The Métis experience at the Chimney Coulee site (DjOe-6):

A historical archaeology investigation into a 19th-century *hivernant* site in the Cypress Hills

by

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ABSTRACT

The Chimney Coulee site (DjOe-6) is a locally well-known historic site and provincial recreation area a few kilometers north of the town of Eastend, Saskatchewan in the southwestern corner of the province. Located along the eastern slopes of the Cypress Hills, the site has a deep history as people from various cultures and eras have called this place home. This thesis uses historical archaeology to delve into the Métis cultural experience at this site which they used to call "Foot of the Mountain" (*Pied de la Montagne)*. It was visited and occupied by various Métis individuals and families between the years of 1870 and 1882. This thesis investigates Métis *hivernant* component to the site to better understand the residents of this cabin and their lifeways through historical archaeology. The historical analysis provides the context to the lives and kinship connections of the individuals and families who called this area their home. The archaeological analysis of a cabin feature helps to give a better understanding to when it was occupied and some context into the daily lives of these individuals. Together, it is argued that this site was occupied by the Métis during three distinct periods. The first was between the years of 1870 and 1874 when it was primarily occupied on an infrequent basis by mostly hunters and traders based from nearby settlements. The second occupation period was between 1874 and 1878 when 70 families settled on the site and in various other ravines and coulees in the area. With perhaps as much as 400 people occupying the site and surrounding areas, it could have been among the largest Métis *hivernant* settlements in this part of the country. The final occupation period was during a period between 1878 and 1882 when members of the Laframboise family were the main occupants at the site. The 2017 archaeological field season found remains of a cabin wall with many historic and domestic associated artifacts mainly

concentrated on one side of this wall. The 2018 field season confirmed these trends. The artifacts are distinctly associated as being Métis in style and highly reflect an archaeological dataset that parallels other findings at previously investigated *hivernant* sites. Many daily activities such as beading, sewing, and tea consumption are well represented among such artifacts. Remains of personal and decorative items show a highly decorative and artistic lifestyle practiced during the long prairie winters. The domestic nature of the artifacts and diagnostic dates acquired suggests the cabin was primarily occupied in the second occupation period (1874-1878) and into the third occupation period (1878-1882). This cabin reflects a highly domesticated space of a Métis *hivernant* family living at the site for several winters during these timeframes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DBD	Depth below datum
EMITA	Exploring Métis Identity through Archaeology
EU	Excavation Unit
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
IPIA	Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology
NW, NE, SW, SE	Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast
NWC	North-West Company
NWMP	North-West Mounted Police
RAS	Regina Archaeological Society
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

By the middle of the 19th-century, many Métis were engaged in a practice of overwintering or *hivernant*, as it was called. They had been moving westward across the prairies founding new winter settlements and abandoning old ones in their pursuit of the bison herds. The Cypress Hills had long been known to the Métis and had been a desirable place among various cultures (Bonnichsen and Baldwin 1978:19-39; Denig and Hewitt 1930:16-17, 81-88). Various sources show that some Métis were using the hills infrequently in some capacity prior to 1870. It was during the 1860s that two wintering settlements were established relatively close to the eastern edge of the hills and the Chimney Coulee site; Wood Mountain (*Montagne de Bois*) which was approximately 170 kilometers to the east and White River (*Rivière Blanche*) approximately 150 kilometers south-east in what was then the Territory of Montana in the United States. Emigration of Métis families westward to these settlements increased after the Red River Rebellion between 1869 and 1870. Generally, these emigrants were both dissatisfied with conditions in Red River after the creation of the province of Manitoba and were additionally drawn westward by the rapidly shrinking bison herds and the economic opportunities they still presented (Ens 1996:114-122). It is from these settlements that a more regular excursions into the hills occurred beginning around 1870.

The area around the Chimney Coulee site was known to the Métis as the Foot of the Mountain (*Pied de la Montagne*) or Tail of the Mountain (*Queue de la Montagne*). For the Chimney Coulee site, a defined occupation occurred between the years of 1870 and 1882. The first occupation period was roughly between the years of 1870 and 1874 and is best characterised by an infrequent settlement and visits by small groups of Métis hunters and traders. The second

occupation period occurred between roughly 1874 and 1878 where approximately 70 families consisting of about 400 individuals lived on the site and the surrounding area. This second occupation period corresponds to the establishment of two other major *hivernant* settlements in the Cypress Hills; Four Mile Coulee and the Head of the Mountain. The last occupation period occurred between 1878 and 1882 where the site was mainly occupied by members of the Laframboise family and several other Métis traders. The site was finally abandoned in 1882 as the remaining occupants moved to various locations on the northside of the hills along the newly established railway line, though most had abandoned the site in the years prior. Some infrequent patrols and temporary summer occupancy by the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) occurred in the few years prior until a permanent NWMP post was established at the current townsite of Eastend, Saskatchewan in 1887. For the remainder of this thesis, the English names for various *hivernant* settlements will be used while "Foot of the Mountain" will occasionally be used to refer to the Chimney Coulee site during its time of occupancy as a Métis *hivernant* settlement. The non-Métis occupation at the site occurred concurrently in the last year of the second occupation period and throughout the third occupation period after the development of a small NWMP outpost which was established first temporarily in 1877 and permanently afterwards until the early 1880s. For the remainder of this thesis, the name East End Post will refer specifically to the NWMP outpost.

The area was opened to settler communities during the late 1890s and the land surrounding the site was primarily part of a ranch and pasture for much of the 20th-century. Several cultural depressions and chimneys were the only visible remains of the Métis *hivernant* cabins and were well-known features in the local community, garnering the site name - Chimney

Coulee. Numerous amateur archaeologists and historians have collected artifacts from the site over the years and large-scale destruction to one part of the site occurred during the 1970s when a local road was expanded. The site was formally surveyed and mapped in the 1980s by Burley et al. (1992). Some archaeological investigations occurred during the 1990s which identified one cabin feature which was excavated and is commonly attested to be the longhouse occupied by Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trader Isaac Cowie. It had been built by his Métis guides in an *hivernant* style during the latter months of 1871 before being burnt down the following spring. The exact location of the Métis *hivernant* cabins from the other settlement periods are generally not known as the chimney remains were mostly displaced by visitors and locals over the years alongside significant overgrowth of vegetation occurring on the site. The initial research for this thesis was first conducted in 2013. Dr. Kisha Supernant from the University of Alberta chose the Chimney Coulee site to be part of the EMITA (Exploring Métis Identity Through Archaeology) research project because of its accessibility and known Métis *hivernant* component. The 2013 investigation revealed a small artifact concentration in a 100 cm x 50 cm excavation unit with a suspected Métis association.

Investigating the Métis component to this site is important for various reasons. As will be described in Chapter 4, few *hivernant* sites have been investigated archaeologically. The Métis as a group are, in general, a fairly underrepresented people in the historical records despite being so integral to the Canadian West. Archaeology at *hivernant* sites can help to place their culture, vast kinship networks, and influence in time and place. For the residents of this site in the 1870s, their traditional bison-based lifestyle was quickly coming to an end. How they were using their culture to adapt to an uncertain future is one such question that likely need many studies like this

to help answer. Finally, providing a greater visibility to their culture and history on the landscape is important to help answer broader questions of recognition in the face of the colonial narratives (Supernant 2018). This study aims to provide a baseline study for future *hivernant* studies at this site and others in and around the Cypress Hills.

Figure 1.1 Location of the Chimney Coulee site in southwestern Saskatchewan.

1.1 Research Questions and General Methods

The research question for the 2017 field season was fairly mosdest in scope. It was to simply expand on a small excavation unit from 2013 which contained a promising artifact concentration and to see how reflective it was to the historically known *hivernant* component on the site. During the 2017 excavations, several discoveries led to the development of more research

questions and possibilities. A suspected cabin wall feature was found which provided opportunities to spatially determine the size, extent, and distribution patterns of artifacts. A reliable fine screening method was also established from previously successful methods for an accurate retrieval of highly fragmented artifacts. The discovery of a unique flower beadwork pattern, which is distinctly Métis in style, gave an indication that this cabin could provide good research opportunities in a mostly well-preserved context. Lastly, being provided good historical documentation by local historic enthusiasts, including a photograph of the Métis residents at the site in 1878, gave additional motivation to establish a reliable and detailed history to give greater context to the material remains and the site in general.

The precise history and cultural experience of the Métis occupants at the Chimney Coulee site may never be fully known. The purpose of this thesis is to give the best approximation available to the lifeways and motivations of these residents and an analysis of their material remains. With historical archaeology we can fully utilize all these analytical tools to begin to get a more complete understanding of the material assemblage found and to accentuate their meaning. Historical research was based upon exhaustive archival work as well as other publicly held sources. Archaeological research first involved excavating three, 1.0 m x 1.0 m excavation units and examining the cultural materials found. The success of the 2017 field season led to a second in the summer of 2018 which expanded on the findings by adding four more excavation units of the same size. Additional investigations occurred in the summer of 2019 but with a different research focus. With that end, the 2019 data has been mostly omitted from this study.

1.2 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 provides the reader with three different areas of background knowledge into this subject. First, is the general background of the Métis as a distinct cultural and ethnic identity. Secondly, is a background to the practice of *hivernant* and various historical impressions provided by Métis and non-Métis sources. Lastly, is a general background to the natural and human history of the Cypress Hills and area surrounding the site.

Chapter 3 will provide a comprehensive history of this site and the other *hivernant* settlements in the Cypress Hills. This chapter is broken down into four parts. The first will be a brief mention of early Métis encounters with the Cypress Hills prior to 1870. The following three parts of the chapter will outline the three primary occupation periods of the Chimney Coulee site by the Métis. Some snapshots into what life was like at the site prior to its eventual abandonment are found within as well.

Chapter 4 first discusses the post-occupation period of the site from the late 19th-century to the present day. This chapter will outline any previous historical or archaeological research conducted by both amateurs and professionals. It will outline some of the other studies in *hivernant* archaeology and then it will describe the past research conducted on the Chimney Coulee site.

Chapter 5 presents the archaeological data recovered from the 2017 and 2018 field seasons. This chapter will start by describing the methodology used in exploring and excavating the *hivernant* cabin at the focus of this study. Then it will outline the artifact classification used to interpret the data. This chapter will then present the seven excavation units, their sedimentation, notable finds, and the artifact totals for each.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter where some of the spatialized artifact data will be presented and discussed. The results from this study will also be compared to the results of one other *hivernant* site, Petite Ville. Interpretations, discussions, and theory will following with some insight into potential future directions and recommendations for future *hivernant* excavations.

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the various background information necessary to understand this research subject. The topic of Métis *hivernant* lifestyle and culture is not well described historically and, as we will see in Chapter 4, rarely studied in an archaeological context. This chapter first broadly addresses the topic of Métis as a people from who they are, their origins, and how the practice of *hivernant* played a role in their development as a people. Then a brief history of how the practice of *hivernant* changed over time in the early 19th-century. Following that are some historical descriptions and impressions of this cultural practice from both an outsider and an insider's perspective. The few Métis descriptions of *hivernant* cabins and lifestyle are used as much as possible from the limited sources. Lastly, this chapter gives an environmental background of the Cypress Hills, the site, and its desirable natural features to human occupation.

2.2 Métis Background

2.2.1 Defining Métis

The Métis are best defined as a post-colonial Indigenous people of Canada. The ethnic group we refer to as "Métis" are generally seen as a diverse peoples which encompassed many backgrounds and were all connected to the historical Canadian Fur Trade. They were called by many different names by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples such as Bois-Brulé, half breeds, or *Otipemisiwak* "the people who own themselves" (Payment 1990). The name "Métis" is derived from the French term métis/métisse, to refer to people of a mixed heritage. The term "Métis" with the accented "e" is generally accepted as representative of traditionally French and

English speaking associated communities though some prefer the term "Metis" to be more inclusive of all (Andersen 2014:44-53). In general, the French speaking associated communities based around the Red River and nearby settlements were historically larger in population and more political assertive of their peoplehood. For this reason, the term "Métis" is now more often used for the entire collective of both French and English-speaking communities and their descendants. Furthermore, in this study we are examining the Métis *hivernants* who lived in the vicinity of the Chimney Coulee site and the Cypress Hills during the 1870s and early 1880s. These families were associated with the French speaking Métis communities of the Red River and Pembina settlements and would likely have identified themselves as Métis. It is also important to note that the Métis were not limited to solely French or English communities in terms of language. Michief and Bungi were languages that had also developed among Métis communities and a variety of Indigenous languages were used by many. Most Métis knew several languages and lived within a few different cultural-linguistic worlds (Charette 1976:90; Weeks 1994:150-151; St-Onge and Podruchny 2012:70-73).

On a wider scale, the term "Métis" is generally limited to describe people who formed a new collective identity during the Fur Trade era between the 17th and 19th centuries in the Great Lakes region and what was historically called Rupert's Land. While inclusive of many peoples, the exact definition of "Métis" has not come to a consensus among academics and descendant communities (Andersen 2014:44-53; Gaudry and Leroux 2017). A stumbling block related to this definition generally regards the many other communities across eastern Canada who are asserting their own unique histories and peoplehood but have no definitive connection to the Fur Trade or the people in the Canadian West. Métis identity among descendant peoples are still a

point of contention and legal disputes (Andersen 2014; Supernant 2018). A major problem in creating a clear and specific definition lies in the large geographical area and timeframe in which we are discussing. Wolfart (2012:120-134) identifies the problems with geographical membership and argues against a spatialized ethnicity. Indeed, many peoples of various European and Indigenous cultures contributed to what would become the Métis people. However, it is often the similarities in cultural expression that are the focus of modern scholarship. St-Onge and Podruchny (2012:59-83) use historical examples from many people sharing similar but different lifestyles and professions across the large geographical area of the Canadian West during the fur trade. The key points that they take away are the commonalities of kinship, mobility, cultural, and historical connections. Exemplified by a historic example, Louis Goulet (Charette 1980:43) explains that:

> *"Back then, family ties among the Métis could stretch to infinity, so to speak. If two grandfathers traded dogs one day, that was enough for their grandchildren to call themselves relatives. Children of cousins two or three times removed turned into uncles and aunts. The in-laws of children united by marriage were called dittawawok."*

Therein lies a common expression of ethnicity and identity. The Métis as a shared nationhood and are a people emergent from their historical and cultural connections tied to the fur trade landscapes (Supernant 2018).

2.2.2 Ethnogenesis Theory and the Métis

Any study regarding Métis peoples or culture requires a firm historical context. Colonial objectives overshadow the narratives of emergent peoples like the Métis and the Canadian West is a prime example as a settler dominant narrative (Andersen 2014:20). The turbulent struggle of Métis recognition of peoplehood throughout the 19th-century resulted in a near silence of cultural self-declaration until the second half of the 20th-century. This is reflected in the explosive rise in self-reported ancestry in the last few iterations of the Canadian census (Andersen 2014:78-89). The field of historical archaeology is especially poised to assist in the validation and study of Métis peoplehood. Narratives and cultural experiences, in this case a study of wintering or *hivernant*, can be better understood, highlighted, and even rediscovered when applying such methods. Orser (2010:124) identifies that the goal of modern historical archaeology should be to benefit the descendant communities. In this case, to contribute to the narrative of the Métis families and their culture to one specific locality which was effectively erased by later settler narratives. Additionally, Newman (2014:130) identifies a that the lack of a comprehensive traditional use survey has been largely detrimental to the Métis. Relating to the Cypress Hills in particular, this study could be of assistance to descendant communities and their ongoing struggles to assert their historic rights to the area (Drake 2013). Helping to redefine this particular site and surrounding area is important because much of the descendent communities have long since moved elsewhere with few remaining. While they may be aware of their history, the specifics surrounding their relationship to this site is likely lost due to the long process of dispossession and the temporary nature of its occupancy.

Much of the academic literature and past research regarding Métis archaeological sites have focused on questions of ethnogenesis. Métis history and cultural practices, such as *hivernant*, are subsequently intertwined with discussions of ethnogenesis which reflect the anthropological questions regarding cultural emergence and change (Supernant 2018). Sturtevant (1971:92-128) proposed the concept of ethnogenesis and has since been defined as a series of transformational processes where an emergent group expresses their ethnic identity over time. This is a continual process where the identity of the emergent group is negotiated and re-negotiated over time and history, with cultural others (Albers 1996:90-92; Campbell 2002:541-542). The Métis have demonstrated their diverse ancestry through the convergence of socio-economic fur trade systems on an Indigenous landscape during early pre-confederation Canada, indicating their multifaceted origins. As a nascent group that emerged from these systems, the concept of ethnogenesis is highly relevant to understanding the origins and development of the Métis as a distinct people. Their history during the 19th-century can be adequately summed up as a struggle to negotiate and re-negotiate their identity in the face of the colonial entanglements (Rubertone 2000:437-439). Specifically, this study focuses on the turbulent years after the Red River Rebellion of 1870, where many Métis moved west to form communities in wintering areas, and before the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 where they would start to become increasingly disenfranchised. This time period is when the bison-based economy was on the verge of collapse and the Métis were thrust in a rapidly changing world in the face of looming western settlement and a re-negotiated landscape.

St-Onge and Podruchy (2012:59-61) highlight that the process of Métis ethnogenesis was "murky and largely unnoticed by those who lived through it". Despite any challenges that may

arise, it is important to study and engage in discourse pertaining to the Métis. This is done primarily to acknowledge the historical and colonial complexities that have shaped their experiences, as well as to actively participate in the conversation concerning the fact that contemporary boundaries do not accurately represent the Métis experience. The Métis and other Indigenous peoples were integral to the foundation and success of Canadian nation building. This study is important in redefining a specific site and will contribute to the dialogue and historiography to the Cypress Hills and its relation to Métis culture history.

2.2.3 *Hivernant* Research and Métis Identity

Early historical writings regarding the Métis often focused on the history of the Red River and the political movements by Louis Riel. The landmark two-volume work by (Giraud 1945) was the first of its kind to focus on the Métis peoples, their history, and culture in extensive detail. Throughout his study, the topic of wintering was an important strand running through the entire background of Métis history and their development as a people. Overall, he laid the groundwork for later analysis and research into the *hivernant* tradition that was fully formed and widespread by the 1840s.

The topic of wintering and Métis ethnogenesis is argued by Foster (1994:1-11) as a two-step process. The first step relates to the 18th-century policy laid out by Montreal based fur trading companies which was instrumental in establishing key relationships which would lead to a population of "Freemen." Ingrained with a tradition of wintering, the second step of ethnogenesis was the endogamous population of early-Métis peoples raised in the wintering tradition of their forebearers who reasserted their identity in the early 19th-century.

St-Onge and Podrunchy (2012:80-83) delve into and attempt to answer the question "why are the Métis unique?" Some aspects of their collective identity are their emergence out of the fur trade, their mobility, and their close relationship to two different economies. One can say, the fur trade world, as lived by the Métis, was one of "stable mobility." The *hivernant* tradition was an important cultural practice for the Métis as it became a process, cultural function, and an economic activity. A structural based approach by Burley et al. (1992) looked at how space was used on *hivernant* settlements as well as in the home. It was the first to comprehensively put the *hivernant* tradition at the forefront and argued its importance to Métis lifeways whether from an economic function or a social-cultural function.

With regards to their emergence as a people, the *hivernant* tradition was essential and necessary to the Métis in the late 19th-century and allowed them to negotiate and re-negotiate their new cultural pathways. That is how we are going to approach this study regarding the *hivernant* tradition, as a culturally fluid activity and a key part of a greater Métis process of ethnogenesis.

2.3 *Hivernant* Background

2.3.1 The origins of a wintering tradition

The Métis people as distinct group were interwoven with the tradition of wintering. The 18th-century was a period fully within a period of global cooling known as the Little Ice Age (Fagan 2000). Prosperity, let alone survival, through the long winters of the Métis homeland was not always a guarantee. Winters lasted more than half of the year and were an important time to harvest the thick furs of bison and other large ungulates. Climate remained generally difficult

well into the 1820s and later which helped in fostering the major Métis centres around the Red River (Giraud 1986b:11-13; Ens 1996:10).

Thick winter furs were a major source of trade between European fur traders and various Indigenous groups. As mentioned earlier, authors such as Foster (1994) highlight the importance of wintering in the gradual ethnogenesis of the Métis. The need for Indigenous women's knowledge was of the utmost importance during the winter months when survival was more difficult and where much of fur trade related economic activities occurred. Girard (1986a:252-260) describes how these women were vital in every aspect of life. In a more comprehensive study, Van Kirk (1980) explored the vital role Indigenous women played in the early fur trade and how European traders actively sought out these relationships to navigate the physical and cultural landscape.

Many authors historically categorize the Battle of Seven Oaks (1816) and the wider Pemmican Wars (1812-1821) as a dividing line in a Métis national awaking and ethnogenesis. Ens and Sawchuk (2015:71-91) argue that this idea needs re-examining in the historiography as the process of ethnogenesis was much more gradual over the following decades to these events. The many institutional, economic, and cultural responses to a changing world by the Métis, such as an eventual reliance on an *hivernant* lifestyle, did not fully crystalize until decades later and could be said went hand in hand with their ethnogenesis.

For the first French speaking traders who arrived in the area of Lake Superior to what is now Manitoba, the reliance on the Indigenous peoples cannot be understated. The ability to survive and thrive in the harsh climates of the northern prairie and parkland were essential skills rooted in the Indigenous traditions of the people who inhabited the region. In the 1730s, the

earliest French fur trading forts were established along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers with the goal of trading furs directly with the Indigenous groups of the area (Ens 1996:9-19; Hogue 2015:16-38; Foster 2006:17-23).

Marriages to the women of these groups were vital for the survival for these European traders. These unions were conducted to establish trade relations, kinship ties, and companionship. Vitally, these women introduced generations worth of knowledge and skills necessary to survive such a climate. The first generations of their descendants were introduced to the early ways of wintering. The backdrop of the Canadian West at this time was still rooted in the language, culture, and a way of life dependent on an Indigenous system in place (Foster 1994). For the Indigenous women in these unions and their children, they were translating, navigating, and even adapting the new systems into the old rather than the other way around. Early Métis were born into a background and cultural influence of the matrilineal tradition (Foster 1994). It was the woman's connections that had the greatest influence. Communities of freemen and their kin relationships were tied to and fully incorporated into Indigenous networks on the landscape (Hogue 2015:16-32).

Many scholars focus on the rivalry of the two fur trade companies in the late 18th-century and early 19th-century as establishing a crucial set of circumstances that contributed to the Métis to see themselves as a distinct group. Even though in the 18th-century a large population of peoples with a mixed heritage, practicing a distinct set of cultural norms, existed and participated in the fur trade as freemen mainly for the Northwest Company (NWC), a collective consciousness appears to have had begun but not fully taken shape. The population of early-

Métis peoples had grown larger with every passing year and so was their awareness of their distinct role in fur trade society (Giraud 1986b:56-118; Ens 1996:9-19).

It was after 1789 that this part of the Canadian northwest was fully entrenched in the competition between the Montreal based NWC and the London, UK based HBC. In general, the NWC was operating deep in the northwest and employed a large number of freemen and Métis in various roles for the functioning of their entire enterprise. Meanwhile, the HBC mainly operated subarctic forts on the Hudson's Bay and other major crossroads despite being technically in control of Rupert's Land. The effectiveness of the NWC's trading practices, in part thanks to the early-Métis, resulted in a decline of profits by the HBC and a concentrated effort to establish inland trading forts. These forts were often in the same locality as NWC forts, which naturally sparked a heated rivalry (Ross 1970; Giraud 1986a:389-401; Ens 1996:9-19).

To further compound the issues, the first decade of 19th-century saw some of the coldest years in the century, which led to an increase in localized hunting pressure. The HBC post at Churchill saw such severe weather and shortages in provisions that they had used up all their long-term supplies by 1812 (Ross 1970:77). For the NWC during the same decade, pemmican production increased as a result while furs were decreasing (Ross 1970:125). Indigenous groups in the area also suffered from a depletion of fur bearing animals around the Red River valley by 1811 (Ross 1970:76). By 1810, many Indigenous groups saw the need to retain more furs and the trade shifted to providing pemmican to the forts in the interior. Additionally, the War of 1812 brought more supply issues for the NWC venture at Red River as their fort at Sault Ste. Marie was destroyed and cross border trade all over ceased.

It was during the last couple of decades of the 18th-century and the first decade of the 19th-century that saw the beginnings of a wintering tradition in the fur trade. The NWC continued the traditions of earlier French speaking traders by building their fur trading forts inland and near Indigenous groups in contrast to the HBC policy of staying along the Hudson's Bay (Giraud 1986a:179-180). The NWC allowed and continued to encourage their voyager employees and partners to form unions with first nations women. The NWC practices and reliance on wintering influenced the practice by introducing some European manufactured goods such as metal pots and pans. A semblance of later *hivernant* traditions had some influence from the NWC practice of securing wintering provisions (Hogue 2015:21).

While wintering started as a practice to service the needs of the NWC, it changed overtime as the needs for the Métis changed over the decades. The late 18th-century fur trade in the interior heavily relied on winter furs of beaver and other small mammals, the early 19th-century began to see a shift into a provisioning trade as the fur bearing animal resources near the Red and Assiniboine rivers were being over exhausted (Giraud 1986a:365-401). Pemmican provisioning and winter hunting of bison became a core part of their business in this area as supplies were shipped to their forts further inland. Certainly, some environmental factors kept it as a necessary practice. The decade of the 1810s was among one of the coldest of the past century (Eddy 1992:11; Fagan 2000:170). These challenges were combined with an increase in population from the Selkirk settlers and it kept the practice of winter provisioning as a dire year-round necessity.

This was the situation faced by the Métis NWC residents, workers, and freemen who lived in the Red River settlement by 1812 when the first settlers of the newly proclaimed Selkirk

Settlement arrived. After a series of conflicts between the two trading companies called the Pemmican War. Armed militia on both sides lashed out against each other's forts as provisions were seized by the HBC employees only to be recaptured by NWC and their Métis employees. The confrontations and retaliatory actions between the two groups continued for the following years reaching a boiling point with the Battle of Seven Oaks on June 19th, 1816 when a group of NWC Métis employees defeated a milita of HBC employees trying to seize a supply of provisions. While tensions continued in the years afterwards, it never again reached quite the same level of open conflict. Rivalries finally subsided when the two companies were forced to merge in 1821 while retaining the HBC name (Ens 1996:9-19; Foster 2006:29-31; Ens and Sawchuk 2015:71-91; Hogue 2015:16-38).

For the Métis, the decade long conflict was an important catalyst in helping to create a common identity from a shared history. While it seems clear that *hivernant* culture was in its infancy beforehand, the decades following the merger would lead to more formalized ways of life that spread their near nomadic brigading culture and *hivernant* practice across the northern prairie and parkland across the Canadian West.

2.3.2 Community growth

The Métis felt the many changes that occurred in the Red River colony after 1821, as the newly merged company took efforts to restructure their operations. For the most part, those who were loyal to either company, be it the English or French speaking Métis communities, put down their differences. Importantly, the HBC consolidated their forts across the whole of Rupert's Land as many of the previous company forts had been in close proximity of one another. Many company

employees were let go from their contracts in the years after the merger which resulted in a large influx of Métis traders and labourers turned Freemen in the years that followed (Foster 2006:30-32). A large segment of this new population of Freemen turned east and relocated with their families to the Red River and their sprouting nearby communities such as White Horse Plain and Pembina (Ens 1996:19-27). The convergence and growth of the various Métis communities were an important part of their coalescence in a shared identity and history (Giraud 1986a:23-25).

The settlements along the Red River as well as their satellite communities saw significant growth in the following decades after the merger despite the challenges they faced. Large amounts of pemmican were still needed by the HBC for their consolidated operations across the northwest and they could draw upon the large pool of Freemen and temporary trade contracts to fill the orders. For the Métis, they began to organize summer hunting brigades from the settlements to fulfill their personal needs and to satisfy the quotas for the company (Giraud 1986b:132-152). Among the remaining population of Selkirk settlers, farming was still being attempted during the 1820s and 1830s while the Métis also took up limited summer farming (Ens 1996:23-29, 35-37). It was during this time that saw a string of poor harvests and crop failure alongside a poor summer bison hunt (Giraud 1986b:166-168). For the Métis, these subsistence uncertainties were convincing enough to initiate a greater expansion of the summer brigades and to continue winter hunting for both subsistence and winter hides for the ever-growing population of the colony and nearby communities (Giraud 1986b:109-135).

2.3.3 A *Hivernant* Culture Forms

As discussed previously, early *hivernant* cultural practices had their origins in both Indigenous lifeways and were later influenced by NWC practices. It was during the rise of organized brigades in the 1820s and the years that followed that *hivernant* culture started to take on a distinctly Métis form. The summer hunting brigades required the participation of entire families for the processing of pemmican and the winter hunts were equally labour intensive for the processing of bison meat and their thick winter hides. When *hivernant* culture expanded in scope and scale, they began to reflect the summer brigading culture with kinship groups staying together and supporting one another as winter hide hunting rose in demand. The religious influences into both brigade and *hivernant* culture is also important to note. Various religious orders were invited to establish themselves in the Red River colony in the 1810s and 1820s. Many Métis adopted Catholicism with the Catholic order of Oblates becoming prominent in joining alongside the summer hunt and later within *hivernant* settlements with some of the first occurrences of this happening in the late 1840s (Giraud 1986b:152-157).

2.3.4 Pull Factors and Pandemic

Spurred on by the restrictive monopoly and low prices imposed by the HBC, Métis traders were constantly being pushed away from the Red River district and drawn elsewhere by various pull factors. From its foundation, Pembina had been a key access point to the American markets namely to St. Paul. With the expansion of various American fur trade companies along the upper Missouri and near the borderlands, the role of *hivernant* settlements such as those at Turtle Mountain became more important (Giraud 1986b:16-19). The reason for this expansion during

the 1830s and 1840s was the rapidly declining Beaver pelt trade and the growth and expansion of the Bison robe trade. The 1837 Northern Plains Epidemic also played a key role in shifting the trading dynamics as American ferry traffic brought a wave of smallpox which decimated the local northern plains Indigenous groups along the Missouri (Giraud 1986a:85; Hackett 2004). Thanks to a successful inoculation campaign by the HBC, many Métis traders and a whole generation of children were mostly spared the future horrors brought on by the disease (Hackett 2004:594-606). The temporary rise in robe prices led to many more Métis seeing the benefit of participating in the winter robe trade (Ens 1996:72-76).

2.3.5 HBC Monopoly Broken

The 1840s continued the trend of Métis subversion of the HBC monopoly into American markets and this was due in part to the success of the *hivernant* settlements. Summer brigades had increased in size to 1700 carts and the bison herds were no longer found in the Red River district necessitating longer journeys (Giraud 1986b:141). The pattern of moving southwest into the northern Missouri for both the winter robes and a means to sell them, was a strong moving force for many Métis. It was during this time that the HBC made repeated attempts to enforce their chartered monopoly but to no avail. The Guillame Sayer trial in 1849 saw Métis assert themselves and showed that the Métis were in charge of their own trading ventures. A result of the events around the trial was that many families moved from Red River, both south to Pembina but also across the northwest borderlands. Their decision to move into more distant localities also resulted in a decision to rely on *hivernant* practices and to participate into the rapidly expanding Bison robe trade (Ens 1996:77-78; Hogue 2015:48-49).

2.4 Impressions of *Hivernant* Settlements and Lifestyle

2.4.1 *Hivernant* Site Selection

From the outset, *hivernant* sites and settlements seem to mostly conform to a specific set of basic environmental criteria. The two most obvious criteria being to establish oneself near forested areas and to be near a water source. Many outside observers to *hivernant* settlements recorded the same or similar necessities. At the Tail Creek settlement, Jean D'Artigue (1882:125) observed that it was well sheltered from the wind and near a place of wood and water which were among the most important factors in selecting a place to build their cabin. Other contemporaries who visited and lived among *hivernants* such as Oblate father DeCorby and H.M. Robinson recorded similar such observations (Blaise 2000:83; Robinson 1879:254-260). There does not seem to be any direct references from Métis sources to confirm these observations. However, there are some references that seem to infer such preferences in site selection (Carpenter 1977:49-50; Milton and W.B 1865:76-78; Weekes 1994:150-152). Most known *hivernant* sites such as those near Cypress Hills, Buffalo Lake, and Petite Ville seem to conform to these logical necessities. Further to this, comparative research has shown that *hivernant* sites seem to make use of natural contours of the landscape and the settlement to be placed opportunistically on the surrounding area (Burley et al. 1992:95-106; Wutzke 2009:234-238). It could also be a case that sites were chosen based on other factors such as the knowledge of or evidence of past human occupations at these places. Of the few *hivernant* sites excavated, many have had a pre-contact components to them. It could also be that sites were selected based

on oral histories or placenames relating to past occupations or other factors not yet extensively studied.

2.4.2 Building Cabins

Several exterior sketches of *hivernant* cabins exist alongside rare examples of historical photos. The details regarding how they were built are somewhat known by accounts from both outsiders as well as some Métis sources. By these estimates, the cabins seemed to have been typically built within the first week upon first arrival at a new settlement (Blaise 2000:83).

Several observers mentioned the teamwork employed from everyone in new settlement (Carpenter 1977:49-51; D'Artigue 1882:124-126). Louis Goulet specifically outlines a process of reciprocal helping within the community which he called a "corvee":

> *"It was a long-standing custom with us. If a job was too much for one man's strength or talents, everyone was ready to lend a hand. That way, people shared their skill or labour automatically and an entire house could be built from scratch in one day with spontaneous help from neighbours. Nobody ever had to be asked."*

(Charette 1980:4)

This example of a communal work tradition is also echoed by other sources most notably in Carpenter (1977:49-51) and Weekes (1945:167-169).

As previous mentioned, *hivernant* settlements were located within or near wooded areas for both fuel and building materials. There are some references of local building materials that seem to suggest both the main trunks of local trees and their branch bows were used in the

construction in winter cabins (Carpenter 1977:50; Robinson 1879:254-255). The most common type of tree used for construction were the various species of poplar trees (*Populus tremuloides*, *Populus deltoides*, and *Populus balsamifera*) found in the upper Missouri. Where they were more abundant, White Spruce (*Picea glauca*) and Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*) were used as building material especially in places such as the Cypress Hills (Charette 1976:41).

There appears to be some construction variability to *hivernant* cabins regarding the size and design which might have been based on the locally available materials and even tools. Burley et al. (1992:100-106) discusses the various structural differences in locality and time. Based on various sources, included historical photographs, they ranged from one to three room houses (Burley et al. 1992:100-106; Brandon 1995, 2001; Weinbender 2003:71-75; Robinson 1879:274-275). A well-known photograph of a multi-room cabin exists from one of the various Wood Mountain *hivernant* settlements during the early 1870s.

Figure 2.1 Métis settlement – Wood Mountain.

Taken in 1974 by the British North American Boundary Commission. (PAM – P8167/9).

Cabin construction became easier overtime with the introduction of a variety of woodworking tools such as the two-man cross saw, augers, planes, and draw knives (Charette, 1980:12-14). One outsiders account of a cabin's construction was described in detail:

> *"The roof was constructed with poles placed in rows and covered with hay and earth. Holes were cut in the walls for door and windows, the latter being closed in when so required with the skins of animals; while the doors were made of slabs of wood split with the axe and fastened together with thongs of rawhide. The chimney was constructed with unburned bricks composed of hay*

> *and mud, and the floor formed of hewed logs completed the carpenter work. This done, they plastered the crevices well with mud and the cabin was ready for occupation. The ease with which they are constructed, and the wanderings of game, will account for the number of these cabins to be found throughout the whole North-West.*
>
> (D'Artigue 1882:125)

Many Métis and non-Métis sources generally describe how ubiquitous these *hivernant* cabins were across the Canadian West. Norbert Welsh claimed to have had over a dozen of them across the northwest (Ens 1996:79). Despite their expedient construction, many survived into the early settlement period if they did not fall victim to fire (Macoun 1882:260). Some were said to have been still standing over fifty years since their original construction (Charette 1976:41).

There are also some references of these cabins being infrequently occupied by non-Métis. A few passing descriptions also show that some buildings were used for storage. Some references state that the chief trader in an *hivernant* village would have a bigger building, with perhaps one or two extensions to them (Robinson 1879: 274-275). Norbert Welsh's account of the Four Mile Coulee settlement, for example, mentions the presence of storage cabins and chapel (Weekes 1994:157-169).

2.4.3 *Hivernant* Hunting

The major economic activity of *hivernant* settlements was hunting and trapping for the acquisition of thick winter furs and provisions. While in its formative years early in the 19th-century, it seems as though wintering was not practiced by all Métis or at least was conducted for

shorter periods to replenish food supplies (Giraud 1986b:152-157). It was during that time that small game such as beaver pelts had a more prominent role in the economic activity of *hivernant* settlements. As previously mentioned, the expansion of the Bison robe trade towards the end of the 1830s and 1840s, *hivernant* settlements increased and with it a shift into a focus of winter bison hunting.

The summer hunt went hand in hand with the winter hunt though, as during times of scarcity during the winter months sometimes the pemmican obtained during the summer was the only thing preventing starvation the following season (Robinson 1879:136). In the later years, Goulet (Charette 1980:50) notes that winter hunting was always about meat; however, the prices for the hides acquired still made it a more profitable venture than summer hunt. During spring, many trading posts saw a regular influx of Métis with their winter Bison hides (Robinson 1879: 326-328). Winter hunts had the advantage of being less laborious as the meat froze and stayed good for longer. There was not as much of a race against time to process the animal like there was during the summer hunt (Charette 1980:50-51).

The actual technique of winter hunting seems to have been much more variable than the organized and regimented culture of the summer hunting brigades. A non-Métis observer, Ross (1957:247), described one technique of hunting where:

> *"The half-breed, dressed in his wolf costume, tackles two or three sturdy curs [mongrols] into a flat sled, throws himself on it at full length, and gets among the buffalo unperceived. Here the bow and arrow play their part, to prevent noise; and here the skilful hunter kills as many as he pleases, and returns to camp without disturbing the band."*

Meanwhile, Goulet (Charette 1980:49) described a different technique which would utilize poor winter weather:

> *"Winter buffalo hunting was done on snowshoes or with a traîne, a large sled pulled by a horse or ox. The hunters would leave early in the morning, at the first light of dawn. The best time was during bad weather, even in a blizzard, because then the animals had a habit of lying down with their heads low, facing the wind, the bulls forming a half-circle at the edge of the herd. All the hunters had to do was come up quietly from downwind until they were at point-blank range – blasting distance we called it – and they could kill all they needed in a very short time."*

These differences in winter hunting techniques likely relate to adaptable techniques for different geographical conditions and different weather conditions. Other descriptions of winter bison hunting describe the use of sleds, guns, and dogs (D'Artigue 1882:91-96). The use of dogs and sleds are a common theme for *hivernant* lifestyle. Many dogs were kept year-round just for their use in the winter where they could navigate the snowy conditions better and haul sleds of goods and people. It is mentioned that dogs were fed scraps of bison, fish, and other left-over animal parts (Robinson 1879:118; Ross 1957:246-247). Trapping was also a seldom mentioned *hivernant* activity. The other animals harvested during the winter months including pine martin, fisher, mink, fox, beaver, muskrat, lynx, wolverine, bear, and even racoon (Robinson, 1879:340-346).

2.4.4 Social and Domestic Activities

A major focus study regarding Métis *hivernants* are the social and cultural aspects of life spent in these cabins. Being quintessential places of Métis culture, there have been some documentation regarding the activities which appear in the material cultural remains, but the day-to-day nuances are difficult to fully uncover.

Food was a large part of the *hivernant* home. Hospitality and food went hand in hand and was recorded by many different outsiders to *hivernant* settlements. Robinson (1879:258) describes such an invitation:

> *"In every hut feasting is kept up from morning till night, and it is impossible to enter the dwelling of a half-breed without being invited to dine. As a refusal is regarded in the light of an intentional slight to the host, it happens that the unwary guest goes about in a highly surfeited condition. The invitation to eat forms, however, the most prominent feature of half-breed hospitality, and is always extended in the kindest and politest manner."*

This description generally matches what Goulet (Charette 1980:43) spoke about regarding a typical *hivernant* evening:

> *"The most important expression of hospitality was sharing the food on your table, so a meal of reception followed soon after people arrived from their journey, and it became an excuse for a big party and celebration that might last for days and weeks. You should have seen what went on under the rustic*

roofs of those winter cabins. An invitation delivered just after sunset would tell people where to go for the party."

Hivernant cabins were certainly the common location of festivities ranging from dances to weddings. These events were typically always accompanied by music and song. Goulet provides a descriptive description for a Métis perspective on this.

"If the house had a wood floor, it would be creaking under the steady rhythm of dancing feet. If there was no floor, which was usually the case with those winter houses, the bare ground took all the stamping from our moccasins and the spectators were forced out many times in the evening for a breath of air because the dust inside would be suffocating…

One night we were all jammed into Omichouche Godin's house in the Judith Basin on the Missouri River. The dance started. There was no wood floor and I don't remember any other instrument than an Indian drum. Some men were sitting on the ground around the drum, pounding away like made to the rhythm of the Red River Jig while the dancing men and women took turns with wild enthusiasm. Spectators sat on the ground all around the room with their backs to the wall, almost completely invisible because of the dust and pipe smoke. The dancers kept time by clapping and snapping their fingers over the heads, adding an extra touch to the rhythm of their dancing feet."

(Charette 1980:43-45)

One of the most described activities was tea drinking. In all accounts of *hivernant* lifestyle, there is an emphasis on the frequency and enormous quantities of tea that was consumed all winter long and at all times of the day. Another common activity frequently described was smoking which was typically done by the men of the settlements (Charette 1980:23; Robinson 1879:50; Ross 1957:193).

The domestic activities by the women and children of an *hivernant* household are less known and seldom described. It is known that much like the summer hunt, they were crucial in the processing of bison meat and skins. However, it was likely that less time was used for processing bison during the winter months because pemmican was typically made during the summer. Much of the time women were likely engaged in different activities. In describing the various types of clothing for both men and women, Goulet (Charette 1980:48) notes:

> *"Moccasins were simply mittens for the feet, made at home, usually by the old Métis women during the long winter nights....."*

Some especially fancy moccasins and gloves had needlework, porcupine quills, or beadwork on them (Charette 1980:48 - 49). But such passing descriptions do not do justice to the range of activities required to maintain a family and household throughout the winter.

The only known source we have from a Métis woman's perspective in a *hivernant* household comes from Marie Delorme Smith. From her recollections we get a window into vast world of necessary tasks and activities that were required and subsequently passed down from mother to daughter (Carpenter 1977:49-53). There are some references to education and religious knowledge of younger children falling onto the responsibilities of the eldest daughter (Robinson

1879:46). There are few references, if any, to other activities such as games, religion, ritual, education, and other forms of socializing.

Hivernant cabins were occupied for half of the year and were important places for the Métis. They were special places from when the community all helped to build them, to their day-to-day to activities within them, and up until their eventual abandonment. They offer a rich example into how life was lived in an intimate and distinctly Métis space. They were important spaces where people met, kinships grew, culture was practiced, and families were raised. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, so few of these spaces have been studied despite being a rich opportunity to better understand 19th-century Métis lifeways.

Figure 2.2 Métis hivernant cabin near the Cypress Hills.

Photograph attributed to George Anderton ca. 1870s (Glenbow Archives NA-652-1).

2.5 Cypress Hills Background

2.5.1 Natural History of the Cypress Hills

The Cypress Hills are a distinctive and unique feature on the interior plains of North America. They are located entirely within Canada, divided between the provinces of the Alberta and Saskatchewan and, on average, approximately 75 kilometers north from the Canadian-United States border and the American state of Montana. Within the plains, the hills are among a greater plateau region called the Coteau du Missouri, or the Missouri Plateau. Within Canada, the Cypress Hills lay on the southern part of the semi-arid steppe called Palliser's Triangle.

The accepted extent of the hills are approximately 130 kilometers east-west and range from approximately 25 km north-south on their narrowest and westerly parts and up to 40 km north-south on their widest and most eastern portions (Jungerius 1966:307-318). They are a bedrock-supported plateau capped by the Upper Eocene to Miocene age Cypress Hills formation, ranging in elevation from around 1200 meters in elevation on places on the eastern side of the plateau and rising to a maximum elevation of 1465 metres elevation on the western side (Leckie and Cheel 1989:1918-1931). Several parts of the western side of the plateau remained unglaciated during the Pleistocene and into the Holocene (Stalker 1965:116-130). The Cypress Hills plateau is mostly covered in coarse silt loess with some areas of bedrock exposure (Catto 1983)

The process of deglaciation formed many meltwater channels around the hills, including the eastern side, and resulted in the deposition of hummocky disintegration moraine and a series of recessional moraines (Kulig 1996:53-77; Vreeken 1986:2024-2038; Westgate 1968:121). Two north-south flowing meltwater channels separate the plateau into three general geographic

divisions referred to as the West Block, the Centre Block, and the East Block (Bonnichsen and Baldwin 1978:2). The margins of the Cypress Hills are subjected to high degrees of erosion. Seasonal water flow through the various valleys, coulees, channels, and streams have given shape to the region to provided amble shelter and environments for a highly diverse variety of flora and fauna. The major sources of postglacial geomorphic processes have been fluvial erosion and mass wasting via landslides (Goulden and Sauchyn 1986:239-248; Sauchyn and Lemmen 1996:7-14).

The area around the Chimney Coulee site (DjOe-6) is located on an alluvial fan with a deeply incised coulee running through it (Brandon 1994:4). A coulee, being a term for a deep ravine that had been previously formed by running water. The site overlooks the Eastend Coulee and the Shaunavon Plateau to the south-east. The Eastend Coulee is a major glacial meltwater channel encompassing the eastern border of the Cypress Hills. The site is located on the edge of the continental divide where water flowing from the site travels south along the Eastend Coulee into the Frenchman-Missouri drainage and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. Water from the adjacent coulees immediately north-east of the site flow into Swift Current-South Saskatchewan drainage and eventually into the Hudson's Bay. In historic times a shallow lake lay in the Eastend Coulee on the continental divide near the site until the early 20th-century. The Shaunavon plateau is lower than Cypress Hills by 50 to 100 metres and is pocketed by several glacial drumlins (Hanna 1995:5).

2.5.2 Climate and Ecology of the Cypress Hills and the Shaunavon Plateau

The present-day climate of the Cypress Hills is described as a continental, subhumid climate characterized by low precipitation, cold winters, and short, warm summer. Intense localized rainfall is common in spring and early summer, but low summer precipitation and daytime heating create a strong moisture deficit throughout southeastern Alberta and, to a lesser extent, along the Cypress Hills. The effects from being a higher elevation result in higher snowfall and a cooler and moister conditions than the surrounding plains. These differences in elevation, moisture, and temperature cause vegetation in the hills to be different and rich in flora diversity (Vance et al. 1998:18-25). The climate along the neighbouring Shaunavon Plateau is slightly different from the Cypress Hills on account of being slightly lower and therefore warmers, and dryer, and much more exposed to wind (Hanna 1995:5).

Much like the surrounding area, the weather along the Cypress Hills typically fluctuates greatly between years and throughout the seasons. To showcase the temperature variability, winter temperatures can approach close to negative 45º Celsius and in the summer months it can approach 40º Celsius (Hildebrandt and Hubner 2007:15). Most areas can see a generally high average rainfall between 430 to 520mm, most of it occurring in the spring although long dry spells are not uncommon (Thorpe 1999:137). Heavy rainfall is also known which causes local flooding can cause major erosion of the slopes. In general, the prevailing winds blow from west to east with colder winter weather typically coming from the northwest though dry Chinook winds are possible in the winter months (Hildebradt and Hubner 2007:15). Typically, the Cypress Hills plateau experiences a cooler and wetter environment than the surrounding plains

especially on the northern and western sides of the hills and in the various shaded narrow coulees and ravines (Cowell 1982).

During deglaciation around 13000 years ago, the Cypress Hills was covered by mixed deciduous and coniferous forests mostly on the western side of the hills that spread to the eastern side (Klassen 1994:1831). In general, the Cypress Hills vegetation is transitional from lower to higher elevations and south facing to north facing slopes. Predominantly mixed short grass prairie vegetation on lower elevations and south facing slopes. On north facing slopes, upland valleys, and other generally shaded and wetter transitional areas contain mixed White Spruce (*Picea glauca*) and Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) as seen in the Chimney Coulee area while the highest uplands of the Cypress Hills are dominated by Lodgepole Pine (Pinus contorta) communities (Breitung 1954:55-92; Vries and Bird 1968:98-100).

Compared to the surrounding plains, the hills support a high ecological diversity which, in turn, have likely been an attractive feature to a host of species and the Indigenous peoples who relied on such flora and fauna (Bonnichsen and Baldwin 1978:1-7). Of the six present-day vegetation communities in the Cypress Hills as described by (Sauchyn and Sauchyn 1991), the Chimney Coulee site is a mixed White Spruce forest and Trembling Aspen woodland with a dominance of the former higher up the coulee and a prevalence of the latter lower down the coulee. This local environment supports a highly diverse understory of berry species and other smaller plant communities. The nearby Shaunavon Plateau is classified as a Mixed Grassland with several minor grassland plant communities with abundant Pasture Sage (*Artemisia frigida*) (McCanny 2000:11-19). In the many meltwater channel valleys and coulees surrounding the hills

are riparian shrubland as a transitional barrier between the hills and the surrounding mixed grass prairie (Wylie 1978:13).

The Cypress Hills and their surrounding environment has been an important oasis for a large variety of fauna. The unglaciated parts of the Cypress Hills and the areas immediately south would have been inhabited by all types of Pleistocene fauna. Included would be the ancestral Bison (*Bison antiquus*). After larger Pleistocene mammals were extirpated, modern Bison (*Bison bison*) became the dominant herbivore of the mixed grass prairie environment and extensively used the hills as a winter refuge. Other ungulates found in the hills are White Tail Deer, Mule Deer, Pronghorn, Elk, and Moose. Large predators included Grizzly Bear, American Black Bear, Cougar, Lynx, Bobcat, Wolves, and Coyotes. Other mammals include Badgers, Beavers, Muskrat, Foxes, Porcupine, Skunk, Richardson's Ground Squirrels, and Hares among many others. Bird Species include Turkey Vultures, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, various hawk species, Pelican, Swan, various Owl species, various corvids, and many other smaller bird species. Full lists of flora and fauna known to be used by Indigenous peoples in the Cypress Hills and the surrounding areas can be seen in Elliott (1971:10-16), Bonnichsen and Baldwin (1978:60-62), and Hanna (2003:6-10). In the historic period, the largest environmental changes include the extirpation of Bison from the hills which occurred concurrently with the Wolf and Grizzly Bear populations. Shortly afterwards, the Elk and Cougar were gone from the hills. Agriculture has heavily reduced the native grasslands on the plateau and around the Cypress Hills.

2.5.3 Early Human Occupations of the Cypress Hills

Ancestors of First Nations occupied the Cypress Hills for millennia. With much of the hills free from glaciation, there have been a number of the earliest fluted points found (Hall 2009:86-91). A sample of the known sites around the Cypress Hills can be found in Bonnichesen and Baldwin (1978:2-6). The Stampede site (DjOn-26) is a particularly notable and highly stratified archaeological site near Elkwater Laker with at least 14 cultural layers (Wiseman et al. 2002:282). Projectile point traditions across multiple thousands of years are found at this site representative of the long human occupation across the hills and the nearby landscape (Meyer, Blakey, and Roe 2009).

The Chimney Coulee site (DjOe-6) also contains at least one pre-contact component to it and has many natural features to it which might have made it a desirable place of past occupation. The abundance of wood from both Lodgepole pine, White Spruce, and Trembling aspen are found all through the deeply incised ravine which contains a seasonal waterflow (Brandon 1994:1-6). As mentioned, the entire site is located above an old lake located in the greater Eastend Coulee which is located at the continental divide between the Missouri and Saskatchewan watersheds. As a result, the local plant community at the site is particularly rich in diversity and might have attracted people to the area. Anxiety Butte, a particularly prominent peak about 2 kilometers northeast of the site, can be seen eastwards across the prairie landscape up to approximately 30 kilometers away. This might have been a useful feature on the landscape which might have assisted in longer distance travel in the surrounding area.

Overall, the unique forested island that is the Cypress Hills attached large numbers of Bison, Elk, and many other wild game. As a result, it is unsurprising it had a near continuous

human presence and a highly prized place to live permanently or seasonally. The quantity and diversity of flora and fauna alongside everything other resource made it a highly desirable place to occupy and control. Even into the historic period, the hills continued to be a place that various peoples sought to venture. As discussed in the next chapter, the hills were among the last place in the Canada that the plains bison were seen and saw a large influx in Métis and other peoples during the 1870s.

2.6 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to better prepare the reader in understanding the people, the practice, and the environment discussed in this study. The Métis had developed a unique and rich cultural practice of finding an area of winter settlement and making it their own. The Cypress Hills were similar to many other locations of *hivernant* settlement in the first half of the 19th-century. During the second half of the 19th-century, the retreating bison herds put the Métis into a direct collision course with the Cypress Hills. The following chapter addresses the specific history of the Métis *hivernants* at the Chimney Coulee site.

CHAPTER 3 HISTORY

3.1 Introduction

As opposed to the major centres such as Fort Edmonton and the Red River settlements, studying Métis *hivernant* history presents unique challenges. The temporary, isolated, and mobile nature of *hivernant* lifestyle has left us with limited documentation and almost always from outsiders of these settlements. As such, many strands of these few sources require to be corroborated for accuracy and specificity. Relying on primary sources documentation is necessary in this study as many secondary sources were found to be unreliable at best or contradictory and subject to colonial agendas at worst.

This chapter outlines a detailed history of the Métis at the Chimney Coulee site. During its primary years of occupation between 1870 to 1882, it was known by the Métis as Foot of the Mountain (*Pied de la Montagne*) or Tail of the Mountain (*Queue de la Montagne*). Three general periods of occupation are proposed for the site. The first occurred between about 1870 to 1874 and was characterized mainly by small groups of Métis hunters and traders whose families mostly remained at the periphery settlements of Wood Mountain and White River. The second occupation period occurred between 1874 and 1878 which was characterized by entire extended groups of interconnected families and was the peak of Métis settlement in the Cypress Hills. The third period occurred between 1878 and 1882 when the site hosted members of the Laframboise family and several other small traders.

3.2 Early Métis excursions and use of the Cypress Hills

3.2.1 Indigenous territory and the Cypress Hills in the 19th-century

The Cypress Hills have been an important place for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. This treed oasis attracted a large diversity of large mammalian resources and as a result they were a desirable place for various Indigenous groups of the northern plains. But the nature of how these various groups organized their territoriality and contested control of the hills is still open to debate. By the 1870s different sources certainly identify the hills to be a desirable location and a boundary between various northern tribes and was on occasion described as a "No man's land" where game was plentiful (Cowie 1913). In their study of the ethnography of the Cypress Hills, Bonnichsen and Baldwin (1978:35-39) directly challenged this notion and instead proposed that they it was more likely an "Everyman's land" and not unlike many other localities within or on the periphery of territories. They argued that much like any feature on the prairie landscapes, if contested and controlled then it would remain within one's own sphere and provide a wealth of pertinent examples (Bonnichsen and Baldwin 1978:31-34). Denig who was an experienced fur trader and early ethnographer in Fort Union, approximately 400 km to the southeast of the Cypress Hills, describes many different Indigenous groups that shared the hills in the early 19th-century (Denig and Hewitt 1930:16-17, 81-88). What does seem to be clear is that the hills were most definitely contested and, at various times, a crossroad between various groups with the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) tending to control the western and northwestern side, the Aaniiih (Gros Ventre) along the south and southwestern side, the Nakota (Assiniboine) along the southeast, and the Nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) along the north and northeast.

Most of these groups were recorded to have occupied and lived near the centre of the hills at different points in times.

3.2.2 Métis brigades and the Cypress Hills

Mobility was a core feature in Métis culture, including the need to maintain their bison-based economy throughout the 19th-century. The summer bison hunting brigades grew into a regular feature of Métis culture since at least the 1820s as it provided additional economic opportunities when it was intertwined and coordinated with the planting of their crops in the Red River settlements (Ens 1996:35-36; Ens 2008:152-154). While the practice of Métis wintering generally predates the practice of the summer brigades, the culture of *hivernant* coalesced alongside that of the summer brigades. Indeed, wintering had seen a great expansion during the 1840s in part due to rising bison robe prices and a flourishing American market along the upper Missouri (Ens 1996). Initially tempered by the HBC trade monopoly north of the international border, in practice it was commonly flouted in secret by many Métis traders and then actively ignored after the Guillame Sawyer trial. The trial concluded in 1849 and with the pressure applied by Sawyer's kin, it resulted in transforming the aforementioned HBC monopoly into a toothless guidance where the Métis asserted their freedom to trade across the ill-defined international border (Foster 2006:39-40; Hogue 2015:46:48). The decades following saw a large expansion of Métis participation in the American fur trading ventures and it was during this time that Métis traders frequented the areas between Fort Union and Fort Benton and along the Milk River (Hogue 2015:48:54).

Beginning in the 1850s, the Métis summer brigades began expanding their boundaries further and further west, and it was during this time that the first such encounters with the Cypress Hills occurred. Some Métis scrip records from later in the 19th-century identify individuals who were born or married in the Cypress Hills in the twenty-year period between 1850 – 1870 (Morin 1997). A small handful of scrip records contain individuals who self-reported to have been born in the Cypress Hills during the 1850s and 1860s, but they appear to be outliers to the general trend of Métis born across the west during this time (Hamilton 2007). The generally accepted trend of wintering settlements moving west highly suggests that places around Wood Mountain (Montagne de Bois) to be regularly visited starting in the early 1860s (Ens 1996:77-79; Foster 2006:60). This places any prospective Métis settlement in the Cypress Hills prior to the 1860s generally at odds with the easily corroborated evidence that comes from Wood Mountain. However, with the various coulees of the Wood Mountain area being occupied during this time, early Métis encounters with the Cypress Hills, being approximately 200 km west of Wood Mountain, was a near certainty.

It was during this time that an active cross border trade network was flourishing in this part of the northwest which brought many Métis traders near and even through the Cypress Hills. An account from Louis Goulet describes being part of a bison hunting brigade which crossed through the Cypress Hills at various times during a formative period of his youth, corresponding with the mid-1860s (Charette 1980:13-20). At several times during the late 1860s, Johnny Grant also participated in long distance trading activities along well-used cart trails between the area of Wood Mountain, along the Milk River, and to Fort Benton which brought him within proximity of the hills (Ens 2008:159-167). During the 1850s and 1860s, the number of robes that Métis

traders were bringing into the trading posts along the upper Missouri dwarfed those ending up with the HBC posts (Foster 2006:53). Other Métis traders sought to benefit from this and established themselves along the Frenchman River north of the forks of the Milk River at a place called White River (Rivière Blanche) to the annoyance of American based traders (Foster 2016; Hogue 2015:75-76).

While it seems likely that *hivernant* settlements did not occur regularly in the Cypress Hill prior to 1870, the Métis most certain knew of the existence of the hills and actively used them. The extent of this interaction is not known. By the late 1860s, Métis *hivernant* settlements had already been long established directly east and southeast of the hills at Wood Mountain near the Milk River.

3.3 Occupation Period I – Métis Hunters and Traders

3.3.1 Hunters from Wood Mountain

While the Cypress Hills were likely known and used by the Métis earlier, it was not until 1870 that written documentation of early *hivernant* interactions emerge. It was also during this time when the Red River Rebellion occurred which, among other things, eventually precepted a large exodus of Métis westward to various *hivernant* settlements in the following years. Many of these families were drawn to their kin networks which lead them to make new temporary homes in one of the many wooded valleys in the Wood Mountain area (Ens 1996:77-79; Foster 2006:60-62).

In late 1870, Oblate Father Joseph J.M. LeStanc was called to Lebret from St. Boniface where he was instructed to visit the rapidly growing *hivernant* settlements around Wood Mountain. After arriving in October 1870, he was immediately greeted with open arms by the

large number of families and children who, he noted, had not received holy sacraments for years if at all (Lestanc, Joeseph-Jean-Marie omi: Souvenirs de 1860 à 1880, 1910, PR1971.0220/6873, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton). It was in November where he described how many of the hunters in the settlements had returned from the "side of the hill" in the west where many bison had been spotted (Correspondence of Jean-Marie LeStanc to Jules DeCorby, 15 November 1870, T-52523 to T-52526, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Centre du Patrimoine, Winnipeg, Manitoba). Considering this description, it is more than likely that he was referring to the eastern side of the Cypress Hills that the hunters had returned from which was a popular wintering ground of bison. It was also during that time that he estimated there were over 100 families in five villages around Wood Mountain and noted that even more families were coming from Lac Qu'Appelle before the start of the winter (Correspondence from Jean-Marie LeStanc to Alexandre Taché, 1 December 1870, T8196-8203, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Centre du Patrimoine, Winnipeg). He noted that the following winter months (1870/1871) were anticipated to be much more difficult than the previous few as the late arriving families faced greater hardship than the ones already established in the area (Rondeau 1970:35). That winter continued to see hunting far west of Wood Mountain near the Cypress Hills and along the Frenchman River in Montana (Rondeau 1970:35-36). With such a sudden increase of *hivernant* families combined with a difficult winter, the reliance on the winter hunt cannot be understated. It was during these particularly long and difficult winters that bison herds would seek shelter in the wooded ravines and coulees. Attracted

by the reliable bison herds, the eastern Cypress Hills had likely become a favorite hunting spot of the Wood Mountain *hivernant* hunters.

3.3.2 Métis Traders alongside Isaac Cowie

Since the 1840s, the HBC had long felt the effect of losing their trade monopoly to American fur trading ventures along the upper Missouri and its tributaries. *Hivernant* traders would travel long distances to obtain better prices across the ill-defined border region (Cowie 1913:437; Hogue 2015). So desperate were they for winter bison hides, that some HBC aligned traders traveled to *hivernant* settlements to purchase them directly from hunters before they could be sold across the line (Hogue 2015). Isaac Cowie was one such HBC employee based at Fort Qu'Appelle during the late 1860s which recognized this trend in the robe trade and stayed close to the ever-expanding Métis frontier.

Cowie had made several trips with his Métis employees near the Cypress Hills in the years prior to 1871 but it was not until that year that they made the decision to try and make a trading excursion to the eastern side of the hills (Cowie 1913:432). With prior knowledge of the area, his fellow traders traveled to what would become the *hivernant* site of Chimney Coulee and built various wintering cabins there. This is the first and earliest description of the site and its surrounding features. Of note is how these cabins were arranged:

> *"The Company's buildings were in a row, not in a square, and those of the freemen were similarly arranged in the shelter of scrub at the foot of a hill…."*
>
> (Cowie 1913:434)

According to Cowie most of these structures were burnt down by a group of hostile Blackfeet upon Cowie's departure in the spring of 1872 (Cowie 1913:435) and they were likely rebuilt within the same or similar structural footprint in later occupations as evidenced by later surveys (Burley, Horsfall, and Brandon 1992). Cowie stated that his intention was to establish trade relations with the Blackfoot who were known to occupy the hills. Prior to their departure, his large party of Métis and other Assiniboine allies warded off any conflict during their length of their stay in the winter of 1871/1872. This might have been in part due to the large influx of *hivernant* hunters and freemen from Wood Mountain who regularly visited during winter. One well known Métis trader from Wood Mountain he notes was Antoine Ouellette and his kin (Cowie 1913:433-434). The winter was extraordinarily successful for Cowie and all the Métis who visited that winter as the herds remained close at hand alongside other large game (Cowie 1913:436-437).

According to Cowie's narrative, the Blackfoot descended upon the site once they departed and avoided conflict except for a few Assiniboine stragglers. He noted that the remains of the few fallen Assiniboine were found among the burned cabins in the following June by Métis hunters revisiting the site (Cowie 1913:435). Although Cowie recorded his brief narrative of wintering in the Cypress Hills decades later in 1913, it is generally corroborated within greater context of the hills and LeStanc's descriptions at the time of *hivernant* movements in and around the Wood Mountain and White River settlements.

3.3.3 Wood Mountain and White River

The same winter that Cowie had resided on the site was the first winter that LeStanc visited the White River *hivernant* settlement from his new base in Wood Mountain. Being situated just across the international boundary, many families of *hivernants* had been drawn to the area near the forks of the Milk and Frenchman rivers (Hogue 2015:75-76). One prominent trader was Francois Janeaux who established the small trading post of Fort T.J. Turney where other Métis *hivernants* had built a settlement nearby (Foster 2016; Hogue 2015:75-76).

LeStanc visited the small settlement along the White River in January 1872 where he additionally reported that there were 20 families of *hivernants* living in the Cypress Hills (Correspondence from Jean-Marie LeStanc to Alexandre Taché, 15 January 1872, T9863-9866, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Centre du Patrimoine, Winnipeg). This is difficult to ascertain if this was a reference to those who were living at the site alongside Cowie and the other freemen or if they were a different group altogether. In general, the demographic trends of Métis *hivernants* at Wood Mountain and White River showed the vast majority remaining at these places until at least 1874 (Hamilton 2007:4-29). This analysis seems to be consistent with a description by LeStanc in March 1873 when he notes that the Wood Mountain and Whitemud river settlements were bolstered by even more families arriving from the east (Correspondence from Jean-Marie LeStanc to Alexandre Taché, 30 March 1873, T11789-11792, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Centre du Patrimoine, Winnipeg).

A common narrative of the Chimney Coulee site describes 60 families moving to site in 1873 and that they called the place Chapel Coulee (H.S. Jones - Letter re East End detachment in

the 1890s. 1955, M9460-125, Wood Family Fonds, Glenbow Achieves, Calgary). However, this narrative seems inconsistent with other lines of evidence. Other researchers have identified this as a likely error which confuses the location of Chimney Coulee with one of the settlements at Wood Mountain which was called Coulee Chappelle which received a large influx of new families in 1873 (Ens 1996:79; Brandon 2000; Brandon 1995; Brandon 1994; McCullough 1990:256-257). What is clear though is that the population of these settlements were probably reaching their capacity by 1873 while the bison were also closer to the Cypress Hills by then. It appears as though the hills were still regarded as unsafe due to the Blackfeet and the newly arrived American whiskey traders. This latter group arrived by 1872 and posed a unique threat to the area.

3.3.4 Conflict in the Hills

By 1873, the Cypress Hills had become an even more dangerous place to venture. An Anglo-Métis freeman and ex-HBC employee, Edward MacKay, was aware the situation among his kin and the problems that the American whiskey traders posed to the area. From Fort Qu'Appelle, he gave a detailed and prophetic report of the Cypress Hills situation at the time:

> *"The whole country and people are in a restless state the laws against liquor and poison are utterly ignored……*
>
> *The state of matter on the plains is most critical and dangerous and demands immediate attention of the Govt……..*

The Metis, British, and American subjects are also making their living on the plains, and will confine to do so as long as the buffalo exists on the plains on this side along the frontier, the American Metis are most numerous, and wish to rule the others. The Sioux also wish to hunt north of the line, and are gradually pushing themselves forward into the Cree hunting grounds. There is understood to be an alliance defensive and offensive between the Tetons [Sioux] and the Metis. The Crees and Salteaux are highly displeased with the Metis and Sioux for hunting on their grounds, and only allow them because they are afraid of them and unable to drive them off.....

American traders from Benton, and the Missouri have established five posts in British Territory at Cypress Hills where they trade in liquors poison and other contraband goods. At one of their posts alone they have bought 3000 of the best quality of buffalo robes from Indians and halfbreeds who had the Americans not been there with liquor, would have sold them to british traders. The total number of robes from our territory bought by American smugglers is variably estimated from 6000 to 10,000 robes and said to have crossed the line this year....."

Urquhart to McKeagney. Submits report given by (Edward) McKay re Northwest Territories, 29 May 1873, Alexander Morris Fonds, M134, Item 165, P5278/5, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Indeed, MacKay was entirely correct with his assessment regarding the dire situation at hand. Less than two weeks after his report, the Cypress Hills massacre occurred when a small group of American wolfers and whiskey traders killed a couple dozen Assiniboine men, women, and children. It took several months for the news to reach Ottawa and the public. The outrage that resulted demanded an organized response from the federal government to this gruesome act and sovereignty crisis (Hogue 2015:83-85; Clipperton 2015).

The immediate result of the Cypress Hills massacre was the establishment of the Northwest Mounted Police in late 1873. They were to be deployed and travel across the plains the following year where they would eventually arrive, in October 1874, at their destination of the American operated Fort Whoop-up in what is now Lethbridge, Alberta (Clipperton 2015). After being eventually tracked down, the trial of the Americans responsible for the massacre saw many Assinboine and Métis witnesses testify. From their accounts, the survivors fled to the various Métis hunting camps dispersed throughout the hills at the time (Clipperton 2015). By these accounts, it seems as though these camps were described as tents and many of Métis claimed to be still residing at either Wood Mountain or White River.

3.3.5 Battle for the Cypress Hills and the Big Camp

It was in 1874 that many Métis *hivernant* families from Wood Mountain and White River would relocate to the Cypress Hills despite the fears and uncertainly that echoed in the landscape. Much of what we know from the movements of these groups come from the accounts of the boundary commission which traveled through the area that year. The international boundary commission had been formed by the Canadian and American governments in 1872 to demarcate the 49th

parallel (Hogue 2015:92-93). This posed an issue for the Métis *hivernants* who were living and trading on both sides of the border as American enforcement of the boundary had increased in the upper Missouri including their tributaries. Some *hivernant* traders near the White River settlement had been raided by American law enforcement in 1871 and had their goods stolen (Hogue 2015:77-78). Since then, traveling along the cart trails between Wood Mountain and Fort Benton had become a slightly more precarious venture for any Métis who wished to sell their goods across the line. Between American law enforcement and the raiding threats posed by other groups, safety for one's life and cargo were much less certain than it had been just a few years prior. Any fears that the White River settlement had were reconfirmed when the *hivernant* residents were again raided in May 1874. Thousands of dollars' worth of goods were seized by American law enforcement on account of illegally trading in the United States (Hogue 2015:82-83). For many this seems to have been the final straw. Foster (2006:59-89) describes the stories of some Métis families who had been located first at Wood Mountain and then Milk River/White River area who were forced after 1873 and 1874 to relocate into the Cypress Hills and then eventually settled in Montana some years later. It appears the White River Métis temporarily relocated to be with their Wood Mountain kin and were likely among the most eager to make the Cypress Hills their new home.

To add to this dilemma, many of the large bison herds had completely left the Wood Mountain area by 1874 and had relocated much further southwest in the area north of the Milk River and south of the boundary (Hogue 2015:64; Ens 1996:114-120). With the Wood Mountain population growing to unsustainable levels, the Métis needed to make the move to the Cypress Hills. The hills provided a proximity to the bison herds, plentiful wooded valleys, fresh water,

and many alternative game resources. When the boundary commission arrived in Wood Mountain, Dawson noted that:

> *"Woody Mt. has probably seen its palmy days. Buffalo & indians already too far west. Most of families speak of wintering next at Cypress Hills."*
>
> George Mercer Dawson Diaries, June 22, 1874, George Mercer Dawson Fonds, Glenbow Archive, Calgary

As mentioned, MacKay had reported that a local group of Teton Sioux had made a tenable defensive and offensive alliance with the Métis in this part of the county by early 1873. It appears this alliance came into full effect in late June or early July 1874. Corroborated by several different accounts, a so-called battle for the Cypress Hills occurred during this time between the Teton Sioux and Métis on one side, and a group of Piegan Blackfoot on the other. Occurring in the middle of the Cypress Hills, this skirmish resulted with the Blackfeet departing from the hills and, at least in the eyes of the victors, ceding control of the area.

The large Métis brigade who had likely been engaged in the battle was a group comprised of many Wood Mountain and former White River residents who were collectively referred to as the "Big Camp." Much of this is reported in the personal journal of George Mercer Dawson when he was accompanying the Canadian Boundary Commission in 1873 and 1874. It was during June 1874 that they reached Wood Mountain and heard of the summer brigade comprised of Wood Mountain and White River Métis. According to Dawson this group was called the "Big Camp" which had several hundred participants including Oblate Father Lestanc who had still

been wintering with the Métis at Wood Mountain. It was when Dawson arrived at Wood Mountain, that he first mentioned some of these details:

> *"Told that all half breeds of this region now at "big camp" which situated northward of Cypress Hills. Engaged in hunting buffalo. They club together for protection & as it were a tribe of themselves. As many as 100 to 200 families congregated there now."*
>
> George Mercer Dawson Diaries, June 25, 1874, George Mercer Dawson Fonds, Glenbow Archive, Calgary

It was in the following month that Dawson and the boundary commission crew would arrive at the "Big Camp" at a lake along the border between the Milk River and the West Fork. Having stayed with the camp for a couple of days, he describes the Métis camp in detail noting around 200 tipis, 2000 horses, and many Red River carts. He also describes how a priest was among them and that during the winter they all reside in cabins at Wood Mountain and White River. He also notes that:

> *"They have just held a council & decided to go N. to the Cypress Hills, scouts having reported plenty buffalo in that direction. They have not come from the hills more than a week or two & were then engaged in an indian fight. They took sides with the [Teton] Sioux against the Blackfeet & drove the latter of killing 8 or 9 of them. It would appear however that the Sioux did the hardest part of the fighting."*

George Mercer Dawson Diaries, June 19, 1874, George Mercer Dawson Fonds, Glenbow Archive, Calgary

The priest that Dawson mentions to have been with the group was none other than Oblate Father LeStanc who had joined the brigade for the summer hunt into the Cypress Hills. It was during the summer months after gaining control over the hills that the "Big Camp" began setting up their new settlements in the centre of the hills. In LeStanc's personal memoirs he recalled:

> *"It was at the beginning of August 1874 that I received my obedience for St. Albert and I left the Montagne de Cypres where the big Metis camp was located."*
>
> *"I left Cypres Mountain around August 19, 1874. I went to Qu'appelle. About half way between the Cypres Mountain and Qu'Appelle, I met the first detachment of the Mounted Police who sold in the country and who went to jounce the town of Macleod. I went to greet the officers at Col. French and Col. Macleod. I dined with them and gave them some information."*

Lestanc, Joeseph-Jean-Marie omi: Souvenirs de 1860 à 1880, 1910, PR1971.0220/6873, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Lacombe Canada fonds, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton

LeStanc was correct in his recollection of events. It was on August 21, 1874, when the NWMP, who had been slowly progressing west on their ill prepared "March West", encountered Lestanc

northwest of Wood Mountain. LeStanc met with the NWMP and relayed details of the country that lay west of them, but the news of the battle had already reached their ranks. It had only been eight days prior when the NWMP encountered a group of Teton Sioux who described the events of the skirmish and, from their account, they were attacked by the Blackfeet while in the Cypress hills (Bagley, Fredrick Augustus, Diary (copy) of Fredrick Augustus Bagley, 1874, M44, Fred Bagley Fonds, Glenbow Museum Archive, Calgary).

It is from this perspective that we can surmise that the Métis brigade had honoured their alliance with the Teton Sioux to defend them in this battle. From this event, it seems the Métis finally saw the opportunity to make permanent claims of residence within the Cypress Hills by the end of the July 1874. Settlement was in full swing by August, as many traveled back to begin transporting their wares while many others probably stayed behind to guard their new claims in the hills. This news spread far and wide through the Métis kin networks, as Norbert Welsh of Prairie Ronde and many other families moved south and established the Four Mile Coulee before the end of the year (Weekes 1945:150-157). On his return trip from the Rocky Mountains in early September, Dawson and crew encountered a brigade of Métis, likely kin of the "Big Camp", with all their possessions traveling westwards from Wood Mountain (George Mercer Dawson Diaries, September 10, 1874, George Mercer Dawson Fonds, Glenbow Archive, Calgary).

The Cypress Hills were a desirable location but posed a difficult challenge for the residents of Wood Mountain and elsewhere in the early 1870s. After some exploratory winter residency alongside Cowie during the winter of 1871 and 1872, they continued to test the hills. While the Americans whiskey traders caused trouble and threatened stability, the Métis and their

vast networks of kin gathered for safety and made a concentrated effort to assert their claim in the hills. The skirmish that occurred in the summer of 1874, gave the Métis and their allies full control to set down new roots and opportunities in the face of a rapidly changing landscape.

Figure 3.1 Métis Hunters & Traders on the Plains.

Members of the "Big Camp" south of the Cypress Hills in 1874.

Note the floral pattern on satchel. Photo by the British North American Boundary Commission (PAM – P8167/63).

3.4 Occupation Period II – Métis *Hivernants* at the Foot of the Mountain

3.4.1 Mass Métis Settlement of the Cypress Hills

The dynamics of the Cypress Hills had changed rapidly in just one year. By the summer of 1874 the Métis had asserted themselves and had begun staking a claim along the familiar coulees that they had already hunted in and known well. The various kinship networks and families of Wood Mountain and White River began making large and semi-permanent settlements in the wooded

valleys, ravines, and coulees of the Cypress Hills. The flow of *hivernants* settlers were not limited to just these locations as the increase of new residents to the hills did not slow for the rest of the year. Word spread among the entire Métis kinscape of the northwest. Norbert Welsh and a large group of his kin moved down from Round Prairie in late 1874 and built themselves a community in the Four Mile Coulee (Weekes 1945:150-153). The Métis were transforming the hills into a place that would be their own.

New *hivernant* settlements were started in the many places of previous encampments. The Métis population increased in all corners of the Cypress Hills by 1874 and they all began reaping the bountiful harvest of winter robes immediately. Early in the spring of 1875, in Fort Benton it was reported that a "large group of half-breeds brought their furs" (The Benton Record. Benton, M.T., 19 June 1875, page 3. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress). The *hivernant* settlements of the Cypress Hills attracted the attention of the NWMP who had been temporarily set up in the buildings of the old Fort Whoop-Up. Arriving so late in the year in 1874, they were planning on building their fort near the location of the massacre that had occurred nearly two years prior. No doubt the abundance of Métis living in the hills was also an attractive benefit for moving into the area as they could be a source of trade, transportation, scouts, and translators. In May 1875 the Helena Newspaper reported that:

> *"About the first of June a troop of fifty men, of the Northwestern Mounted Police, under the command of Major Walsh, will move from Fort Macleod to Cypress Hills, where there is a settlement of half-breeds numbering about 80 houses. A permanent post will be established and built, and will probably be named after the commanding officer. The Cypress Hills is what is considered*

neutral ground by the Indians, and it is a favorite hunting, fighting and trading ground."

The Helena independent. (Helena, Mont.), 6 May 1875, page 4

Not only for being the site of the massacre and having an abundance of Métis labour available to them but the physical environment also provided a highly desirable place for settlement. Walsh noted in his report to Ottawa that:

"Half-Breeds from Manitoba that have been about the [Cypress] Mountain for years, say that the soil and climate are like the Red River Country"

Asst. Comm. J.F. MacLeod reports building of post at Cypress Hills by Inspector J.M. Walsh, August 28, 1875, RG18-A-1, Volume number: 7, File number: 345-75, Royal Canadian Mounted Police fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

The building of Fort Walsh commenced in June 1875 and relied heavily on Métis labour. The Métis contribution to the creation, growth, and success of Fort Walsh cannot be understated. The success from this venture was pivotal into attracting more to the area. By the end of the year even more people from around the prairies found themselves setting in the hills.

"Over fifty houses <u>have recently been built</u> in the immediate vicinity of Fort Walsh, and about six miles east about fifty more buildings have been put up, all of which are occupied by Scotch and French half-breeds."

The Benton Record. Benton, M.T., 20 November 1875, page 2

From the time it was built, the Fort Walsh townsite and the NWMP relied on both men and women from the Métis settlements among the hills. Labourers, traders, freighters, translators, scouts, lumberjacks, seamstresses, wives, and companions, the story of Fort Walsh is a story of the Cypress Hills Métis. MacLeod would later note that the in the late 1870s that all of society was "dependent on the half-breeds" (Letter from Fort Walsh, 28 November 1879, CA ACU GBA F1212, James F. Macleod family fonds, Glenbow Archives, Calgary)

3.4.2 The Chimney Coulee site as the Foot of the Mountain Settlement

All Cypress hills settlements continued to prosper in the couple of years after 1875. Many small independent traders found their place among the settlements. One trader that returned to the old Chimney Coulee wintering settlement was Henry Jordan, a friend of Isaac Cowie, who then traded on behalf of I.G. Baker & Co. (Cowie 1913:256). It was during this time that many Indigenous peoples found themselves in the hills as well to take part in the prosperity. The abundance of bison in the area and the mild winters of 1875/1876 and 1876/1877 only assisted in maintaining a peaceful and prosperous existence in the hills among all the diverse peoples (Benton Weekly Record; Saturday, February 26, 1876, pg. 2). For the Métis, the *hivernant* settlements had everything they needed except for the services from the church.

Since Oblate Father LeStanc was recalled to Edmonton mid-1874, the majority of Métis who had moved into the Cypress hills were without any spiritual guidance. To stem the nomadic lifestyle of the *hivernant*s, Father Taché, who was the leader of the Oblate order, issued a ban on any more Oblate Fathers from living or visiting any newly formed settlements (Huel 2003:152-

153). Prior to this, there had been a strong drive by the oblate order to try and convince the Métis to reject their nomadic ways and adopt a settled and agricultural lifestyle. This was just another attempt at doing just that. Ultimately, Father Decorby was selected as the replacement for Father Lestanc to service the already established settlements west of Lebret, provided he did not visit any of the new settlements. However, this ban would not last as the situation had rapidly become untenable as the Cypress hills were too populated with new Métis residents and their families who needed DeCorby's services. In early 1876, after having visited the settlements of White River and along the Milk River, DeCorby wrote to Taché in hopes he would reverse this decision. Likely embellishing the dire nature of the situation, he wrote:

> *"They did not celebrate Easter because they did not want to do it and by my Part I did not pressure them Because they always get me in trouble when they come. Others, I would like to say, still have a religious background and know that they have to endure one week when they deserved it and were satisfied, and do not desire more than a priest next winter. They fact is they need it. You the Métis, my Lord, and you know what they are capable of when reunited in large numbers in ties of plenty, outside all control, and without the practice of religion. The children that descended into ignorance and barbarism in whose fathers the first missionaries had high hopes. I have, under my eyes, a status of the established population of three or four thousand within 3 or 4 miles of the Fort of the Mounted Police. Since the paper that was handed to me by Mr. Farland, doctor of the Canadian government, and which is only a copy of the government survey. There would have been, this winter, 133 Métis families and*

121 families of savages around the fort; next winter there will probably be as many, if not more. There are still many small wintering sites of six, seven, eight, families spread through the mountain which I do not think are included in the current census.

I believe Cypress Mountain will be the rallying place of all wintering sites in the area. It is in the middle of the prairie. The Americans have established multiple stores well stocked with everything they need to attract hunters and have access to their needs and their amenities, the government has a barracks incited to make a central place in our prairies for some time. I have said for some time because it will surely not be for a long time. To see the dinner plate always shrinking, to see the Métis always numerous and the savages of all sorts and of all languages that since the conclusion of the peace appear tenacious for every scrap, we cannot doubt the coming of the disappearance of the buffalo in this area. What will be for the Métis and the savages, the character of this disappearance I do not know – or to say that the true vision is not nice to see, so I close my eyes to save them from my sight.

Meanwhile, should they, is there no way to stop the wintering and abandon such a large population without the security of religion. Your answer will be the judge… I promised them I should speak to your grandeur about it in order to ask for a response and transmit to them. If the former was favourable, they would assign them a place where they could gather together and to erect a provisional chapel and we would take the means to offer them a school to

avoid the inconvenience, for us and them, of sending their children to the school of a few protestant ministers like the mayor of the government wants to do."

Correspondence from Jules DeCorby to Alexandre Taché, 20 May 1876, T17481-T17492, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Centre du Patrimoine, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

DeCorby was likely exaggerating some claims in his letter to Taché specifically to highlight the direness of the situation and claiming that the Métis were to fall to Protestantism or savagery. Regardless, his report was effective in persuading Taché to reverse his ban and allow for DeCorby to prepare his visits to the settlements among the hills. It was the following autumn that DeCorby departed from Fort Qu'Appelle to an *hivernant* settlement that, based on the geographical description, appears to have been the Chimney Coulee site. In mid-1877, he described his winter among the Métis:

"There were many hunting groups in the hills. In the groups there were 5 to 50 families. We call the wintering place a place where hunters hunt for the winter. The groups find sheltered places, within a week they build houses which they will abandon in the spring. The first group village I came upon was made up of 50 families. They offered to build me a little house and a small church 40 feet long. From this little church I visited other groups of winter residents, saying Mass, teaching school, catechism, singing and praying with my people.

Every evening I would go to take my meals with a good hunter who I call my cousin. I was well fed all through winter by the cause of the good hunters. I passed a beautiful winter amongst these good hunters. Most of the groups were but 3 days away. Once, for critical reasons I made it in less than 1 day and 2 nights. It is true that it was urgent that we had many horses and that they made good time. But we had good horses to get there. That is how I spent my winter without noticing it." June 3rd, 1877

(Blaise 2000:82-83)

There are several things about his description that are worth noting. His travel description across the hills to the other settlements is generally consistent with later accounts of travel between Fort Walsh and the Chimney Coulee site. Also, this appears to be the first place along the Cypress Hills he travels to from the east which would be consistent with its general location. Lastly, in a letter written later in the year, he describes how he departed from this site and moves to the Four Mile Coulee settlement where they built him a different chapel. The naming convention for this location is also worth discussing as he refers to it as "a place where hunters hunt in the winter". This is interesting as it echoes the general function from the perspective of earlier Wood Mountain descriptions where the hunters would travel west to the edge of the hills to hunt. The winter when Isaac Cowie and his group were at the site was another snapshot of how some Wood Mountain hunters and traders would frequent this area. However, this naming convention would clearly change around the same time it grew into an established *hivernant* settlement. The name "Foot of the Mountain" (and less commonly "Tail of the Mountain") became widely used

in the historical records of the time. The first such mention was in the Fort Benton newspaper by their Cypress Hills correspondent:

> *"The half-breeds are not camped in great numbers in this vicinity this winter. Their camping places being at the head of the mountain where quite a settlement is already established. At the foot of the mountain another winter settlement is started."*

Benton Weekly Record, November 10, 1876, pg. 3

It is uncertain from the above description if these areas were already well established or not. It could be that the Four Mile Coulee and those already in the area of Fort Walsh comprised of most Métis families which left other areas open for *hivernant* families. It could be that places like the "Head" and "Foot" of the mountain already had established settlements and, from a Fort Benton perspective, the knowledge of such places was outdated, or they were too small to be worth mentioning previously. The main point to take away is the general consistent naming convention. Also, having these *hivernant* settlements stretched out among the wooded coulees was by design as the limited wood and game resources were valuable for all Métis. Like the vast array of Métis kinship groups, these settlements were connected but also waypoints between longer networks that they could rely on. While Benton and other places west and south of the Cypress hills received an increase in robes and trade, the Métis connections to Red River remained intact. As noted by the Benton newspaper:

> *"The half-breeds at the "Head" are preparing to make a move for the fort and the "Tail", preparatory to starting for the Red River settlement."*

This name seems to persist in various documents until after the NWMP established their outpost in 1877. They originally refer to as "Foot of the Mountain" and then later as the "East End post" when more permanent NWMP buildings are established after 1877. For a time, it seems as though the name becomes interchangeable in documents until the name "East End post" becomes preferably used after 1879. One such example that highlights this interchangeability is a story from the diary of William Parker in May 1878 and the novelistic version of the same events by Dempsey (Parker, William, photocopy of typescript of diary, 1878, M-9836-124, William Parker fonds, Glenbow Archives, Calgary; Dempsey 1973). The name "East End" eventually became the namesake for the town of Eastend, Saskatchewan.

3.4.3 Métis Occupants of the Site

The "Foot of the Mountain" had likely already reached its peak around the same time the NWMP established an outpost in late 1877. When sent to survey the area, Clarke reported in his journal in April 1877 that the Métis were leaving for the summer noting "over 400 people in total with carts and doges. Will return in the fall." (Clarke, S.J. Clarke's Handwritten Diaries 1876-1886., 1886, M229, Simon J. Clarke fonds, Glenbow Archives, Calgary). All the residents did return in the fall alongside DeCorby, who had passed the previous winter at the "Foot of the Mountain". He returned to his chapel-house at the settlement but after a month was brought to live at the Four Mile Coulee (Weekes 1945:167-168). Perhaps, the most important description of the "Foot

of the Mountain" and other Métis settlements in the Cypress Hills came from one letter written by DeCorby in 1877:

> *Your grace, a few news from Cypress Hills might please you. I will get to work to give you some. It is late nevertheless, nearing midnight. But I must write tonight. If I do not want to delay my letter by 15 days or maybe a month. Here your Grace, I at least have the consolation of never being alone. Loafers, drunks, school children or catechism children, my house is never empty. After having dismissed a gang of youth who meet here every night to learn to read and sing in Cree, I am now alone. I had 100 troubles getting rid of 2 or 3 intruders who were said, to be glued, to the seats of the house. I mention these small details only to solicit in advance your indulgence if my letter presses it.*
>
> *Although many of our Métis have gone to settle on the other side of the international lines, terrified by the new law regulating the buffalo hunt, Cypress Hills is not entirely abandoned. On the contrary, it has never had such a large population. At the foot of the hill, that is south-east, is found a settlement numbering approximately 75 families, there is a chapel and a schoolhouse functioning well enough under the direction of a Miss Marion, Marie-Rose. After the length of one month in that place, the little Priest went to what I would call the center of the settlements. Since it is found between the settlements of the head and tail of the Hills at 4 or 5 miles from Fort Walsh. I have not taken the census yet, but I was told there were 63 homes. My people*

had started and nearly abandoned the house-chapel of 58 feet long by 22 feet wide….

A dozen soldiers from Fort Walsh come to Mass on Sunday. The Métis filled the church to the brim today and nearly every other day of the week, morning and night. At the head of the Hills, that is on the west, is yet another settlement of forty families, I will not be able to visit them till after the New Year. If to those three main groups you add another 20 isolated families, lost here and there, you will have an idea, Your Grace, of the number of your children living here… (December 12, 1877)

(Blaise 2000:96)

This letter is of vital importance in understanding and connecting the many histories and narratives of the Cypress Hills Métis. Firstly, it corroborates his previous letter as he returns to the place where they built him the first chapel (40 feet in length). It also corroborates Norbert Welsh's narrative where he describes traveling from the Four Mile Coulee settlement to the east end of the Cypress Hills in the winter to retrieve a priest who was residing there. He also describes that they then built a large house-chapel for the priest that was 60 feet by 30 feet in dimensions (Weekes 1945:167-172). DeCorby documents the same journey and a similar sized house-chapel that was built for him in the Four Mile Coulee settlement at 58 feet by 22 feet. Importantly, this is dissimilar to the 40 foot chapel he described that was built for him the previous winter at the Foot of the Mountain which he refers to as being occupied and led by a Métis girl, Marie Rose Marion. She is of particular importance in this letter because it highlights

this important role that she played in the community. It was no doubt a large honour to take over the religious and educational services at the settlement and shows an important cultural role young women had in *hivernant* society. Finally, we know that she was the daughter of Edouard Marion and Eliza McDougall, that she was 19 years old at the time of the letter (Morin 1996:19), and she was part of the greater Marion-Oulette brigade who, Antoine Ouellette and his kin, were at the same site when Isaac Cowie and company were there in the winter of 1871-1872 (Cowie 1913:433-434). It was more than likely that this area was an important hunting and wintering site for them for many years. Interestingly, the winter of 1877-1878 was likely the last one at the Foot of the Mountain as most of the brigade moved near the Fort Belknap settlement in late 1878 where they remain for a few years trading with the Marion family and even hosting Louis Riel (Foster 2006:93-99). It was during this time that Marie Rose rejected Riel's affection and eventually married a trader named Salomon Venne where they then moved to North Dakota and then Estevan, Saskatchewan in the early 20th-century (Morin 1996:19-22; Campbell and Flanagan 2019:2-12).

In short, the Marion and Ouelette families would follow the trend of many of their American aligned kin and permanently move away from the Cypress Hills in mid-1878. The real scarcity of the dwindling bison herds was felt by many for years but by 1878 the herds were mainly found south of the border along the Milk River in Montana Territory. Virtually all the men among the Métis settlements signed the Cypress Hills petition in 1878 which was a last-ditch effort to preserve the bison and create a land base for the Métis with a large strip of land in southwestern Manitoba including the Turtle Mountain area. Many from the Marion/Ouelette

brigade would sign another petition in 1880 started by Louis Riel in Montana Territory requesting for the establishment of a Métis reserve (Hogue 2015).

The dire situation in the Cypress Hills continued for the Métis families who stayed. By all accounts, the winter of 1878-1879 was difficult as prairie fires seem to have kept much of the remaining bison herds south of the hills.

> *"The buffalo are very scarce and it is feared the Indians will have a hard winter. The typhoid fever has quite disappeared. Tremendous fires have raged around this vicinity during the past week; once it was feared it would get into the pines near the Fort and do some damage."*
>
> New Northwest Newspaper; December 6, 1878, pg. 2

Ultimately, this large influx of Canadian Métis would eventually lead to their arrest in the summer of 1879 by the American army. With many of their possessions seized they would be forced to choose where they were to be relocated permanently (Foster 2006). For the Canadian aligned Métis who remained in the Cypress Hills, they would continue to live in the settlements of Four Mile Coulee and Foot of the Mountain for a couple more years.

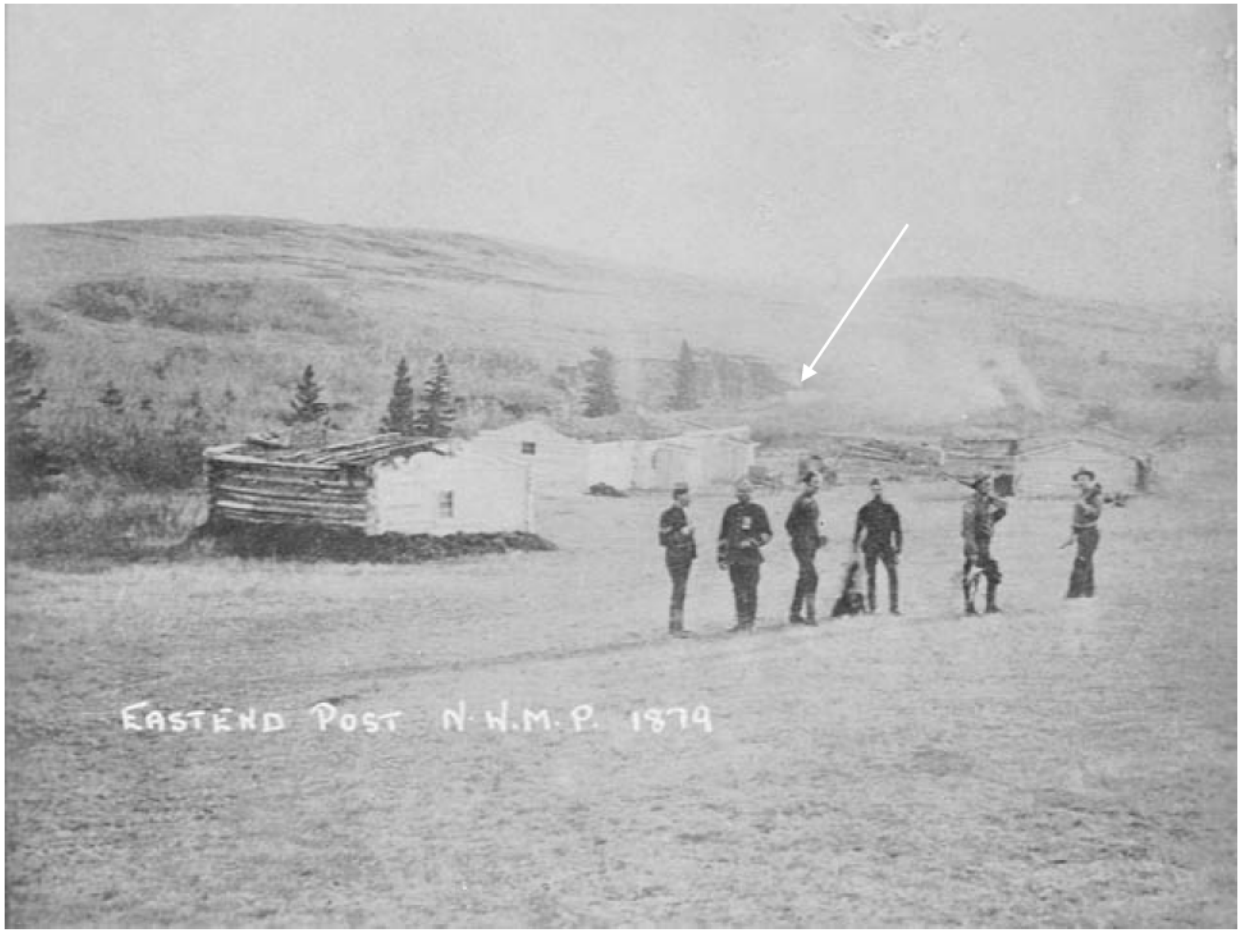

Figure 3.2 NWMP buildings at Chimney Coulee.

Note the smoke coming from one building in the background which could be a Métis hivernant *cabin (arrow). This photo is often misattributed as being taken by George Anderton in 1879. It was originally taken by William E. Hook in late autumn of 1878 when he visited the East End Post. (George Kush, personal communication.)*

Figure 3.3 Various NWMP and Métis posing at the Chimney Coulee.

The building in the background appears to be the same one with two covered entrances seen in Figure 2.1. Photo taken by William E. Hook in late autumn of 1878. (George Kush personal communication.)

3.5 Occupation Period III – Laframboise's Coulee

The kinship ties among the Métis *hivernants* in the Cypress Hills were quite strong even while facing an uncertain future. While spread out among the various coulees and settlements, many families still worked hard to share the success of their labours and maintain a strong connection

between family. The more American aligned Métis found themselves moving away from the site while the ones with stronger Canadian ties remained. One such example of this were the kinship ties between the Trottier and LaFramboise families which were dispersed in the Four Mile Coulee and Foot of the Mountain settlements, respectively.

The LaFramboise family remained at the Foot of the Mountain settlement as some of the last remaining Métis living at the site. It was late in the year in 1878 when the American photographer William E. Hook arrived at the East End Post and photographed the site (George Kush personal communication). One of these photos (Figure 3.4) is a photo of the Métis families who are still living at the site in late 1878. Based on the 1881 census and the descriptions by Norbert Welsh regarding the residents of the Four Mile Coulee, it is likely that at least the women in the photo are part of the LaFramboise family (Wutzke 2009:table A1). Apart from the three NWMP members, several of the men were likely part of the Laframboise family while others were the various traders and freighters that remained at the site.

Figure 3.4 Métis at Chimney Coulee.

Taken by William E. Hook during his visit of the East End Post in late autumn 1878. Photo courtesy of Donny White.

There is always a possibility that these women are not the Laframboise women but there is a strong likelihood that they are based on supporting and corroborating evidence. John and Margurite Laframboise were well-known residents of Maple Creek who had always recounted

living at the site during that time (Eastend History Society 1984) and their nephew Pete Laframboise was born on the site in 1882.

With the presence of Métis traders at the site as late as 1881 (Cox. W. H., "Diary of a Mountie 1880-1885" photocopy of article published in Lethbridge Herald, July 11, 1935, M-9836-84, Jack F. Dunn collection, Glenbow Archives, Calgary), one can only assume that the area around the site was still a valuable place to continue trading. Either among the Sioux related to Sitting Bull's camps or among the NWMP related to the Wood Mountain-Fort Walsh route, trade remained important in the area as hunting, fishing, and other infrequent jobs were available. As for hunting, the Laframboise men were listed as "Chassier", French for hunters, on the 1881 census. One government eyewitness who visited the East End post on October 31/1879 saw:

> *"Some half breeds living here have lots of meat fresh killed. & the Police told me there a lots of Buffalo north of the line..the Burnt Country will drive them West & North.."*

Dewdney, Edgar, Edgar Dewdney Diaries, 1879, M-320-1039, Glenbow Archives, Calgary

This seemed to have been among the last large incursions of bison into Canadian territory. The Wood Mountain post did report plenty of bison between them and the East End post on October 14th, 1880 (Wurtele, Jonathon Wolfred Luther, Diary, Wood Mountain 1880, M-9836-139, Jack F. Dunn collection, Glenbow Archives, Calgary) but for any large herds, this might have been the last. With bison not being guaranteed, one of the members of the NWMP recorded some of the other provisions they ate during the winter of 1879/1880. These included various local game

but also Grizzly Bear and many fish from the nearby lake (Fitzpatrick 1921). It was likely that these methods of acquiring local sources of food were learned from the Métis on the site.

The settlement probably saw its end in either the summer of 1882 or 1883. The railway line was built along the northside of the Cypress Hills and all reasons to continue living at the site ended. The NWMP stopped manning their outpost at East End and by 1883 both Fort Walsh and the post at Wood Mountain were dismantled with the former being relocated to the rapidly growing town of Maple Creek. The LaFramboise family relocated alongside their kin to the townsite by 1883 where they and their descendants took up ranching and farming while others would relocate to Montana in the decades to come.

A geological surveyor traveled down the Eastend Coulee in 1883 where, in his sketch book, label the buildings at the site to be "abandoned" (Notebook Bow and Red Deer rivers district, Alberta - Vicinity of Cypress Hills, 1883, RG45, Volume number: 162, Microfilm reel number: T-20199, File number: 3295, Geological Survey of Canada sous-fonds, Natural Resources Canada fonds, Ottawa, Ontario). However, the NWMP would temporarily re-occupy the site in 1887 and in 1888 they would move all the timbers from the cabins and other buildings to the current town of Eastend. One diary entry from their brief stay in 1887 would record two men named Laframboise traveling nearby the site on horseback (History and Reminiscences of Eastend and District. Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee 1905 – 1955 Commemorative Volume. 1955).

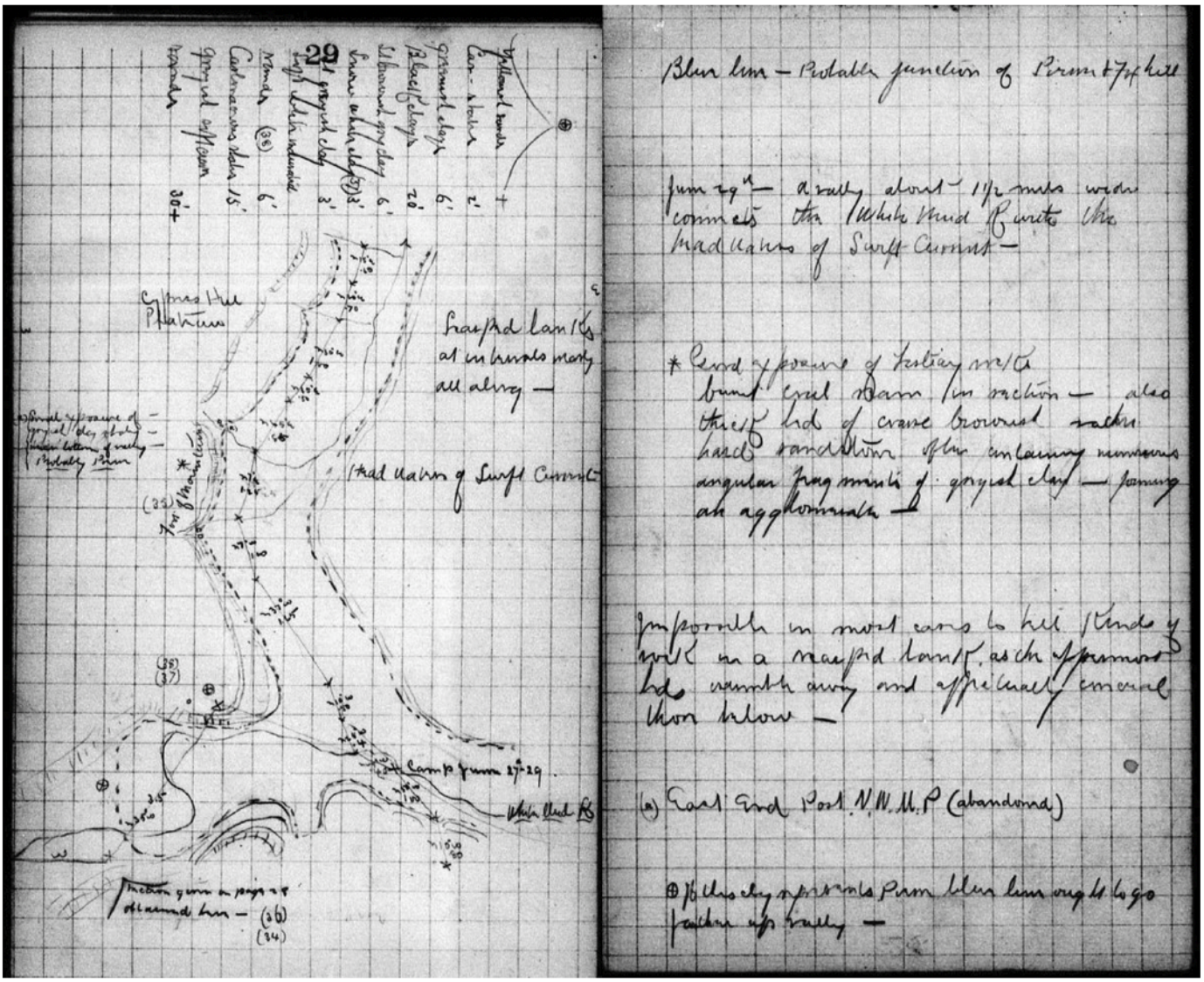

Figure 3.5 Geological Survey sketch of the entire Eastend Coulee in 1883.

At "Foot of the Mountain" it describes "East End Post NWMP (abandoned)". Note the buildings, possibly hivernant cabins, in more than one coulee. (Notebook Bow and Red Deer rivers district, Alberta - Vicinity of Cypress Hills, 1883, RG45, Volume number: 162, Microfilm reel number: T-20199, File number: 3295, Natural Resources Canada fonds, Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined a detailed history of the Métis in the Cypress Hills and at the Chimney Coulee site. The goal of this chapter was to outline some of the background and motivations of the Métis, how the site was formed, and why it was occupied when it was. Importantly, this history was given with an emphasis on the Métis experience by finding and corroborating the primary sources available. In general, *hivernant* history is fragmentary and difficult to compile in part due their culture of mobility, temporary settlement patterns, and a historic bias of primarily being written about by outsiders. An additional challenge encountered when researching this history was the ample numbers of secondary sources with repeatedly misleading and often incorrect information regarding this site.

Overall, this section argues that there were three general occupation periods at the site each being around four years in length. For the Métis, it was part of a natural movement westward following the bison herds which had been occurring for several decades. The eventual move into the hills that occurred during 1874 seems to have been following a skirmish in which the Métis and their allies won. As far as the author is aware, this event and much of the information presented in this chapter regarding the site itself has never been extensively written about prior to this study. While invaluable from a general site perspective, this history does little in giving an understanding of their lifestyle and day to day experiences. Only archaeological research and analysis can assist with uncovering the habitual daily patterns inside a *hivernant* space.

CHAPTER 4 OTHER *HIVERNANT* ARCHEOLOGY AND PAST RESEARCH ON THE CHIMNEY COULEE SITE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines a summary of Métis *hivernant* archaeology in western Canada and a description of the general results at each site. This chapter only outlines sites that have been explored archaeologically and yielded material remains, as some other areas of known *hivernant* settlement have been partially (formally or informally) surveyed but have not had research-based excavations on them (Hamilton and Nicholson 2000; Wonders 1983; Baldwin 1980). The focus on Métis *hivernant* research aims to focus on the unique culture and patterns of these spaces and can be considered different from other Métis sites such as river lot sites. In general, the consumption of trade goods, use of available materials, economic focus, use of space and place, and overall culture would be unique to an *hivernant* lifestyle as opposed to a more settled or farming lifestyle (Supernant 2018). In the case of river lots, there would also be a greater chance of mixed assemblages as many of these places later in time changed hands between Métis and non-Métis peoples. *Hivernant* households are unique for being distinctly Métis spaces located in isolated places for a temporary window of time. Despite the unique opportunities in this field of study, few sites have been investigated archaeologically (Supernant 2018). Methods in excavation and reporting have changed considerably since the first *hivernant* cabin was excavated over 50 years ago and directly comparing the results between these sites can be problematic. The following are the descriptions of six archaeology sites of a known *hivernant* context roughly contemporaneous of one another but across different geographic components.

Figure 4.1 Different angles of "The Last Chimney" at Chimney Coulee.

Pictured at right are Frank Bennett, H.A. Crawford, and H.S. Jones. Photographer unknown. (David James Wylie family fonds, accession numbers 0378.0044 and 0378.0045, Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre).

4.2 The Kajewski Cabins Site

The first Métis *hivernant* site to be surveyed and excavated is known as the Kajewski cabins site. It is situated in Alberta, on the western side of the Cypress Hills approximately 2.5 kms southwest of Elkwater Lake on a north facing slope. The site is named after the local landowners

who had known about the site for many years before it was first documented by Bonnichsen and his field crew during an initial survey of historical sites in 1966 (Bonnichsen 1967:2-7). They returned to the site and excavated one cabin area in 1967 which was retroactively designated as Cabin A (Bonnichsen 1967; Bonnichsen et al. 1973). Elliot, who was present in the 1966 and 1967 investigations, returned to the site in 1969 to survey more cabin locations at the site and excavate two more cabins referred to as Cabin B and Cabin E (Elliott 1971:1-7). The results of the 1969 excavations formed the basis of his master's thesis through the University of Calgary.

In total, approximately 90 m/sq for the area around Cabin B and approximately 60 m/sq was excavated for Cabin E (Elliott 1971:1, figures 4 and 5). The archaeological methods applied were standard for the time of excavation but would be considered outdated from a modern perspective. Elliott's study provided a valuable baseline study for *hivernant* history and archaeology which others have since built upon. Specifically, it was the first documentation of a Métis *hivernant* archaeological assemblage which reflects later research on *hivernant* sites. The report for Cabin A (Bonnichsen et al. 1973) has since been lost and the precise methods and results of the 1967 study can only be gleaned from secondary sources (Bonnichsen 1967; Doll et al. 1988). Bonnichsen (1967:5-6) was the first to propose that the lithics, stone scrappers specifically, found in association with the historical materials were used by Métis *hivernant*s. In general, the results from Cabin A seem to fit with the assemblage noted from Cabin B and E but with the finds reflecting a more domestic associated space (Bonnichsen 1967:4-6; Doll et al. 1988:216-219). The results from the Kajewski cabins research outlined an *hivernant* assemblage that included but not limited to various beads, ceramics, nails, various personal and religious items, various finds relating to household food stuffs and hunting, lithic tools, and various local

faunal remains which were dominated by butchered bison remains (Doll et al. 1988:216-219; Bonnichsen 1967:2-7; Elliott 1971:178-281). Based on the diagnostic analysis, the artifacts at the Kajewski cabins site provides a range of when they were occupied with a likely timeframe reflecting the mid-1870s, making the occupants contemporary to the Métis at the Chimney Coulee site (Bonnichsen 1967:5-7; Elliott 1971:47-51). The site can likely best be interpreted as part of the historic "Head of the Mountain" *hivernant* settlement briefly mentioned in Chapter 3. Over 50 years have passed since the Kajewski cabins site have been excavated and the material culture would benefit from a full re-analysis and re-interpretation of the archaeological finds.

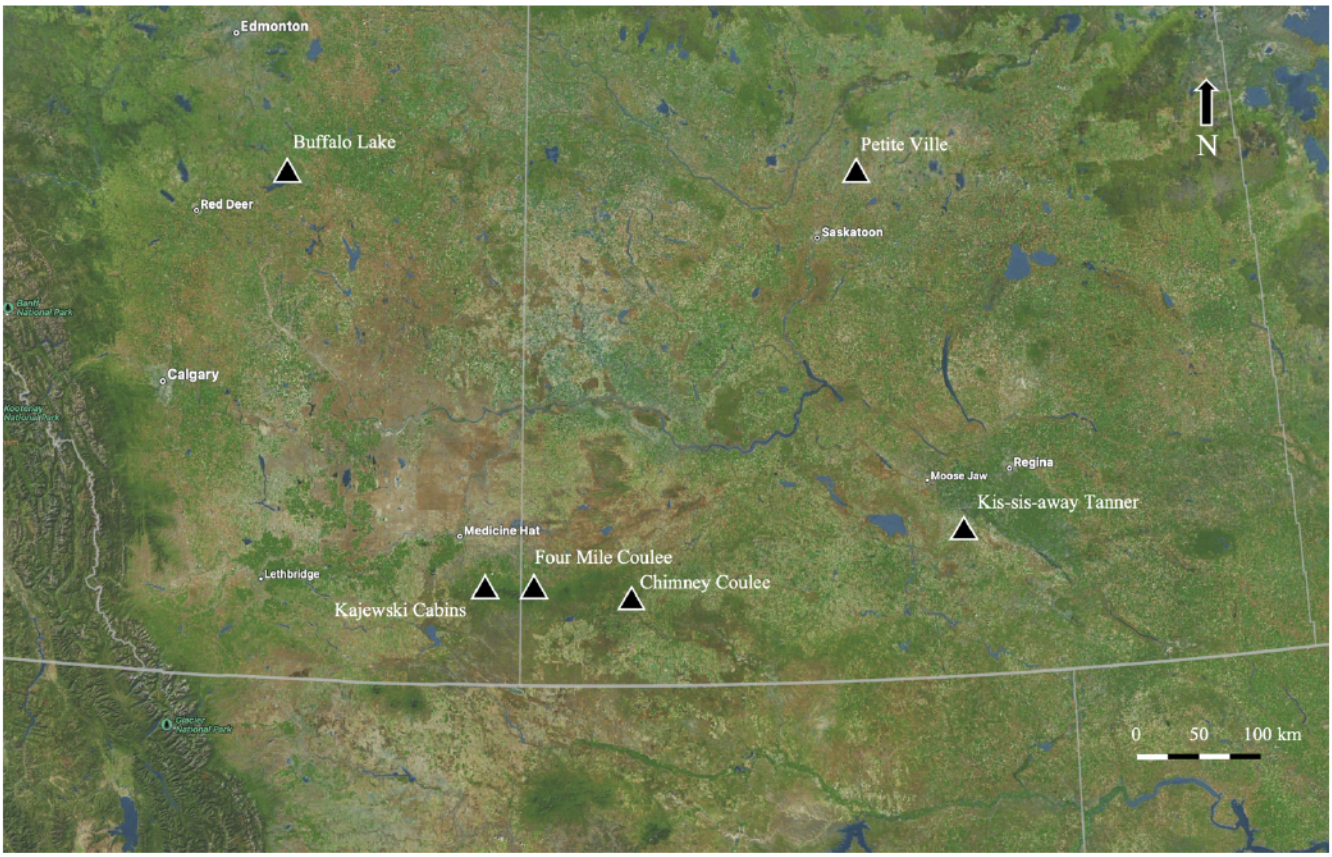

Figure 4.2 All* hivernant *sites mentioned in this chapter.

4.3 The Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement

The Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement is located northeast of the lake that bears its name in the Central Parkland natural region of Alberta. Among the largest lakes in the area, it attracted many Métis *hivernant* families during the 1870s and perhaps earlier. Known by local farmers for decades, the site was first formally recorded as a significant historical site in 1959 (Doll et al. 1988:3). Various excavations were led by different researchers between 1970 and 1979, including Kidd, Doll, Arnold, and Crone (Doll et al. 1988:3). Doll led most of the excavations in the 1970s and again in 1982 with various individuals from numerous academic backgrounds assisting with fieldwork and analysis with a resulting comprehensive study of this site (Doll et al. 1988:1-8).

In total, the survey of the site located 88 known cabin features with a possibility of almost double that number if all the nearby known wintering areas were included (Doll et al. 1988:211). Seven cabin features had surface finds collected from them with five cabins and associated features excavated (Doll et al. 1988:1-8, 203-209). Across the five excavated cabins (named Cabins 1-5) and their associated features, approximately 148 m/sq were excavated in total (Doll et al. 1988: figures 10, 35, 43, 53, 60b). Employing standard archaeological methods across all the cabins excavations, thousands of artifacts with a Métis *hivernant* association were found giving a comprehensive picture of their lifeways during the 1870s. Notably, when their standard ¼ inch sized mesh screens were deemed insufficient, large quantities of sediment were collected and removed from one feature in Cabin 3. This sediment was fine screened in the lab and recovered a total of 11 762 glass seed beads (Doll et al. 1988:106-115). This study was significant because it greatly expanded the Métis *hivernant* sample size and known assemblage.

All aspects of their historic lifeways were represented when all artifacts and analyses are considered.

Historically, this site was known and recorded by various individuals during the 1870s. Doll et al. (1988:9-77) provided a historic background but for an exceptionally detailed history of all known sources including Métis individuals who lived at the site see Beal et al (1987). Additional research on the site was led by Dr. Kisha Supernant in the form of an educational field school in 2014 (Coons 2017:3). A total of 6 m/sq were excavated by Cabin 3 with sediment removed and fine screened at the University of Alberta with several hundred artifacts of various artifact types found, providing insight into areas outside of the Cabin 3 (Supernant et al. 2023).

4.4 Four Mile Coulee

Four Mile Coulee on the western half of the Cypress Hills approximately seven kilometers northeast of the national historic site of Fort Walsh. The coulee is located on the forested north facing side of the hills and south of two nearby lakes, Coulee Lake and Adams Lake. The site had been well known among the residents of the Fort Walsh townsite and the knowledge of the site passed down among some older residents, landowners, and local historians in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.

The site was first formally surveyed and recorded by Burley and a field crew in 1986, they mapped out various depressions and features along a stretch of almost two kilometers up the coulee. A total of 8 well-defined mounds and over 100 depressions were recorded and grouped into 10 general clusters (Burley et al. 1992). Burley et al. (1992:76-77) note that there might be many more features that have yet to be found and recorded due to the dense vegetation. Some

archaeological testing was conducted on some features. A grid of several 50cm x 50cm test units were conducted and successful tests were expanded for a total of 5.75 m/sq excavated (Burley et al. 1992:77-80) Various artifacts reflecting a Métis *hivernant* assemblage were found such as beads, ceramics, bottle glass, personal and household wares, nails, faunal remains, and finds related to hunting (Burley et al. 1992:77-80). With this testing method, a proposed *hivernant* cabin was located based on the high concentration of artifacts and associated features (Burley et al. 1992:77-84).

Historically, the site was a well-known Métis *hivernant* settlement in the Cypress Hills and was primarily occupied during the mid-1870s. It was known and frequently visited by the residents of Fort Walsh and their townsite due to its proximity. The Métis residents of the site appear to have had close kinship ties to the Chimney Coulee site. Some of the history of the Four Mile Coulee Métis is touched upon several times in Chapter 3 of this study. There were still Métis living there until at least 1882 where some of the residents relocated to newly founded town of Maple Creek.

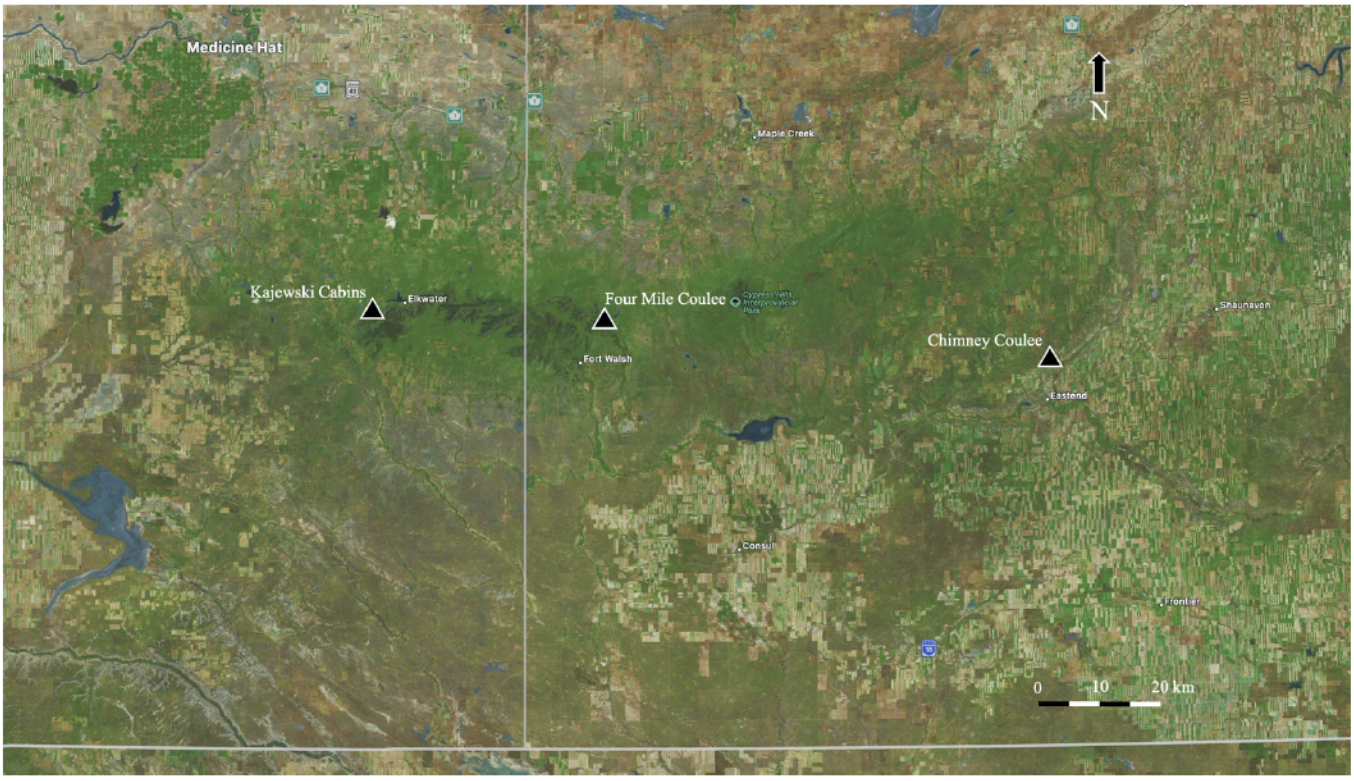

Figure 4.3 Known Cypress Hills hivernant sites.

4.5 Kis-sis-away Tanner's Camp

Kis-sis-away Tanner's Camp is in the Dirt Hills which are approximately 70 kilometers southwest of Regina and immediately east of Old Wives Lake. This area is a higher plateau of land along the prairie of south-central Saskatchewan that contains various creeks and coulees throughout the hills offering treed refuge to both bison herds and hunters alike.

The site was first recorded in 1971 then resurveyed and mapped by Burley and a field crew in 1986 where they recorded five clusters of over 20 features and depressions (Burley et al. 1992:62-67). Test units of various sizes were placed on a few features identified as being high potential. An area of approximately 5 m/sq was excavated in total with most of it conducted on

two depressions deemed to be the remains of a historic cabin; one of them containing several faunal remains and historic artifacts associated with a typical Métis *hivernant* assemblage (Burley et al. 1992:67-71).

The Kis-sis-away Tanner's Camp was named after a Métis trader known to have had a couple of cabins in the Dirt Hills during the late 1860s and early 1870s. The location of the abandoned cabins was noted as late as 1874 (Burley et al. 1992:61-62, 69-71). If the interpretations are correct, this site would be the earliest dated Métis *hivernant* site so far to be excavated.

4.6 Petite Ville

Petite Ville is located along a large bend of the south Saskatchewan River in the central Aspen Parkland ecoregion of Saskatchewan. The site is approximately 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Saskatoon and approximately 15 kilometers south of the historic Métis settlement of Batoche. The site is located on a well treed and low-lying corner terrace overlooking the major riverway and along historic routes used by Métis traders throughout the early to middle 19th-century (Weinbender 2003:21-25).

This historic site had been known by the local landowners but was brought to the attention of archaeologists working at the Batoche site during the mid-1970s. It was first formally surveyed and various features on the site were initially mapped in 1979 (Grainger and Ross 1980). The site was then resurveyed by Burley and a field crew in 1986 where a total of 177 features such as depressions, mounds, and traces of chimneys were located in 26 different clusters over approximately 80 hectares (Burley et al. 1992). Immediately after the resurvey, a

total of 15.5 m/sq was excavated in a series of trenches and test units surrounding a cluster of features associated with two adjacent chimney remains (Burley et al. 1992:50-52). The 1986 test excavations revealed what appeared to be the subsurface remains of a large cabin structure and a total of 196 artifacts alongside 690 faunal fragments which were recovered (Burley et al. 1992:55-60). The artifacts appeared to reflect a Métis *hivernant* assemblage which included beads, transferware ceramics, container glass, other household and personal wares, machine cut nails, and various faunal fragments (Burley et al. 1992:55-58). It was determined that the site was likely the historic Petite Ville *hivernant* settlement that was primarily occupied between 1870 and 1874 (Burley et al. 1992:58-60).

The cabin feature was then the focus of the University of Saskatchewan archaeology field school in 1998, 1999, and 2000. Led by Dr. Margaret Kennedy, the site would host several students and volunteers in the planned research excavation of 62 m/sq in and around the cabin feature (Weinbender 2003:46-48). A graduate student, Kimberley Weinbender, would eventually compile and analyze the results for her master's thesis (2003). With brush clearing assistance from the landowners, additional features and depressions were found and recorded in 1999 having been missed in previous surveys. Artifacts were recovered by quadrant during the 1999 and 2000 field schools (Weinbender 2003:46-50). The eventual size of the cabin was estimated to be at least 20 meters long and between 5.6 meters and 6.5 meters wide, differing in width at opposite ends (Weinbender 2003:70-71). Among the few studied cabins at previously investigated Métis *hivernant* sites, the Petite Ville cabin is unique for its size and number of rooms. The cabin likely had either two or three rooms with Weinbender (2003:71-75) arguing for the latter based on the few wooden remains of walls and room dividers. Previous excavations

used standard ¼ inch screen mesh but early in the 1998 excavation this was deemed to be ineffective for the small size of the artifacts being found. All sediment under the first layer from then on was fine screened with window screen to ensure that virtually all artifacts were being recovered (Weinbender 2003:47-48). In total, over 14 000 artifacts were recovered not including a roughly equal amount of faunal remains. Of the artifacts recovered, the majority were the typical coloured drawn glass seed beads found in large quantities at every other Métis *hivernant* sites to date. The assemblage generally matched the few other *hivernant* sites studied which included beads, transferware ceramics, personal and religious items, various forms of glass fragments, lead teabox foil, architectural materials, and various items related to hunting. Unique to the Petite Ville assemblage was the large quantities of straight pins, bent pins, and pin heads (Weinbender 2003:75-109). While straight pins were noted at other sites like Buffalo Lake, the quantity and their apparent manner of use was unique. Weinbender credits the use of window screen for the comprehensive recovery of artifacts and recommended that all future work on Métis *hivernant* spaces to build on the methods used at Petite Ville (Weinbender 2003:156-158).

Petite Ville is well documented as being the predecessor of the Métis agricultural village of Batoche. Both locations are along the south Saskatchewan River but less than 40 kilometers east from the north Saskatchewan River and, subsequently, Fort Carlton. The area between the two rivers, part of the Upper Saskatchewan District, were frequented by Métis hunters and traders for most of the 19th-century so it stands to reason that the area surrounding Petite Ville had been known to the Métis for decades prior its establishment (Weinbender 2003:16-17). Other wintering villages in the area had been in use in the 1860s but any documents pertaining to Petite Ville only begin to appear around 1870 (Weinbender 2003:23-24). The peak of Métis occupation

at the site appears to be the years between 1871 and 1874 when it was abandoned and their residents moved to Batoche. It was during those years, that the population is estimated to between 40 and 60 families of several hundred individuals. Winter bison hunting stopped being viable in the area after 1873 and the community mostly decided to adopt a more agriculturally based lifestyle and was the motivation for their relocation (Weinbender 2003:25-26).

4.7 Chimney Coulee

4.7.1 Post-depositional and settler history of the Chimney Coulee site

The site of Chimney Coulee became well known to the early settler community which would eventually form the town of the Eastend, Saskatchewan. The site became well known in the early years due to the mudbrick *hivernant* chimney remains that were still standing at the site. One of the first residents and landowners near the Chimney Coulee site was a notable resident known as Harold S. "Corky" Jones. Most of the site was on Jones' land for the first half of the 20th-century. He can be credited with promoting and protecting the local heritage at the site. He provided local tours of the site and knew the location of the various buildings that he could ascertain as relating to the various groups that occupied the site. He instilled a sense of pride in the local history and likely contributed to helping to protect the site. Jones recorded some history Chimney Coulee and was the first to document the Laframboise family as being among the Métis residents at the site (History and Reminiscences of Eastend and District. Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee 1905 – 1955 Commemorative Volume. 1955:2-3). Jones recalled some fragments of the *hivernant* history, as he claimed, speaking with John Laframboise in Maple Creek prior to his passing in 1939. The Jones narrative claims that the site was called "Chapel Coulee" and was occupied by

60 Métis families in 1873 but these specific details are disputed by many including the author (McCullough 1990:256-257). This narrative best reflects a different site at Wood Mountain known as Chapelle Coulee that was occupied in 1873.

Figure 4.4 Early Chimney Coulee.

Captioned as "Chimney Coulee, 1912. Mrs. McLeod and Mrs. Morrison standing beside the last remaining chimney." Photographer unknown. (Eastend History Society 1984)

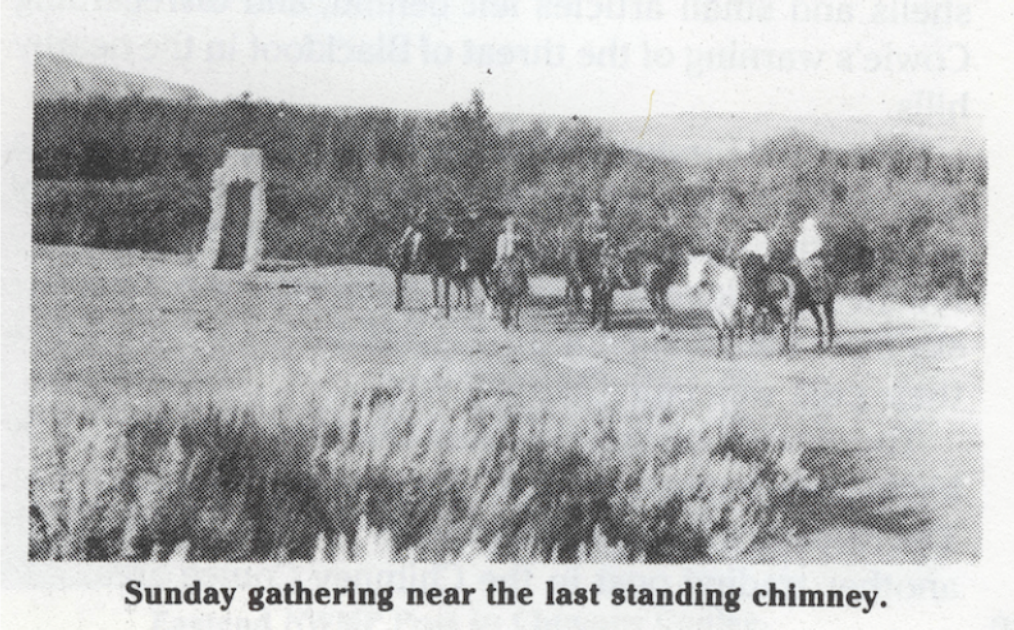

Figure 4.5 People on horseback beside a chimney.

Photographer unknown. (Eastend History Society 1984)

Some early 20th-century photographs of the site exist with many different people posing near a tall chimney. In all photographs this chimney appears to be the same and was allegedly the last chimney which collapsed around 1915 (History and Reminiscences of Eastend and District. Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee 1905 – 1955 Commemorative Volume. 1955:2-4). Throughout the 1940s to 1960s, photographer Everett Baker was a traveling salesman and was deeply interested in the culture-history of rural Saskatchewan. Thanks to his interest in the site, much of the site was documented through detailed photography of the site. Included in this, are some photos from when Jones led a local tour of the site.

The largest impact of the site occurred in the early 1970s when the nearby road was expanded without any historical or cultural considerations. This effectively removed a large

section of the site and the area that was known to contain many of the *hivernant* cabins (Burley et al. 1992:). Before this occurred, an amateur historian from Montana accompanied Baker and made some rudimentary sketches and maps of the site recording the stone piles where the chimneys once stood. Though Thain White's reports are handwritten and not greatly detailed, they do provide some interpretive value as he recorded the chimney piles to be at semi-regular intervals and along the coulee edge (amateur historical reports by Thain White 1967). In his brief reports, he outlines the various artifacts he relates to the NWMP occupation at the site, but he also incorporates musings about the Métis and notes the many coloured glass beads and transfer ware ceramics found (amateur historical reports by Thain White 1967, 1968, 1974, 1975).

Figure 4.6 The Chimney Coulee site in 1949.

Photo by Everett Baker.

4.7.2 Past Archaeology

The Chimney Coulee site was first archaeologically recorded by Bonnichsen (1967:2-3) and field crew in 1966 as part of a general study of the late historic period in the Cypress Hills when the location of three historic cabins were noted. The site was formally surveyed and mapped in 1986 by David Burley and field crew as part of a previously mentioned larger project to archaeologically survey various Métis *hivernant* sites primarily in Saskatchewan. Burley recorded the site over a couple of days the same year it was designated a Provincial Recreation Area. They officially mapped every cultural feature on and around the site on both sides of the highway (Burley et al. 1992:89-93). Drawing heavily from Jones' history of the area, they wrote the first comprehensive summary of the Métis history at the site (Burley et al. 1992). Unlike the other *hivernant* sites surveyed they did not conduct any excavations due to time constraints. They were also notified by local informants that the site has seen extensive looting over the years (Burley et al. 1992). While brief, their survey was valuable for future researchers to help navigate the various, now overgrown, cultural features.

In 1994, the first excavations at Chimney Coulee took place. Lead by John Brandon and the consultant firm SEDAR, the research project on the Chimney Coulee site operated in 1994 and 1995. The project's aim was to find the Issac Cowie longhouse mentioned when he stayed at the site with his Métis employees during the winter of 1871-1872. Excavations continued as an informal Regina Archaeological Society (RAS) field project in 1998 and as a field school in 2000 (Brandon 2001:1-2). The excavation was concentrated on flat part of the site between the known NWMP occupation area and the *hivernant* occupation area lower along the coulee edge.

The remains of an older burnt longhouse structure, which does not appear in the 1878 historic photo of the site, was found and the remains of the NWMP barracks was also investigated (Brandon 1995:15-48). Excavations during the four seasons mostly concentrated on this longhouse structure. Their interpretations concluded that they had found the remains of Cowie's longhouse built by his Métis guides in late 1871, which was subsequently burned down the spring of 1872 (Cowie 1913:432-437). The artifact assemblage recovered from these excavations revealed a mixture of modern artifacts on the surficial layer, historic Euro-Canadian and Métis associated artifacts on the sub-surficial layers, and pre-contact artifacts on the lowest layers (Brandon 1994, 1995, 2000, 2001). Primarily with the use of volunteer labour, over 60 m/sq was excavated on the site. Brandon also employed the use of wet screening with fine mesh window screen in the 2000 field season and recovered large quantities of artifacts which would have been missed with traditional 1/4-inch or 1/8-inch mesh.

Figure 4.7 Chimney Coulee site in 1962.

Note the cultural depressions. Photo by Everett Baker.

4.7.3 Current Archaeology

Conducting research under the EMITA project, Dr. Kisha Supernant led a preliminary survey of the Métis *hivernant* area of the Chimney Coulee site in 2013. This survey included modern digital mapping of the site features noted by Burley et al. (1992) and test excavations. The test excavations revealed a large concentration of artifacts near two cultural depressions relatively distant from the coulee edge. This concentration of artifacts was presumed to be associated with a Métis assemblage due to the presence of glass seed beads and transferware ceramics. The results of 2013 test excavations became the basis that this project was built upon during the 2017 and 2018 field seasons which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.8 Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, the field of Métis *hivernant* archaeology is still a relatively new one. In a time period of over 50 years, a total of six sites have been explored archaeologically with two of them having less than 6 m/sq excavated. Furthermore, the methods of excavation, analysis, and reporting has changed considerably as well. Supernant (2018) also highlights the potential for different regional variations as availability to local natural resources and trade goods would differ. As a result, the findings from these studies have differences but still retain important elements of similarity. In general, the Métis *hivernant* material assemblage, based on the limited sample size, is consistent but the numbers and proportions of artifact types found vary considerably (Supernant 2018). The research at Petite Ville, in particular, was built on the methods of screening that yielded a significant increase in material remains recovered. Due to

these successes, the excavations at Chimney Coulee, outlined in the next chapter, have built on the research from all of these past studies.

CHAPTER 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the archaeological results from the Chimney Coulee site for the 2017 and 2018 field seasons. Excavation and screening methods were built upon the success of previous research on Métis *hivernant* archaeology, most notably Weinbender (2003). In total, seven 1.0 metre by 1.0 metre units were excavated across the two field seasons. Great care was taken in both the excavation and artifact recovery stage which yielded a high artifact count (n=12013), considering the scope of the study. The artifact counts and notable finds are presented for each unit. A woody trench feature was found to transect all but one of the seven units. This feature is interpreted as the poorly preserved remains of a cabin wall which was likely removed sometime after the site was abandoned when the timbers were reused in the modern townsite. Artifacts related to activities such as beading, sewing, and the use of decorated transferware ceramics were found in much greater quantities on the western side of this feature. It was on this same side where many other artifacts typical of a domestic associated household were found, suggesting that this was the interior of the cabin. The total artifact assemblage strongly correlates with a Métis *hivernant* assemblage of a family unit based on the few similar sites researched.

Figure 5.1 Chimney Coulee site.

a. The cabin which is the focus of this study. b. Approximate area of the Isaac Cowie longhouse studied by Brandon (1994; 1995; 2000). c. Area of NWMP buildings also studied by Brandon (1994; 1995; 2000; 2001).

5.2 Research Goals

5.2.1 Research goals for the 2013 Field Season

This research began in 2013 as a foundational EMITA (Exploring Métis Identity Through Archaeology) project led by Dr. Kisha Supernant at the University of Alberta. The project set out to revive and begin to fill the vast knowledge gap that is Métis archaeology in western Canada. Broadly speaking, the research goals for the 2013 field season were exploratory in nature. It begun by re-examining a known Métis *hivernant* area. Chimney Coulee was ideal for this as it had been a designated Provincial Recreation Area since 1986 and provided easy access for study. Another research goal was to resurvey the site mainly based on the 1986 study conducted by Burley et al. (1992:85-94). From there, they tried to identify the area where Métis *hivernant* cabins were known to have existed. To do this, test excavations were conducted to attempt to locate one of these cabins based on a generally known assemblage. Ultimately, the 2013 study fulfilled its role in establishing a foundation for future research as an artifact concentration including historic transferware ceramic and coloured glass beads were found in a 50cm x 100cm test unit. Due to time constraints, the unit was left unfinished and backfilled.

5.2.2 Research goals for the 2017 field season

The first major excavations for this study began in the 2017 field season. The research goals were based on the findings from the previous survey with the initial task of completing and expanding the 2013 test unit to 1.0 metre by 1.0 metre in size. From there, the goal was to explore and expand the excavation into the direction with the most historic artifact potential. This would be based on both quality, quantity, sedimentation, stratigraphy, and proximity to

adjacent site features. The overarching research question, if possible, was to confirm or deny the presence of a Métis *hivernant* cabin based on the material finds and features found through excavation. These methods will be discussed later in this chapter. Overall, the research goals of the 2017 field season were modest, straightforward, and, as discussed later, successful.

5.2.3 Research goals for the 2018 Field Season

The excavations for the 2018 field season were, in essence, a follow up on the successes from the previous year. The remains of a proposed Métis *hivernant* cabin had been identified and a large sample of historic artifacts supporting this hypothesis had been recovered. One follow-up research question was to investigate a woody trench feature which was believed to be the fragmentary remains of an exterior cabin wall. To do this, a series of 1.0 m x 1.0 m units were to be placed to find the extend of this feature. Secondly, it was determined that a larger sample size of artifacts was needed, and one unit was placed in an area that was determined to be wholly within the proposed cabin footprint. An additional goal of the 2018 field season was to bring awareness to this research and, more broadly, Métis archaeology as a film crew was on site for a portion of the excavations.

5.2.4 Research goals of this study

In the broadest terms, this research is designed to provide a comprehensive baseline study to the Métis component of the Chimney Coulee site. This study hopes to add valuable insight and data to the limited sphere of *hivernant* archaeology in western Canada. To do so, the goal is to combine comprehensive historical and archaeological data to provide a better understanding of

the site and to future researchers. Another goal is to briefly look at the archaeological data spatially and to compare total finds recovered to one other study with similar results. Doing so will help to contribute and further establish any insights to the currently known Métis *hivernant* assemblage. Finally, a major goal in this study is to build upon successful and unique methods of excavation laid out by previous researchers in this field (Weinbender 2003). In essence, this study hopes to provide a strong baseline study of the historic Métis of Chimney Coulee for other researchers to successfully build upon.

5.3 Methodology and Procedures

5.3.1 Considerations for *hivernant* archaeology

There are a few unique features of *hivernant* archaeology which warrant discussion. The first of which is a general limitation of background information. As highlighted in the previous chapter, only a handful of studies have occurred over the past half century, while methods, technology, and availability of information have changed during that time. Additionally, while the few examples present have somewhat identified a consistent assemblage, the total quantities of artifacts are mostly inconsistent due to fragmentation (Weinbender 2003:75,135-156). The limited sample size of sites also opens the possibilities for future excavations to reveal unexpected results. Interpretations of artifacts and their use are also open to various re-interpretations as many ambiguities arise. This is due in part of the limited historical accounts, especially from Métis perspectives, which restrict our full understanding and interpretations of finds. Many of the previous studies had challenging natural deposition due to these sites existing in an aspen parkland environment such as Buffalo Lake and Petite Ville. Chimney Coulee mostly

did not have these issues and preservation was good due to the dry prairie environment and chernozemic soils. However, interpretation from the stratigraphy can be difficult due to when these spaces were last occupied (150-170 years ago) in contrast to the total length of time occupied (5-10 years). The physical size of artifacts found at *hivernant* sites also provides a unique challenge which will be discussed later (see. Weinbender 2003:156-158). Lastly, technology has changed significantly in the two decades from even the last major study of *hivernant* archaeology. As a result, optimal methods are always being explored and found (see. Wadsworth 2020).

5.3.2 Excavations involved in this study

This section covers the methods and procedures from two field seasons at the Chimney Coulee site, 2017 and 2018. The combined total area excavated was seven square metres, all within one excavation block. The work conducted was divided into seven excavation units with the associated labels of EU1 through EU7. They were all completed in their sequential numeric order with EU1 being excavated first and EU7 last. The 2017 field season saw units EU 1 – 3 completed with units EU 4 – 7 excavated in 2018. Each unit was further broken down into four excavation quadrants: northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. All four quadrants within each unit were excavated simultaneously. The author was actively involved in the excavation of every unit in both field seasons and was the primary supervisor in 2017 and an assistant field supervisor for the 2018 excavations under the direction of Dr. Kisha Supernant. A couple of hired teaching assistants from the University of Alberta were present for the 2018 excavation and both student and volunteer help were utilized for both years. The 2017 excavations occurred over

a four-week period in August and September with artifact screening occurring over an additional two-week period in September and October. The 2018 excavations occurred over a three-week period in June and July with artifact screening occurring over an additional two-week period in July and August. Additional excavations were conducted in 2019 and 2022 which will not be discussed in this study as they involve experimentation with different methods, technology, and mostly different areas of the site (Wadsworth 2020; Gauthier 2023).

5.3.3 Excavation methods and artifact retrieval

For the most part, typical excavation methods were employed during this research. Excavation was initially conducted with trowels and line levels with three-point provenience in the 2017 and the use of a total station in 2018 for artifact retrieval. This was the first major excavation under the EMITA project, so extensive care was taken through both years of the study. The idea was to retrieve as many artifacts as possible and maintain features in their original context. Continual assessment of excavation manner and speed was considered. Generally, more care was taken within units with less disturbances and within a proposed cabin layer, than in units with observable natural disturbances. Experiences acquired here will be applied in future EMITA studies.

As previously mentioned, a total of seven 1.0 m x 1.0 m units were excavated in four intercardinal quadrants. The units were excavated in natural stratigraphic layers using arbitrary 5 cm levels. Overall, there were some differences between the units, as there was a slight north-facing slope. In total there were four layers designated across all units. Layer "A" was the layer of topsoil with a high concentration of grass roots and mixed modern soils. Layer "B" was the

layer directly underneath the topsoil and was mostly uniform across all the units. Layer "C" was the designated occupation layer for the proposed cabin feature, and it varied considerably between the western and eastern sides of the entire excavation block. In the units determined to be outside of the cabin, it often resembled the "B" layer or "D" layer but still contained historic artifacts. In the units, or quadrants of units, within the proposed cabin, the compaction, colouration, and artifact quantity were quite apparent. Layer "D" was determined to be below the occupation layer and was consistent across all units. This bottom layer was always known by the sudden cessation of historic artifacts combined with a clear soil change. Arbitrary 5 cm levels were used across all units with most layers having one, two, and occasionally three levels.

Artifact retrieval differed slightly between both field seasons. While substantial efforts were made to retrieve as many artifacts as possible in situ, the vast majority were found in the screening process due to the small size of the artifacts. For the sample that were found in situ, three-point provenience measurements were taken with a line level in the 2017 excavations. In addition to this, an arbitrary datum was used for measuring depth and was kept consistent for all units for both years. A total station was used for all in situ artifacts found in the 2018 field season. The in situ data has not been corrected and coordinated for this study. In general, many of the medium to large artifacts were found and recorded in situ. Overall, the in situ artifacts represent a small number of total artifacts found and are better represented in units with better preservation and less natural disturbances.

The method of fine screening was built on the recommendation and success of previous excavations in Métis *hivernant* studies (Weinbender 2003:156-158). The layer "A" topsoil was found too difficult and cumbersome for effective use of fine mesh screening that was employed

in other layers. In addition, the "A" layer was found to yield very few historic artifacts of relevance and was mixed with modern materials. As a result, all the "A" layer sediment was screened in 1/8" inch screen (3.18 mm). For all other layers, the sediment was collected into woven polypropylene bags and fine mesh screened offsite. The specific method of fine mesh screening with highly reflective metal screen was developed from trial and error with sediment primarily from EU1. A highly durable, bright aluminium (<1.5mm) mesh screen was found to be the most effective type of for this work and required constant replacement. This screen was laid onto two regular 1/8" inch (3.18 mm) standing screens to completely cover the top screen (see Figure 5.2). Sediment was placed on the fine mesh and a continuously flowing source of water was used to mix and slowly drain away the sediment. The remaining artifacts were retrieved by hand or, in the case of seed beads, with dental picks and then placed into plastic bags. This screening method was found to be effective in finding all highly fragmented artifacts of sub-millimeter size though highly time consuming.

Figure 5.2 Example of wet screening sediment with reflective window screen.

Joan Hodgins and Mel Fitch in photo.

5.3.4 Artifact analysis

Artifacts were catalogued and are analysed according to a functional category system similar to previous studies (see Weinbender 2003). It classifies historic artifacts according to their functional categories and sub-categories. This system is based on previously developed systems by Sprague (1981). There are some limitations to this system of classification as we can never be certain what function some of these artifacts were used, reused, or modified as in a specific *hivernant* context. Due to the general remote nature of these settlements, many artifacts might have been used or re-used in different ways and in manners not fully known. Some of these

limitations in similar contexts have been discussed by other researchers on both Métis and non-Métis sites (Szot 2022:35-36; Weinbender 2003:53-55). The author suggests that future researchers develop a system more conducive and inclusive for a Métis specific database where possible.

The use of the functional categories and sub-categories in this study were modeled, where applicable, after Weinbender (2003:75-76). In total, six functional categories were used for this study. The "Personal and Recreational" category was further broken into the sub-categories of "Adornment", "Clothing", "Ritual", and "Miscellaneous". The "Architectural" category contains the sub-category of "Machine Cut Nail", "Window Glass", and "Chinking". The category of "Household Activities" was separated into "Sewing", "Body Care", and "Lamp Glass" sub-categories. The "Kitchen" category included "Ceramic", "Lead Foil", and "Glass Container" sub-categories. The "Hunting and Defense" category contained the sub-categories of "Lead Shot", "Ammunition", "Firearms", and "Miscellaneous". A category for "Business and Transportation" would have been used but no artifact was found to fall within this category. Lastly, an extensive "Miscellaneous" category was used for many other artifacts recovered such as "Flora", "Faunal", "Lithics", and various others sub-categories not the primary focus of this study. Faunal and lithics were mostly not included in this analysis and are currently being examined by other scholars. Where applicable, exceptional artifacts from these categories will be included for a brief description.

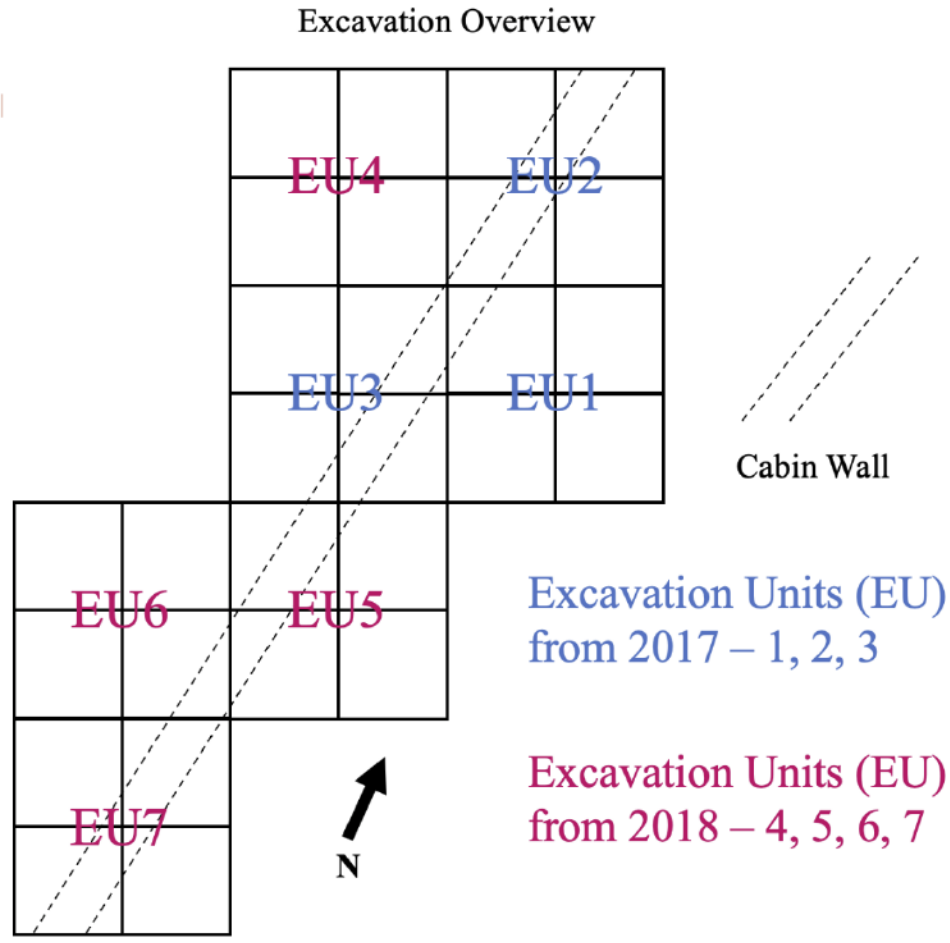

Figure 5.3 Unit locations and year excavated with cabin wall indicated.

5.3.5 Limitations

A discussion regarding the limitations of this study is necessary to highlight. Firstly, the most obvious limitation in this research is simply that there are not many previous studies to draw upon. For those involved in this study, including the author and all the volunteers, previous experience excavating a Métis *hivernant* cabin was absent. This limitation in background knowledge was a considerable learning curve and temporarily affected the cataloguing and

interpretation of artifacts. In addition, volunteer labour from individuals with no prior archaeology experience was greatly needed and appreciated but, on occasion, at the expense of accuracy in various stages of the research.

Some methods found to be effective were the result of careful excavation, trial and error, and a general attempting to document everything. All efforts were made to correct for unforeseen errors but at the expense of time. For that reason, only three 1.0 m x 1.0 m units were excavated during the four weeks of the 2017 field season. It was also during that year that three-point provenience was used but has limited accuracy for artifacts of such a small size. Regarding artifact size, particularly the thousands of drawn glass seed beads less than 2mm in diameter, was an issue that was difficult to work with in almost every part of the excavation, recovery, and later cataloguing. Some beads were lost during the various processes, but the overall number is small enough to be statistically insignificant.

For the physical excavation, the sediment and compaction changes were not always clear. The best possible job was accomplished at the time but room for interpretation certainly exists. Natural disturbances were numerous and disruptive in some units, particularity in the units on the northern half of the excavation. To further complicate matters, the site has seen an extensive history of pothunting and illegal collection of artifacts. According to locals, much of this happened over the years prior to established heritage laws in the province. Despite this, pothunting has persisted in recent years but hopefully to a smaller degree. When the field crew arrived on site in 2017, evidence of recent holes likely made by a metal detectorist were present on the site. The area immediately within the 2017 and 2018 excavations appears to have been free from this type of human disturbance but may have occurred in the past.

5.4 Unit Results

5.4.1 Excavation Unit 1

5.4.1.1 Unit Description

This unit was originally started as an exploratory test unit of 50 cm x 50 cm in size during the 2013 field season. This test unit was placed in the general area deemed to be high potential for finding Métis associated material remains. Based on the previous site survey conducted in 1986 by Burley et al. (1992:85-94), the area by the test unit was close to features described as depressions and a chimney pile. This location was chosen for its association of these nearby features but also for being outside of a treed area and therefore less roots and disturbances. The original test unit was expanded to a size of 100 cm x 50 cm upon revealing historic artifacts such as corroded sheet metal, beads, and a nail. Most of the sediment was collected from the test excavation and were screened with a fine mesh screen at a later time. Due to time constraints, the expanded test unit was left unfinished. In the 2017 field season, the test unit was first completed before the decision was made to expand it into a 1.0 m x 1.0 m unit. It was expanded to the west to find the extent of a large piece of buried sheet metal. The western half of the unit was notable for having more artifacts and specifically a large concentration of drawn glass seed beads in a dark grey silty loam area in the northwest corner of the unit in layer “C”. This area appeared uniquely triangular and terminated into the north and west profiles.

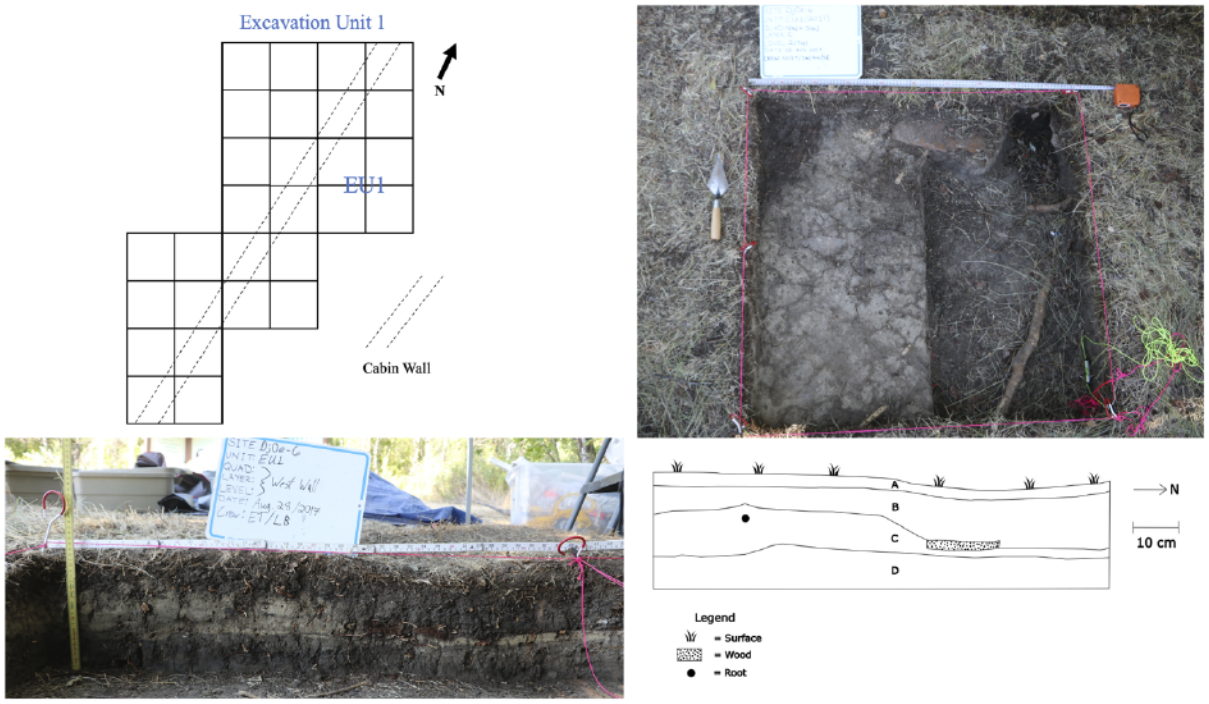

Figure 5.4 Excavation Unit 1: Location, overview, and west profile stratigraphy.

5.4.1.2 Unit Sedimentation

After the initial loose root filled topsoil, the first layer underlying contained very dark grey silty loam of medium compaction. There was an unclear transition from this second layer to the third other than the appearance of a small section in the far northwest corner of the northwest quadrant of the unit which contained a thin layer of pinkish grey silty loam turning to black while the rest of the unit remained a dark grey. This corner was notable for the number of artifacts it contained and was potentially suggestive of a feature. The final layer was of a medium compaction of very dark brown to black chunky loamy clay with a termination of historic artifacts.

The stratigraphy was found to be unique in the northwest quadrant. The northwest corner of the northwest quadrant showed a clear compaction change in the north and west profiles. It

was presumed at the time to be part of a feature or structure due to the trace of wood associated with the compaction in the profiles as well as the artifact concentration found in that corner. Some aspen roots and the occasional gopher hole were noted but typically concentrated in the north and northeast side of the unit.

5.4.1.3 Artifact totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.1. Only around 5.5% of the beads found were in this unit (n=184) which was the second fewest of all seven units. There was a comparatively low number of ceramics (n=23) found which were around 4.6% of all ceramics, the fewest of all units. The remains of 80% of all the window glass (n=4) were also found in EU1. Overall, this unit had artifacts representing all the different functional categories but in small amounts. It was later determined that this unit lay mostly outside of the proposed cabin structure.

Functional Category	**Quantity**
Architectural	**43**
Chinking	32
Machine Cut Nail	7
Window Glass	4
Kitchen	**23**
Ceramic	23
Personal	**184**
Adornment	184
Seed Beads	184
Household Activities	2
Body Care	1
Comb	1

Lamp Glass	1
Hunting and Defense	1
Lead Shot	1
Miscellaneous	**1256**
Glass Fragments	60
Metal Fragments	97
Lithics	45
Stone Fragments	105
Wood	336
Faunal	555
Fish	135
Others	420
Flora	6
Charcoal	45
Others	7

Table 5.1 Artifacts of EU1

5.4.1.4 Notable Artifacts

The first notable artifact worth discussing is the fine-toothed bone comb (DjOe-6:11359). This was found in situ in the southwest quadrant in the occupation layer "C". It is notable for being a common type of fine louse comb which has also been found in two other *hivernant* cabins (Doll et al. 1988:175, 314; Weinbender 2003:78). Small comb teeth from this or a similar comb are found in every unit at this excavation. Another part of this or a similar comb was found in EU6 and will be discussed later in that unit.

More than half of all the unidentifiable metal fragments recovered in this study were found in this unit (n=97). Included in this were a couple of large fragments of sheet metal which were

heavily rusted. Not much can be described other than they were flat with crimped sides. One metal fragment was from a corner piece and contained a small metal handle (Figure 5.7).

A couple of pieces of flat window glass were also found (*n*=4). This is interesting as most *hivernant* cabins were often described as having thin stretched parchment windows. The presence of window glass shows that at least one of them were not made of parchment. The historic photographs of the other structures on this site also appear to have glass windows (Figure 3.3).

As mentioned, few ceramics were found in this unit and only four ceramic fragments were diagnostic. Two were common Spode and Copeland patterns, specifically Elcho and Macaw/Pagoda patterns (Sussman 1979:109,146). The Elcho pattern had production years of 1863-post 1873 and the Macaw/Pagoda pattern of 1837-post 1872 (Hamilton 1982:62). A red body sherd of Continental Views/Louis Quatorze was also found. This was the only red fragment of this pattern that was found in the entire excavation and is representative of its own vessel. This pattern had production years of 1845- post 1882 (Hamilton 1982; Sussman 1979). One large fragment of a W&E Corn makers mark was also found (DjOe-6:11302). This style of whiteware is found at another historic site in central Saskatchewan during the 1880s (Gibson 2010:66-67). This fragment indicates that it was manufactured when W&E Corn was located at Burslem, Staffordshire which would place the range of production between 1864-1891 (Godden 1999:220; Sussman 1979:22).

Figure 5.5 Bone Comb.

DjOe-6:11359

a. b.

Figure 5.6 Large sheet metal fragments.

a. DjOe-6:0279 and b. DjOe-6:0281.

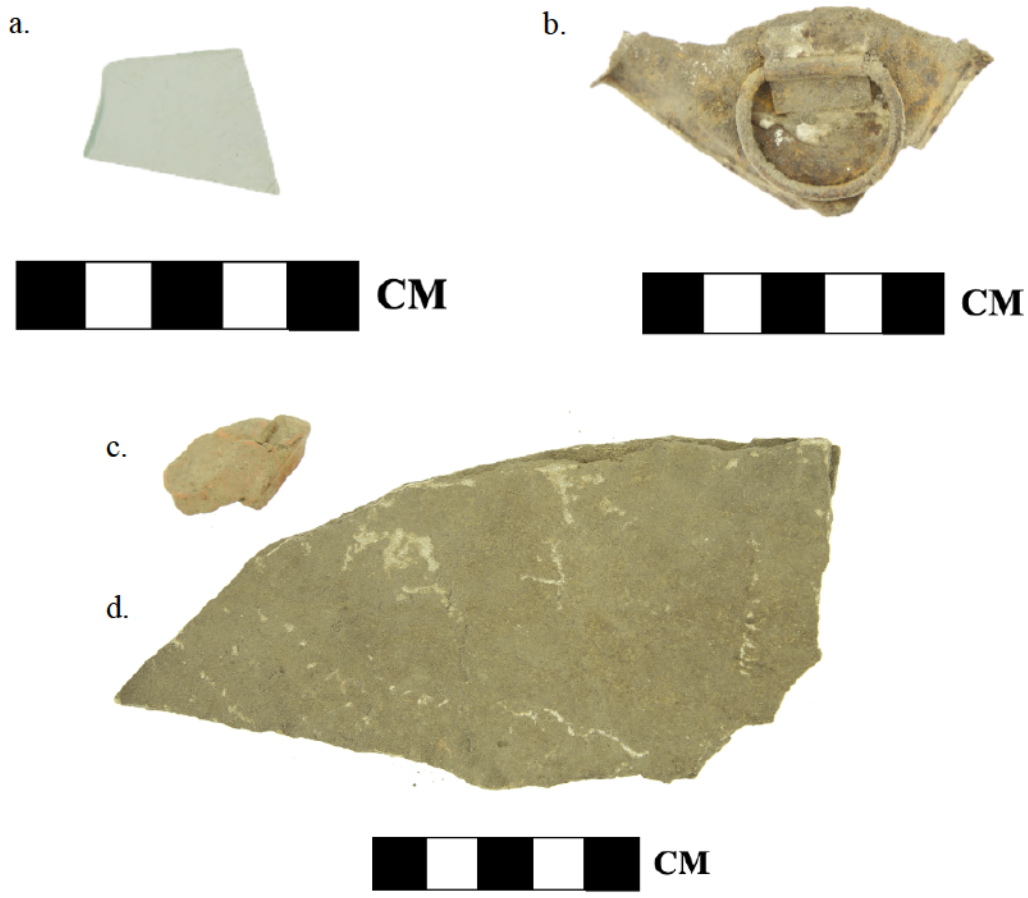

Figure 5.7 Other artifacts in EU1

a. Window glass (DjOe-6:0334), b. sheet metal with handle (DjOe-6:0277), c. chinking (DjOe-20236), d. large stone fragment (likely a chimney stone, DjOe-20237)

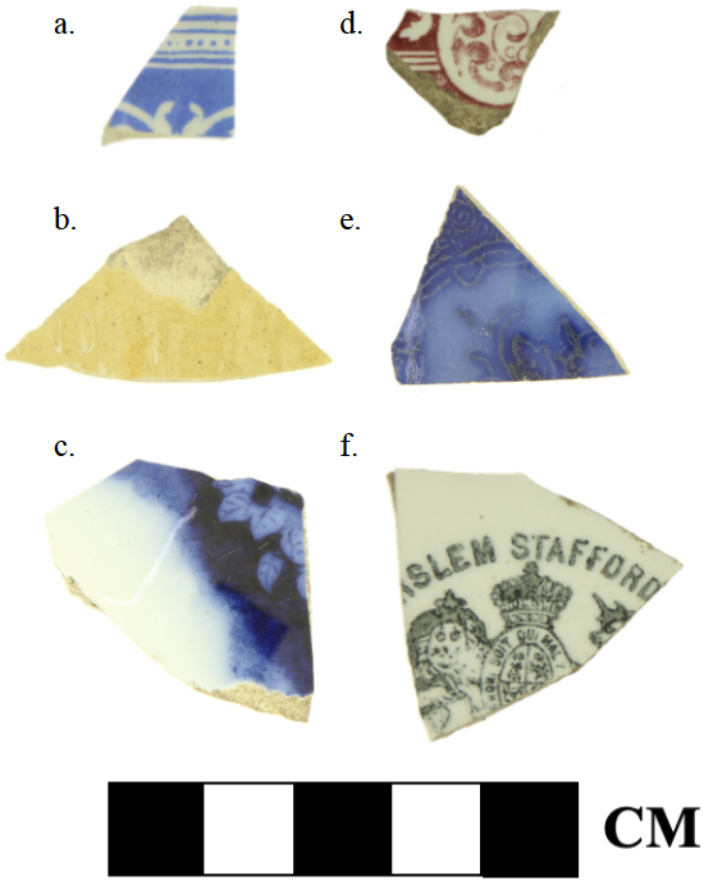

Figure 5.8 Ceramics

a. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:0326), b. glazed stoneware (DjOe-6:11353), c. unknown blue pattern DjOe-6:20201), d. Continental Views/Louis Quatorze (DjOe-6:11310), e. Macaw/Pagoda pattern (DjOe-6:11352), f. W&E Corn whiteware (DjOe-6:11302).

5.4.1.5 Unit Summary

This unit was important for increasing the sample of historic artifacts found at this location. At the time it was excavated, the large number of artifacts from a "Personal and Recreational" category gave weight to the idea that a cabin might have been located. The sedimentation and stratigraphy were important to show part of a unique feature that was found in the far northwest corner of this unit. This feature was notable for the darker colour sequence, high number of artifacts found within, and this change being reflected in the profile containing associated wood alongside compaction change.

5.4.2 Excavation Unit 2

5.4.2.1 Unit Description

This unit was chosen as it was directly adjacent to EU1 on the north side. The unique stratigraphy found on the north profile of EU1 and the continuation of the sheet metal artifact became the primary reasons for the placement of this unit. Early on, the excavation of this unit proved to be different as there was immediate evidence of extensive rodent disturbance in the first layer. This pattern would continue through the entire unit. Additionally, there were many aspen root disturbances as this unit went closer to the edge of the adjacent treed area. In total, this unit showed a high degree of natural disturbance which obscured many attempts at interpreting features and deposition on the site. The most notable aspect of this unit were the artifacts found in both their quantity and unique quality.

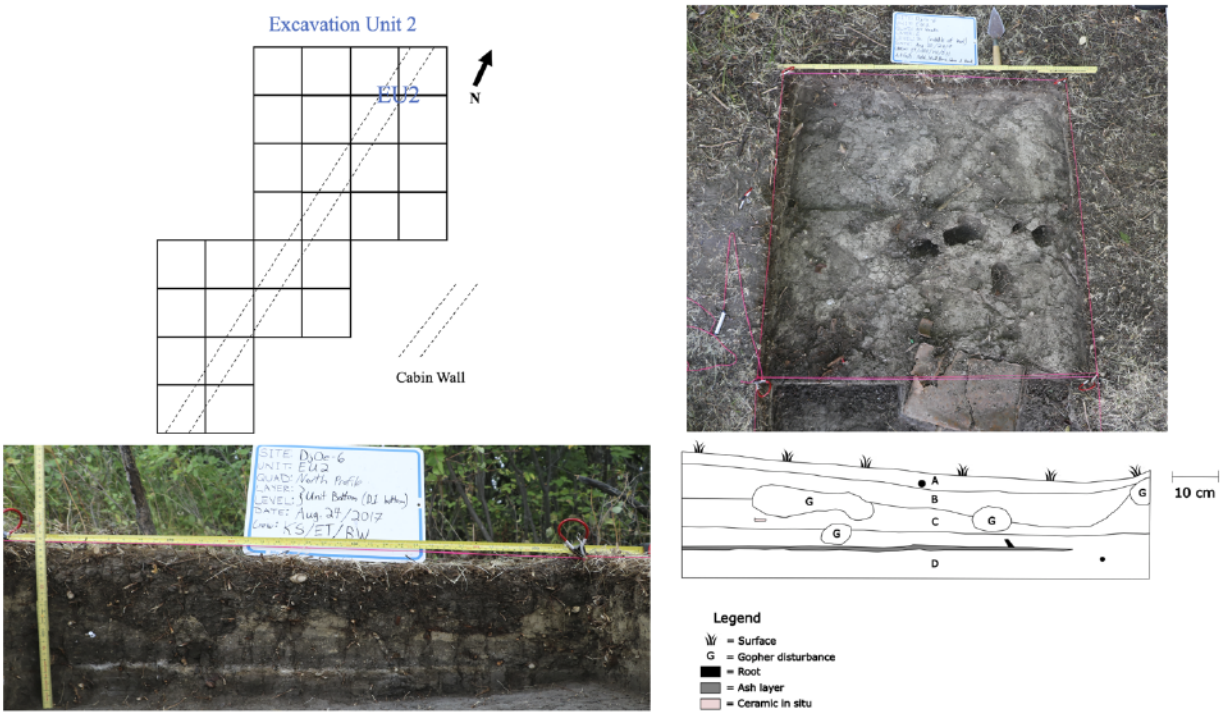

Figure 5.9 Excavation Unit 2: Location, overview, and north profile stratigraphy.

5.4.2.2 Unit Sedimentation

The sedimentation found in this unit posed a unique challenge to both excavate and interpret. The black layer of topsoil was found to be slightly mounded and related to the numerous gopher disturbances found. It was likely an old gopher mound that was subsequently covered up with sediment over time. The next layer was of medium compaction and dark brown loam with abundant aspen roots and gopher disturbance. The underlying layer contained the most artifacts but also the most disturbance. These interspersed with many large aspen roots made the presumed cabin layer difficult to excavate and interpret. The compaction and soil colouration varied considerably in this unit depending on if one was excavating within an old burrow or not. The compaction ranged from hard clay to patches of loose sandy loam. Soil colouration varied from brown to dark grayish brown, to very dark grey in a variety of areas in this layer. Artifacts

were also found at a lower depth than the previous unit. The bottom layer was identified again with a termination of historic artifacts at around 20 cm depth below datum (DBD) and a uniformity in very dark grey and very dark brown loamy clay.

The stratigraphy reflected the sedimentation in that there was little interpretation to be gained. The feature noted in the previous unit was heavily obscured and not visibly present while excavating in this unit. The north profile of this unit appeared to show some compaction difference in comparison to the east profile but was also obscured with gopher disturbance. The western profile showed a bit more uniformity and clearer compaction than the other profiles. Overall, not much could be interpreted from both the sedimentation and the stratigraphy in this unit due to these disturbances.

5.4.2.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.2.

The quantity of artifacts found in this unit are impressive. A total of 955 beads were found in this unit accounting for 28.4% of all beads found, the most of all units. If one were to exclude all the beads found in the flower beadwork pattern (n=376) from this unit and the total, then EU2 still accounts for 19.3% of all beads found. This would be the third highest number of beads after EU3 and EU4, with slightly more than EU6. This contrasts with the comparatively low number of ceramics recovered from this unit. Ceramics recovered (n=49) amounted to only 9.8% of all found. This is the third lowest number of ceramics found after EU1 and EU5. Overall, this unit contained artifacts representing all the functional categories. It was determined that roughly half

of this unit was within the proposed cabin structure. The high levels of gopher disturbances in this unit might have contributed to this unit being a natural trap for artifacts, beads in particular.

Functional Category	Quantity
Architectural	**24**
Chinking	12
Machine Cut Nail	12
Kitchen	**53**
Ceramic	49
Lead Foil	3
Glass Container	1
Personal	**958**
Adornment	955
Seed beads	578
Seed beads in flower beadwork	376
Beads Other	1
Clothing	2
Clasps	2
Miscellaneous	1
Household Activities	**12**
Sewing	4
Straight Pins	4
Body Care	5
Comb Teeth	5
Lamp Glass	3
Hunting and Defense	**1**
Miscellaneous	1
Miscellaneous	**1202**
Glass Fragments	144
Metal Fragments	23
Lithics	91
Stone Fragments	14
Wood	43

Faunal	786
Fish Fragments	242
Others	544
Flora	15
Charcoal	34
Others	52

Table 5.2 Artifacts of EU2

5.4.2.4 Notable Artifacts

Many notable artifacts were found in this unit. One of which was a crumpled ball of lead foil (DjOe-6:12849). These have been found in other *hivernant* sites as lead foil was used in the lining of tea boxes. Some of these foil packages contained makers marks on them but when partially unraveled, this artifact did not appear to have one.

Several fragments of a thick olive coloured glass were found. The glass is curved which could indicate it was from a bottle or some other container. Only body sherds were found so it fell into the "Miscellaneous" category under the "glass fragments" sub-category. Olive coloured glass is sometimes indicative of a sauce or condiment bottles, but these artifacts were too fragmented for any indication of this. Additionally, a round clear glass container bottom was found in this unit.

Two fragments of an unglazed grey clay ceramic bottom were also found. They refit together with one another and appear to be the bottom rim of a vessel. More of what appears to be this, or a similar vessel were found in EU4 and EU5. It is unclear what this could be from and what it was used for other than a utilitarian bowl or vessel.

More of the sheet metal that was found in EU1 continued into EU2. One large piece was found transecting both units (DjOe-6:17073) and it was loosely attached to another piece which

was almost fully within EU2 (DjOe-6:17072). Whatever these fragments of sheet metal were used for, they all have crimped edges and are likely all from the same larger piece or similar pieces.

The most significant artifact found in the entire excavation to date was the Flower Beadwork pattern. The beadwork consists of solid coloured light green beads (n=211), clear dark blue-green beads (n=55), dark pink beads (n=103), and light pink beads (n=3). The flower bud pattern itself has 371 beads while there a small concentration of five clear dark blue-green beads outside of the pattern and might have been part of a decorative trim. The discovery and recovery of this piece intact can be attributed to the careful excavation methods applied during this project. The beadwork was found underneath the previously mentioned sheet metal which likely protected it from the elements and perhaps excessive root damage. In the process of excavating it, the thin layer of soil that was carefully removed from most of the beadwork had a somewhat fibrous appearance which might have been the remains of some leather that it had been designed onto. Many other metal fragments as well as various faunal remains were found directly above it and around it which suggests that it might have been part of a refuse pile. However, one can never rule out the possibility of another meaning. The small pattern and the design of a flower bud might be suggestive that it was crafted for a young child or infant. One might go further and suggest that this beadwork was intentionally buried and there might be some deeper cultural or symbolic meaning to it. Regardless, this pattern was meaningful to the person who make it at the time both in the process of creation and to whom it was made for. For being known as the "flower beadwork people", this find is highly indicative of the Métis who lived here (Brasser 1985:225). This pattern was found in the southeast quadrant of this unit in an area that is outside

of the proposed cabin. A wax sealant was used to stabilize the beadwork and it was removed intact alongside a large section of soil surrounding it. To this day, the pattern remains mostly intact, but some cracking of the soil has further damaged it.

Several more ceramics styles were found in this unit alongside an unknown red pattern and two large sherds of a white earthenware ceramic. The British Flowers pattern produced between 1829-20th century (Hamilton 1982:61; Sussman 1979:61) and Flower Vase pattern produced between 1828-20th century (Hamilton 1982:61-62; Sussman 1979:115) were identified as well.

Of the various other small items found, a fused lead ball object was found. It appears to be from two large lead shots that were fused together. It was catalogued as one artifact under the "Hunting and Defense" functional category. They might have ended up fused together by accident or intentionally. Alternative uses could have been used as sinking lure or a net weight. Another unknown artifact was circular metal ring. It resembles a ring tab from small tin can or it could have been part of some jewelry. The ambiguity of this item resulted it being categorized in the "Metal Fragments" sub-category. More bone comb teeth were found alongside a black vulcanized rubber comb tooth. A notable artifact recovered was a small decorative item made of a vulcanized rubber or gutta percha in the form of holy leaves with grapes on it. For more discussion on this artifact see Wambold (2022:117-118). It appears to have been attached to something else and was catalogued under the "Personal" functional category under its own "Miscellanous" sub-category.

Figure 5.10 Flower beadwork pattern in situ.

Figure 5.11 Flower beadwork pattern.

Note the slight damage to due to pins used to mark artifacts found above the pattern. Also note the small cluster of green beads away from the main beadwork in the bottom right.

Figure 5.12 Crumpled lead foil, before and after unravelling.

DjOe-6:12849

Figure 5.13 Olive green glass fragments.

Possibly from a sauce/condiment bottle. DjOe-6:13651, 13708, 13711, 13715, 13734.

Figure 5.14 Wood fragments

DjOe-6:20010, catalogued as one sample.

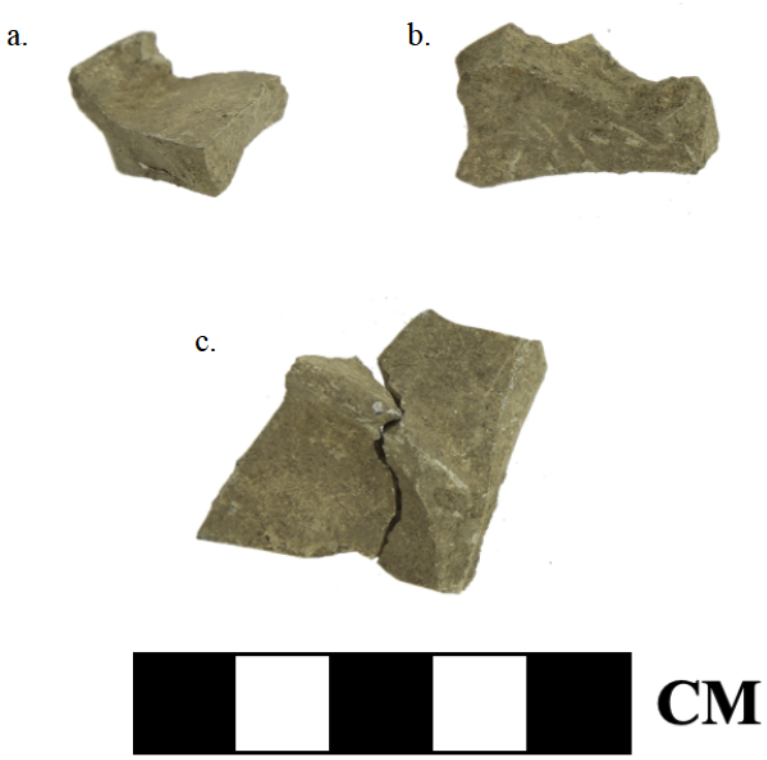

Figure 5.15 Grey unglazed ceramic base.

a. DjOe-6:17238, b. DjOe-17102 (right) c. both fragments refitted.

Figure 5.16 Large sheet metal

a. DjOe-6:17072 (all fragments), b. DjOe-6:17073

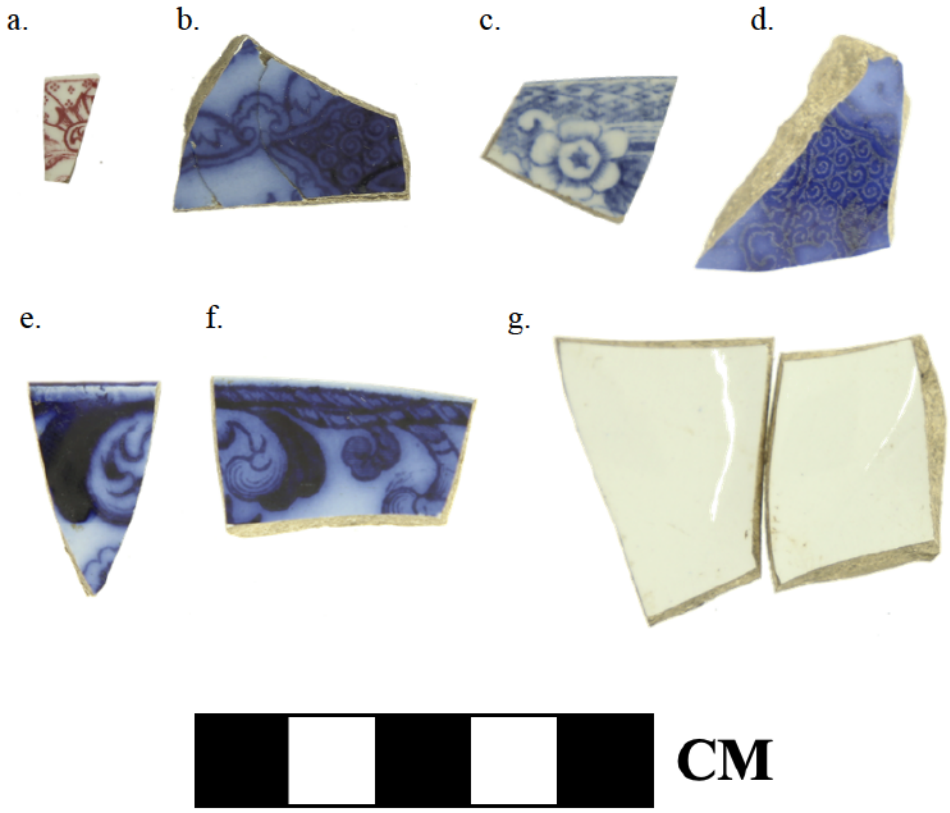

Figure 5.17 Ceramics

a. Unknown red pattern (DjOe-6:17337), b. Macaw/Pagoda pattern (DjOe-6:19984-19988), c. British Flowers pattern (DjOe-6:20096), d. Macaw/Pagoda pattern (DjOe-6:17271), e. Flower Vase pattern (DjOe-6:17269), f. Flower Vase pattern (DjOe-6:17117), g. undecorated whiteware (DjOe-6:20020-20021)

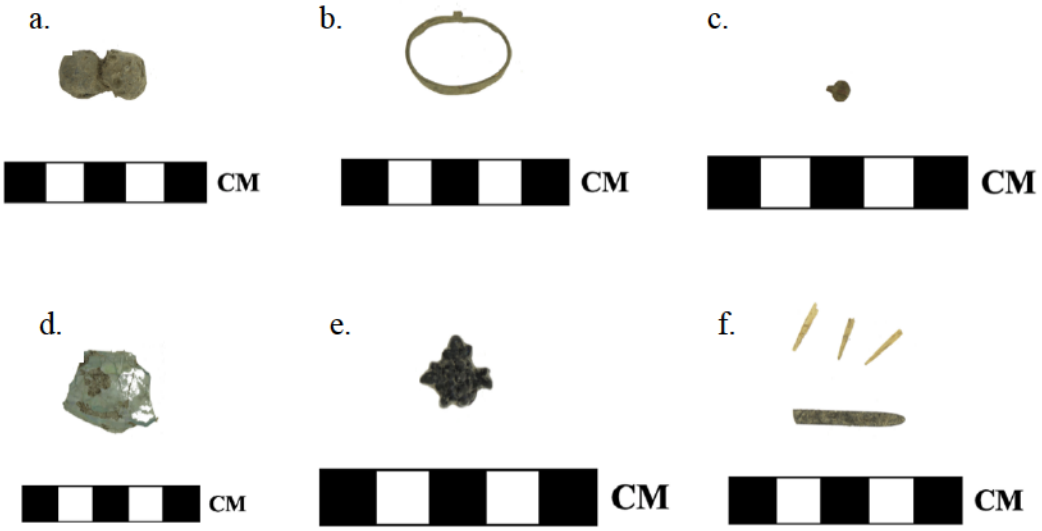

Figure 5.18 Artifact plate

a. Fused lead balls (hunting and defense, miscellaneous; DjOe-6:13737), b. unknown metal ring tab (DjOe-6:13738), c. small clasp (DjOe-6:12439), d. circular glass container bottom (DjOe-17099), e. ivy and grape (personal, miscellaneous; DjOe-6:13138), f. bone comb bristles (DjOe-6:12312-12314) and a black vulcanized rubber comb bristle (DjOe-6:11726)

5.4.2.5 Summary

The sedimentation and stratigraphy of this unit provided little information for interpreting the nature of the overall structure being excavated. However, this unit was important for the substantial artifacts recovered that were directly associated to the Métis. The beadwork was a unique and special find that cannot be understated as very few beadwork patterns have ever been recovered in a Métis context.

5.4.3 Excavation Unit 3

5.4.3.1 Unit Description

Much like EU2, this unit was chosen due to the potential stratigraphic feature found in the north and west profile in EU1. Another reason for this placement was the large number of historic artifacts that had already been recovered from the previous two units. This unit was directly adjacent to EU1 on the west side. In total, this unit was the most productive of the three excavated in the 2017 field season. Additionally, this unit had little disturbances beyond one notable gopher hole along the east side in a north to south direction. The presence of a clear buried woody trench feature also helped to confirm a clear pattern that was interpreted as a cabin wall as the artifact types and quantity were also reflective of this.

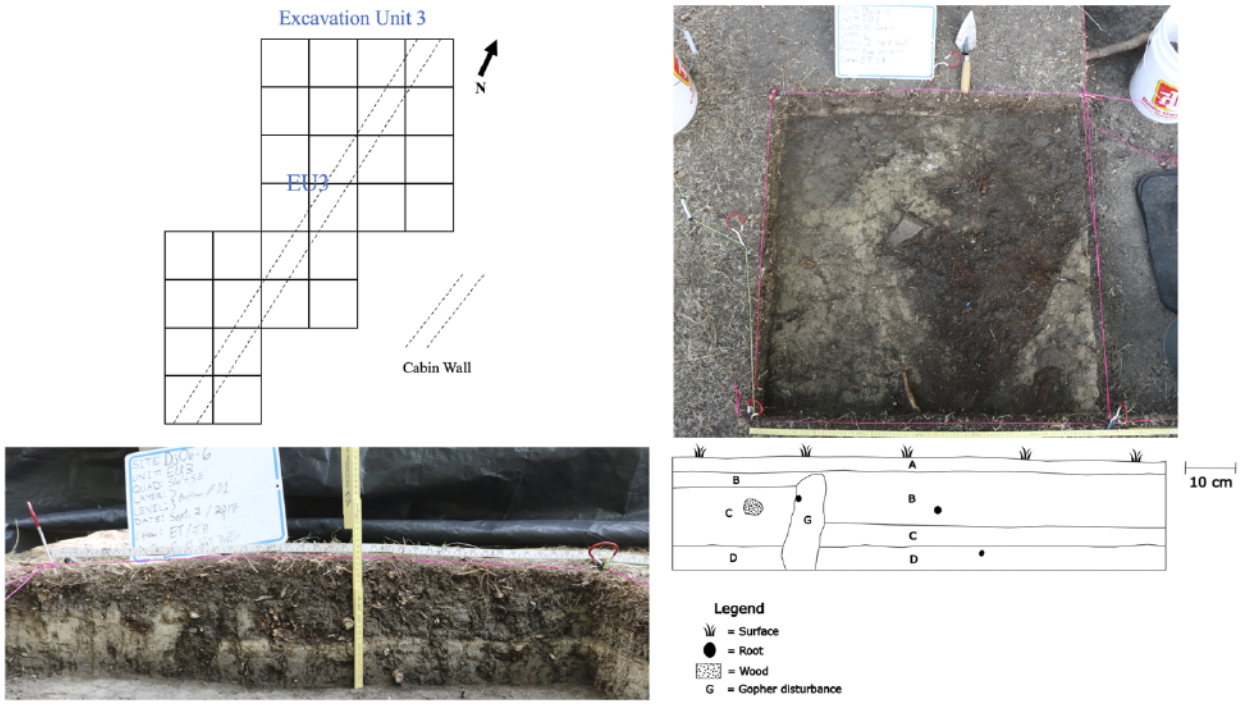

Figure 5.19 Excavation Unit 3: Location, overview, and south profile stratigraphy.

5.4.3.2 Unit Sedimentation

The sedimentation in this unit was the most intact of all the three units excavated in the 2017 field season with few natural disturbances. The black layer of loose topsoil was underlaid with a layer of very dark brown to dark yellowish-brown loam of medium compaction. It was under this layer that was later deemed to be the cabin layer of occupation. This cabin layer was approximately 10 cm thick at its maximum and was made of compact loamy clay. The sediment colour in this cabin layer varied in three distinct areas. Approximately 70% of the western and central side of the unit was determined to be within the cabin and consisted of a dark yellowish brown to light brown compact loamy clay. Approximately 20% of the unit in this layer comprised of a straight woody trench feature of mostly dark brown loose to medium compaction loam interspersed with wood fragments of various sizes. The last part of the unit contained in the southeastern side was dark grey to dark brown compact loamy clay and was reminiscent to most of the sediment from EU1. The bottom layer was again identified with a termination of historic artifacts nearing 19 cm DBD and a uniformity of very dark grey to very dark brown chunky loamy clay. The stratigraphy showed a clear difference in compaction all around the unit except for the eastern side of the south profile which lined up with the woody trench feature.

5.4.3.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.3. In general, this unit was notable for the large quantities of artifacts recovered but also the diversity of artifacts recovered. It contained 21.6% of all the beads (n=727) found which was the second highest number of beads after EU2. Excluding the beads in the flower beadwork pattern in EU2, this unit would have the

highest number of loose beads recovered. This unit also contained the higher number of ceramics (n=147) found at 29.5% which is almost a third of all ceramics. For machine cut nails, this unit contained the second highest number of nails recovered (n=17) after EU6. Exactly a third of all the lead shot (n=5) recovered came from this unit and the only percussion cap was found in this unit (n=1). All functional categories are well represented in this unit and highly reflects a known Métis *hivernant* assemblage.

Functional Category	**Quantity**
Architectural	**39**
Chinking	22
Machine Cut Nail	17
Kitchen	**150**
Ceramic	147
Glass Container	3
Personal	**733**
Adornment	728
Seed Beads	725
Beads Other	2
Brass Ring	1
Clothing	4
Button	4
Ritual	1
Rosary	1
Household Activities	**11**
Sewing	4
Straight Pins	4
Body Care	4
Comb Teeth	4
Lamp Glass	3
Hunting and Defense	**6**
Lead Shot	5

Percussion Cap	1
Miscellaneous	**907**
Glass Fragments	74
Metal Fragments	13
Lithics	92
Wood	57
Faunal	611
Fish Fragments	209
Others	402
Flora	14
Charcoal	11
Others	35

Table 5.3 Artifacts of EU3

5.4.3.4 Notable Artifacts

As mentioned, this unit contains many unique personal items. The middle of a heart shaped medallion Catholic rosary was recovered. Highly rusted, there are no markings associated with it limiting its diagnostics potential, but it resembles others found at *hivernant* sites (Doll et al. 1988:116, 290; Weinbender 2003:79-80). For a more detailed description of the types and styles of rosaries see Weinbender (2003:79-85). The other personal items include four different types of buttons. One is a four-hole, white ceramic Prosser button with pink speckles (DjOe-6:20607). This common type of button was made in the decades between 1840 – 1880 (Sprauge 2002:123). The two complete buttons are a four-hole metal button (DjOe-6:17787) and a four-hole bone button (DjOe-6:20618). Both styles are commonly found at all *hivernant* sites studied. Lastly the fragment of a decorative clay button front was found which appears to have been in the design of an anchor (DjOe-6:20603). A unique brass ring with an impressed dotted pattern was also found

(DjOe-6:20619). This is interesting because it was clearly a personal item that the owner would likely be habitually wearing and, presumably, somewhat difficult to lose.

This unit had the highest number of ceramics recovered but they were mostly patterns already found in the previous two units. Only the Shamrock pattern, produced between 1861 – 1910 (Hamilton 1982:63; Sussman 1979:211), was new to this unit. Several of the British Flower and Shamrock rim sherds refit together despite being found in different quadrants of the unit. One fragment (DjOe-6: 20711) of a large sherd with the Flower Vase pattern was found to refit with another sherd in EU4 which will be discussed later. Additionally, a fragment of pre-contact ceramic was found in this unit but underneath the historic component in the "D" layer.

Both lithics and faunal are not the focus of this study but this unit had two worth discussing. The right astragalus of a bison was recovered in the A/B layer (DjOe-6:13642). It is unique for both being on top of many layers but also for having signs of butcher marks along the side of it. One could imagine it was one of several faunal remains around the site that ended up deposited after the site was abandoned. The presence of a lithic scrapper (DjOe-6:17559) made from a Brown Chalcedony or Knife River Flint was found in the occupation layer.

Figure 5.20 Heart medallion rosary.

DjOe-6:20604

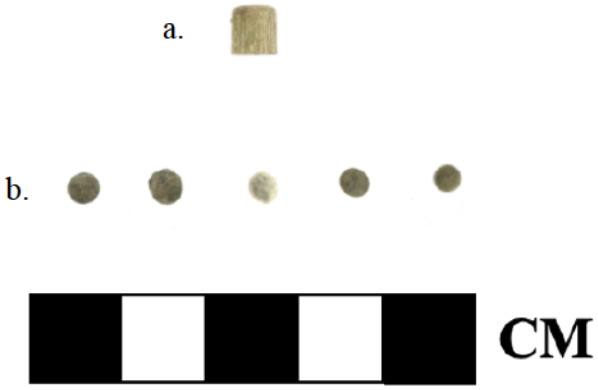

Figure 5.21 Hunting and defense artifacts

a. Percussion cap (DjOe-6:19346), b. Lead shot (DjOe-6:17832-17833, 19394, 13571, 13163, left to right)

Figure 5.22 Right astragulus of a bison with butcher marks.

DjOe-6:13642.

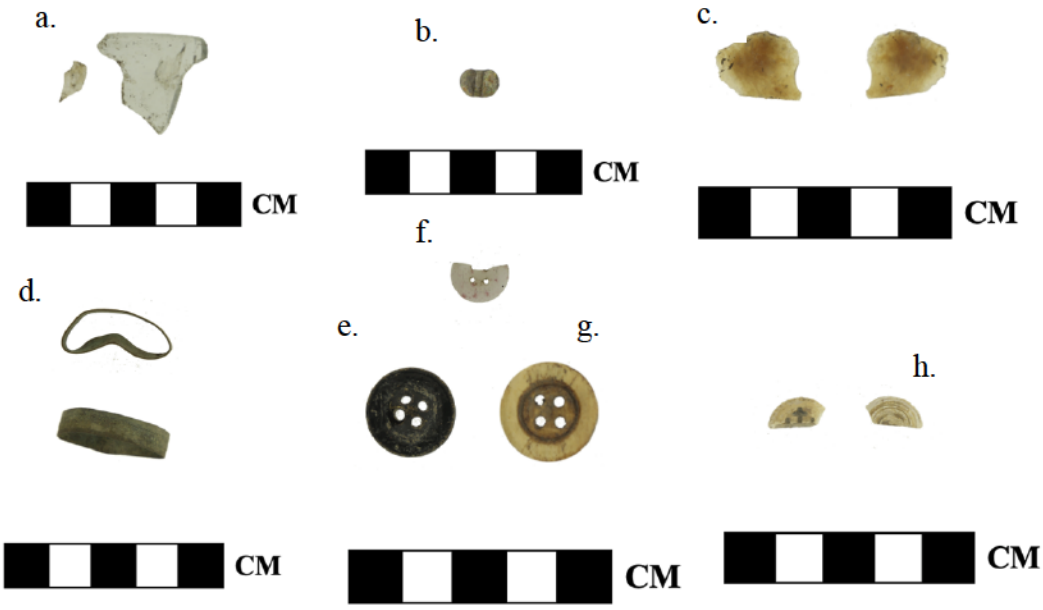

Figure 5.23 Plate of artifacts.

a. Glass bottle rim (DjOe-6:9835-9836), b. Wound bead, broken (DjOe-6:13212) (broken wound bead), c. Lithic scraper, brown chalcedony or knife river flint in appearance (DjOe-6:17559), d. Brass ring (DjOe-6:20619), e. Metal button (DjOe-6:17787), f. Prosser button, white with pink speckles (DjOe-6:20607), g. Bone button (DjOe-6:20618), f. Button fragment, broken with anchor symbol (DjOe-6:20603).

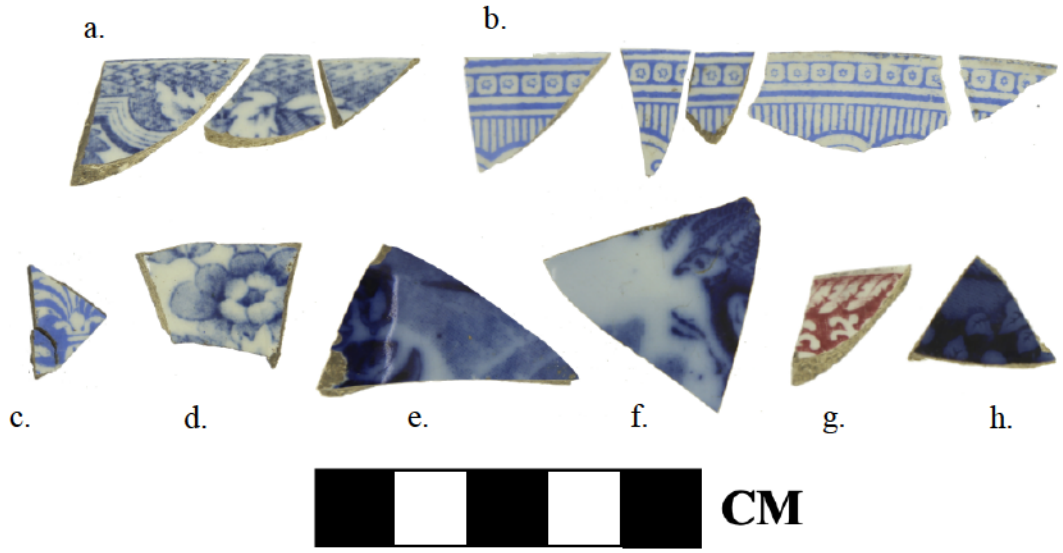

Figure 5.24 Ceramics.

a. British Flowers pattern, rim sherds (left to right, DjOe-6:20700, 19733, 20705), b. Shamrock pattern, rim sherds (left to right, DjOe-6:20713, 13567, 19732, 20694-20695), c. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:20584-20585), d. British Flowers pattern (DjOe-6:20706), e. Unknown blue pattern (DjOe-6:20704), f. Flower Vase pattern (DjOe-6:19735), g. Continental Views/Louis Quatorze pattern, red rim sherd (DjOe-6:20701), h. Flower Vase pattern, refits with DjOe-6:5352 in EU4 (DjOe-6:20711).

5.4.3.5 Summary

This unit was important for the wealth of historic artifacts that were reflective of the known Métis *hivernant* assemblage. Also, the well-preserved sedimentation revealed the presence of a woody trench feature that separated the artifact rich area of this unit from the, comparatively, less informative EU1. The success from this unit laid the foundation for the following 2018 field season and the following four units excavated.

5.4.4 Excavation Unit 4

5.4.4.1 Unit Description

This unit was the first to be excavated in the 2018 field season. It was chosen to further investigate the woody trench feature uncovered in the 2017 field season and to better understand the proposed cabin. This unit was adjacent to both EU2 and EU3, west of the former and north of the latter. Based on the direction and angle of the woody trench feature, this unit was predicted to be 100% within the cabin. This would be determined based on the absence of any such feature, the abundance of personal items, and a sediment type and compaction more similar to EU3 and less similar to EU1. A challenge faced in this unit was the abundance of gopher holes and natural disturbances but overall it fit the expectations laid out based on knowledge of previous units.

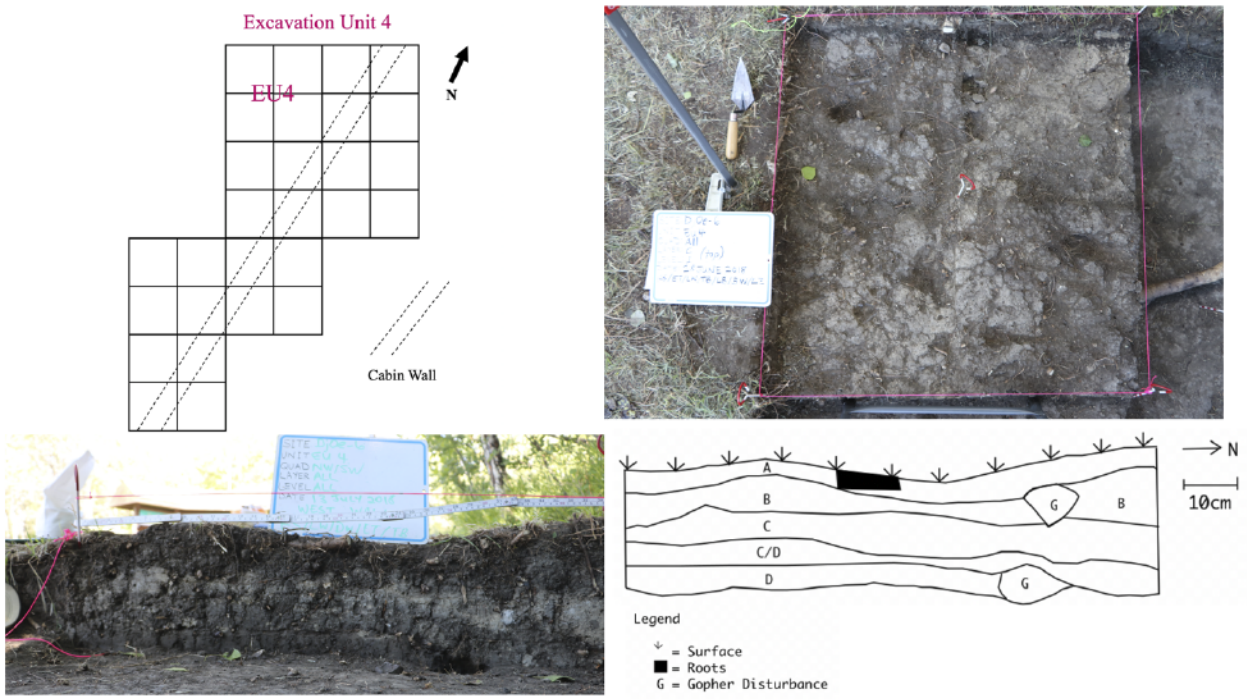

Figure 5.25 Excavation Unit 4: Location, overview, and west profile stratigraphy.

5.4.4.2 Unit Sedimentation

Despite the numerous gopher disturbances, the sedimentation in this unit was fairly intact enough for adequate interpretation. The very dark brown layer of loose topsoil was slightly mounded and was underlaid with a layer of medium hard dark grey sandy loam. It was in this second layer that the gopher disturbances were primarily uncovered. The next layer was the anticipated cabin layer that was approximately 10 cm thick and was mostly a medium hard to hard compact gray to light brownish grey loamy clay. The gopher disturbance revealed many pockets of sandy loam and old chokecherry seeds of which a large sample was collected. Much like the previous units, this cabin layer was identified with a termination of historic artifacts at approximately 20 cm DBD alongside a change of sediment to a uniform chunky dark greyish brown loamy clay. The stratigraphy was fairly uniform in compaction for both the western and northern profiles.

5.4.4.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.4.

EU4 is the only unit of the seven which is entirely located within the proposed cabin. This is reflected in the high number of artifacts within the Kitchen, Personal, and Household Activities category. This unit had the third highest number of beads found (n=696) which is around 20.7% of all beads recovered. This unit also contains the second highest number of ceramics found (n=100) which accounts for approximately 20% of all sherds recovered. Lastly, the sewing category is represented by straight pins (n=8) of which 21% of the assemblage were found in this unit, the second highest of all units. All functional categories in this unit are represented. Additionally, this unit had the lowest number of faunal and metal fragments found.

Functional Category	**Quantity**
Architectural	**9**
Machine Cut Nail	9
Kitchen	**101**
Ceramic	100
Glass Container	1
Personal	**701**
Adornment	699
Seed Beads	695
Beads Other	1
Earring	3
Clothing	2
Clasps	2
Household Activities	**12**
Sewing	8
Straight Pins	8

Body Care	2
Comb Teeth	2
Lamp Glass	2
Hunting and Defense	**6**
Lead Shot	6
Miscellaneous	**522**
Glass Fragments	51
Metal Fragments	9
Lithics	37
Wood	3
Faunal	397
Fish Fragments	107
Others	290
Flora	11
Charcoal	1
Others	13

Table 5.4 Artifacts of EU4

5.4.4.4 Notable Artifacts

As discussed, this unit contains the second highest number of ceramics recovered. Many large fragments were recovered and, if one were to make a rough estimate at the size and weight of all ceramics recovered, this unit would likely be an outlier. Two large bowl bottoms were recovered from this unit. One which was found in many fragments with the transferware Flower Vase pattern (DjOe-6:5362-5373). The other was a large white earthenware ceramic fragment recovered from a gopher hole (DjOe-6:5111). Another notable ceramic was the bottom fragment of a plate with the "Copeland" makers mark on it (DjOe-6:5352). This sherd had a detailed version of the Flower Vase pattern on it and refit with a fragment found in EU3 (see DjOe-

6:5352). More rim sherds of a British Flowers pattern (DjOe-6:5400-5413) was found and likely belonged to the same or similar vessel as in EU3 (see DjOe-6:20700, 19733, 20705). Another fragment of the unglazed grey ceramic bottom sherd was found (DjOe-6:6044) which was found to refit with a fragment in EU5 (see DjOe-6:6562).

As for other finds, there were not many unique artifacts recovered in this unit. Many of the same similar items are found such as lead shot, a large metal bead, straight pins, black vulcanized rubber comb teeth, small metal clasps, and more lithics (similar to the scrapper found in EU3; DjOe-6: 17559) found in the occupation layer. One unique personal belonging was an earring found in separate parts (DjOe-6:6070-6071, 6069). As discussed, few metal fragments (n=9) were found in this unit and they all likely came from two larger pieces found (DjOe-6: 5687, 5420. DjOe-6:5414-5415). This unit is the only one to be completely within the proposed cabin and these artifacts help to support that argument.

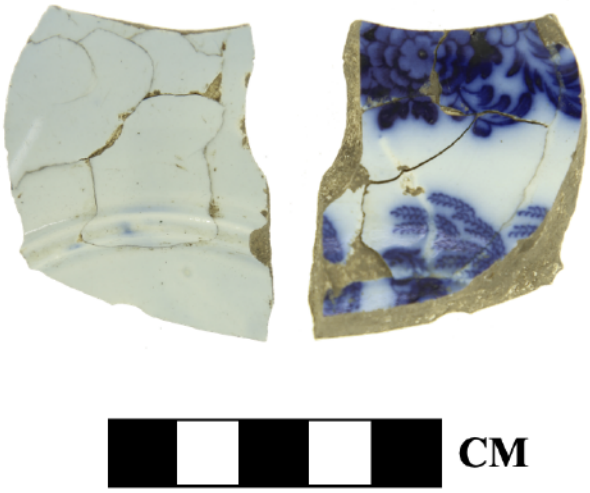

Figure 5.26 Large decorated transferware plate bottom.

Flower Vase pattern, bottom sherd (DjOe-6:5362-5373).

Figure 5.27 Large decorated plate.

Flower Vase pattern, refits with DjOe-6:20711 in EU3 (DjOe-6:5352).

Figure 5.28 Undecorated white glaze earthenware bowl bottom.

Found in a gopher hole within the unit (DjOe-5111).

Figure 5.29 Earring found in separate pieces.

(DjOe-6070-6071, 6069).

Figure 5.30 An unglazed grey ceramic bottom sherd.

Refits with DjOe-6:6562 in EU5 (DjOe-6:6044).

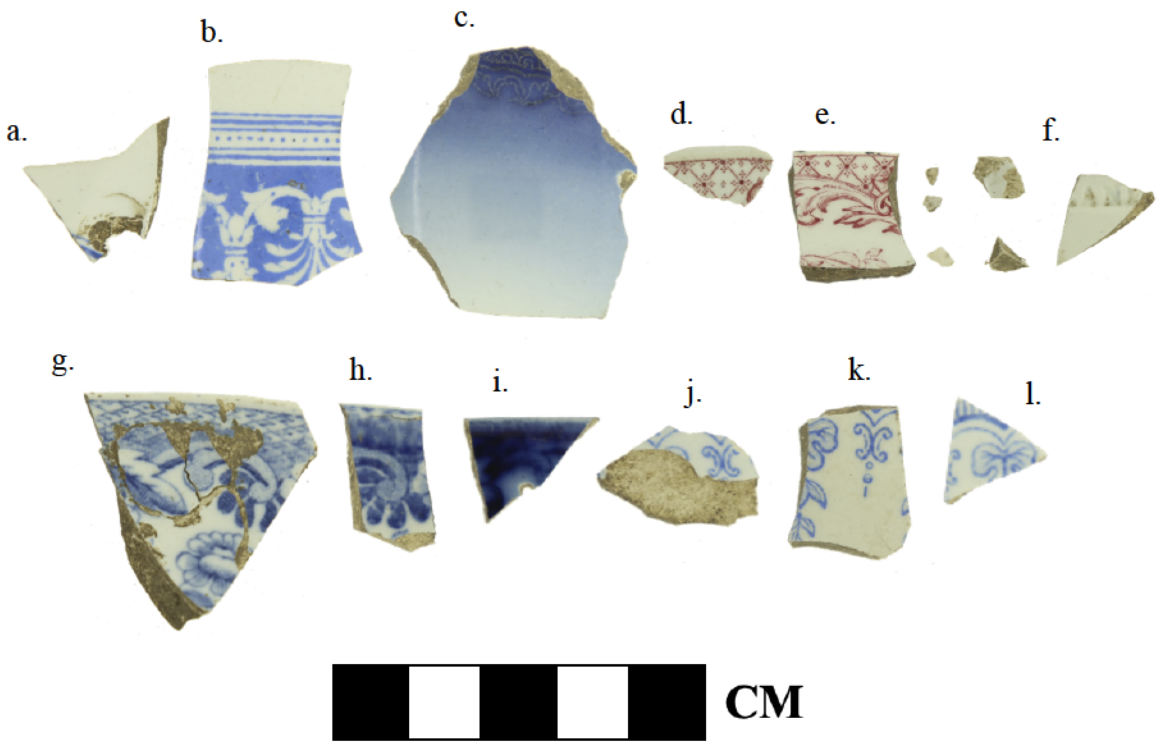

Figure 5.31 Ceramics found in EU4.

a. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:5391), b. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:5356), c. Macaw/Pagoda pattern (DjOe-6:8064), d. Unknown red pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:5390), e. Unknown red patter, (DjOe-6:5130), f. Small sherds with part of an impressed "Copeland" mark (DjOe-6:5899-5904), g. British Flowers pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:5400-5413), h. British Flowers pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:5162), i. Flower Vase pattern (DjOe-6:5375), j. Shamrock pattern (DjOe-6:5419), k. Shamrock pattern (DjOe-6:5170), l. Shamrock pattern (DjOe-6:5096).

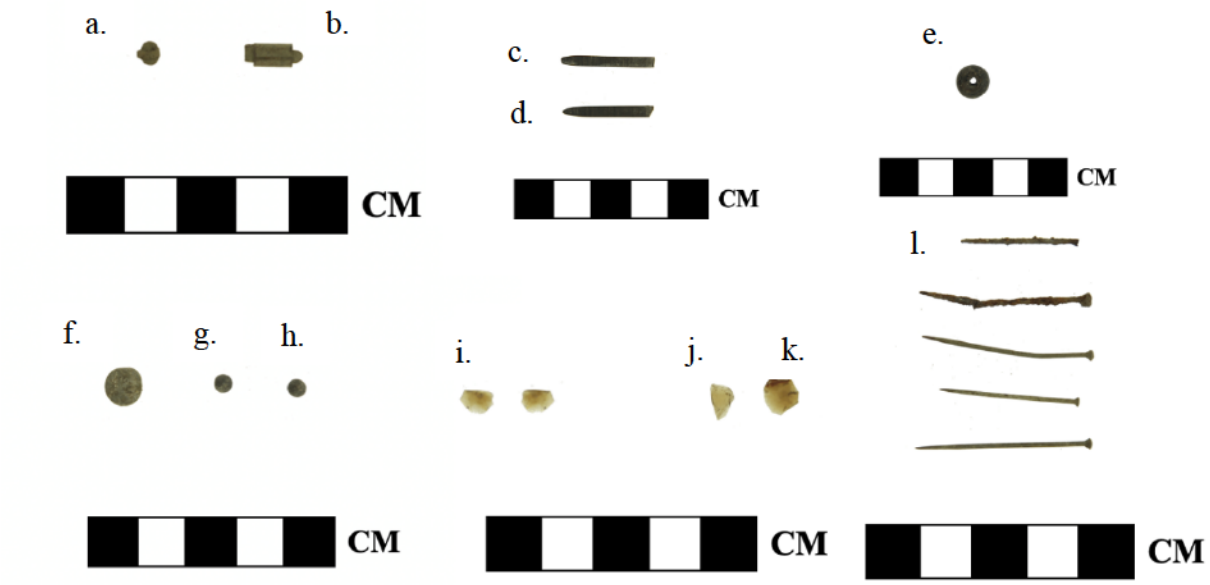

Figure 5.32 Other artifacts found.

a. Clasp (DjOe-6:5557), b. Clasp (DjOe-6:5295). c. Rubber comb bristle (DjOe-6:5085), d. Rubber comb bristle (DjOe-6:5157), e. Wound bead (DjOe-6:5151), f. Lead shot, flattened (DjOe-6:6068), g. Lead shot (DjOe-6:5622), h. Lead shot (DjOe-6:5975), i., j., k., Lithic debitage, brown chalcedony or knife river flint in appearance (left to right, DjOe-6:5524, 5740-5741), l. Straight pins (top to bottom, DjOe-6:5267, 5064, 5109, 5097, 5093).

5.4.4.5 Summary

Despite the gopher disturbances, this unit was fairly straightforward to understand and interpret. In one instance, the presence of a gopher hole seems to have helped to preserve a large part of a what appears to be a transferware tea cup. This was the first unit that was completely within the cabin and contained a high number of artifacts associated with the "Personal and Recreational"

category. When just looking at the bead totals, it ranked the second highest in number. As predicted, this unit highly resembled EU3 in both sedimentation and finds while lacking the woody trench feature.

5.4.5 Excavation Unit 5

5.4.5.1 Unit Description

This unit was the first of the 2018 field season to investigate a large portion of the woody trench feature found in the previous year. The primary research question was to answer if the trend of artifact distribution within the proposed cabin found in EU3 continued and if it was separated by this trench feature. This unit was placed directly south of the adjacent unit EU3. It was predicted to be more like EU1 in both artifact counts and sedimentation with the woody trench feature to be contained mostly in the northwestern quadrant of the unit. Overall, this interpretation held true as it contained less "Personal" associated artifacts than EU1 and approximately half of them were contained in the northwestern quadrant where the wooden trench feature lay.

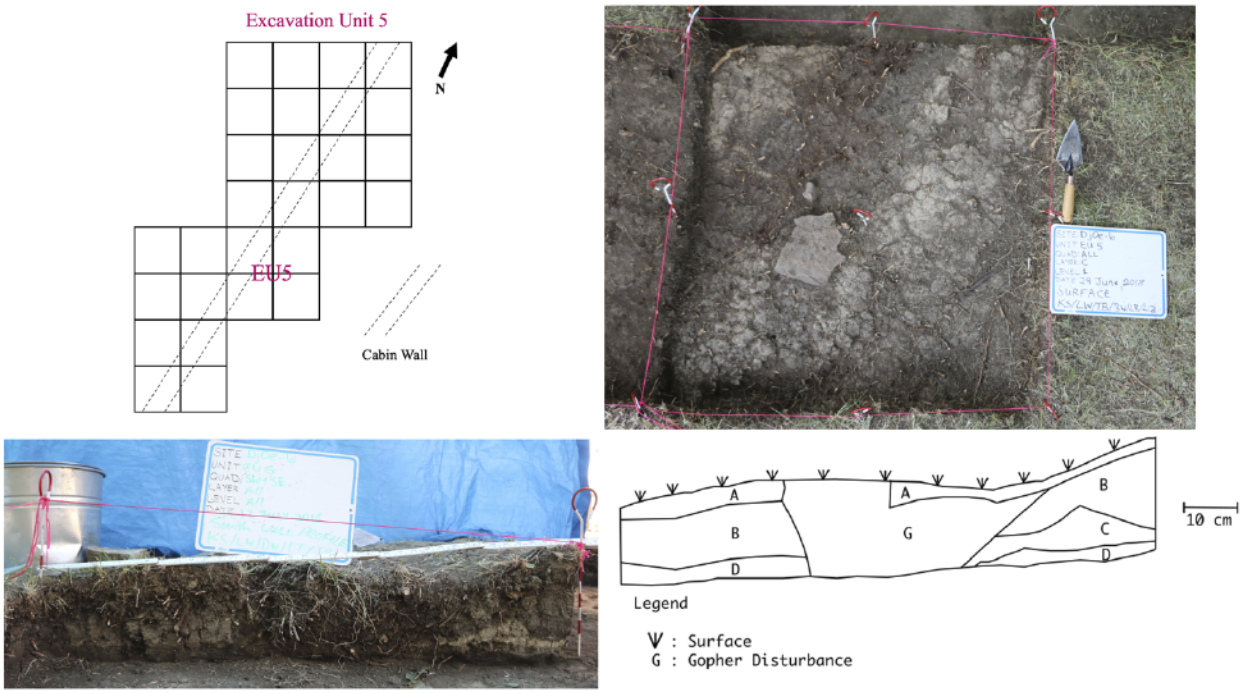

Figure 5.33 Excavation Unit 5: Location, overview, and south profile stratigraphy.

5.4.5.2 Unit Sedimentation

This unit resembled EU1 in sedimentation. The loose sandy loam topsoil was underlaid by a layer of greyish brown chunky and somewhat compact loam. Like EU1 the cabin occupation layer was not present but instead the third layer revealed a patchwork of differing sediment. The exception to this was the woody trench feature that was present in the northwestern quadrant which contained some dark greyish brown soil interspersed with wood fragments and some pale red compact loamy clay in the very far northwest corner of the unit. Overall, this third layer contained many different and difficult to interpret soils but was mostly absent by approximately 22 cm DBD. Like the other units, the bottom layer was identified with the termination of historic artifacts and the appearance of a uniform layer of very dark greyish brown chunky loamy clay. The stratigraphy in this unit on the western profile was not recorded due to EU6 having already

been partially excavated by the time EU5 was completed. The other profiles on the eastern and southern sides were unremarkable as they were determined to be outside of the proposed cabin.

5.4.5.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.5. Only around 3.3% of all beads were found in this unit (n=111) which was the fewest of all seven units. There were also few ceramics found (n=28) accounting for only around 5.6% of sherds recovered. This is the second fewest ceramics found after EU1. Apart from the few fragments of window glass found in EU1 (n=4), this unit had the only other piece of window glass which is a singular long fragment. Additionally, this unit has the fewest number of nails (n=6) representing only around 7.3% of the total found. This unit contained artifacts representing all the functional categories but, much like EU1, at low levels. As mentioned, it was determined that this unit lay mostly outside of the proposed cabin structure.

Functional Category	**Quantity**
Architectural	**7**
Machine Cut Nail	6
Window Glass	1
Kitchen	**28**
Ceramic	28
Personal	**111**
Adornment	111
Seed Beads	111
Household Activities	**6**
Sewing	4
Straight Pins	4
Body Care	2

Comb Teeth	2
Hunting and Defense	**3**
Lead Shot	3
Miscellaneous	**866**
Glass Fragments	50
Metal Fragments	10
Lithics	78
Stone Fragments	1
Faunal	619
Fish Fragments	298
Others	421
Flora	6
Others	2

Table 5.5 Artifacts of EU5

5.4.5.4 Notable Artifacts

The first notable artifact worth discussing is another bottom fragment of an unglazed grey ceramic (DjOe-6:6562). Two more fragments of what seem to be a similar or the same artifact were found in EU2 and another fragment was found in EU4 which refit with this one (DjOe-6:6044). This is interesting because the fragments are found on either side of the proposed cabin wall. A reasonable explanation would be either post-depositional movement or that that this piece was simply discarded outside of the cabin while the others were deposited into the cabin floor.

The other artifacts worth mentioning are the ceramics found in this unit. The most notable being a sizable and decorated rim sherd (DjOe-6:6375). It is a Thistle pattern produced by Spode and Copeland with a manufacturing date 1869-early 20th-century (Hamilton 1982:63;

Sussman 1979:219). This is unique as it would be reasonable to estimate a timeline of production to transportation to this site being around two seasons. Therefore, a reasonable earliest time of arrival at this site being around 1871. This pattern is also found in other units. This artifact is thin and curved in a manner suggestive of a teacup. The only other diagnostic ceramic fragment was another couple pieces of the Elcho pattern as seen in other units. More fragments of a light brown glazed stoneware vessel were found.

Figure 5.34 Thistle pattern.

Large rim sherd, likely from a teacup (DjOe-6:6375).

Figure 5.35 Glazed stoneware ceramics.

(DjOe-6:6371-6372).

Figure 5.36 Unglazed grey ceramic vessel bottom.

Refits with DjOe-6044 in EU4 (DjOe-6:6562).

Figure 5.37 Window glass.

(DjOe-6:6376)

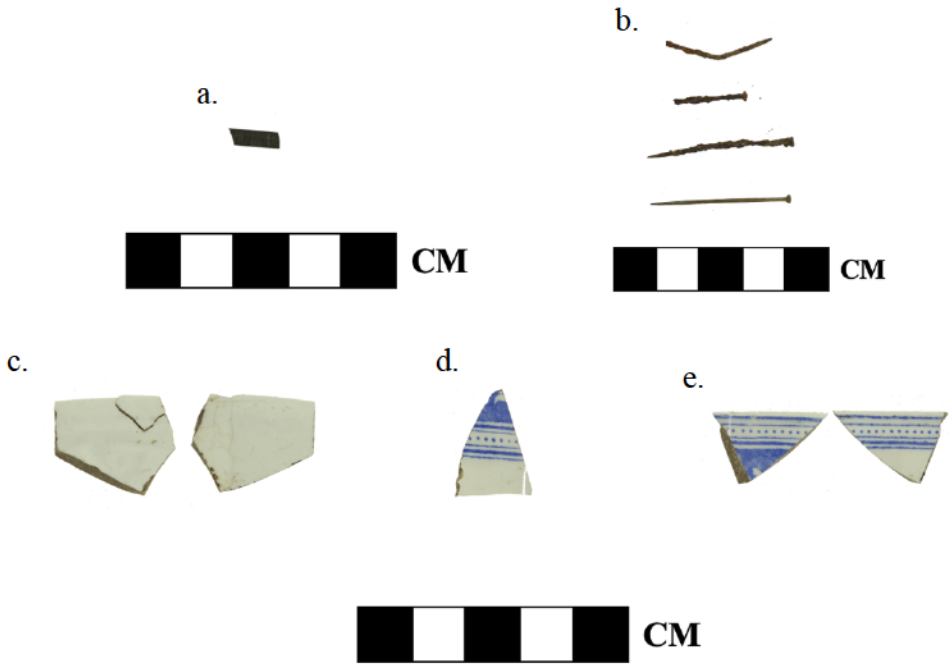

Figure 5.38 Domestic Artifact Plate.

a. Black vulcanized rubber comb bristle (DjOe-6:7202), b. Straight pins (top to bottom, DjOe:67200, 7162-7164), c. Whiteware ceramic (DjOe-6:6548, 6545), d. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:6406), e. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:6386).

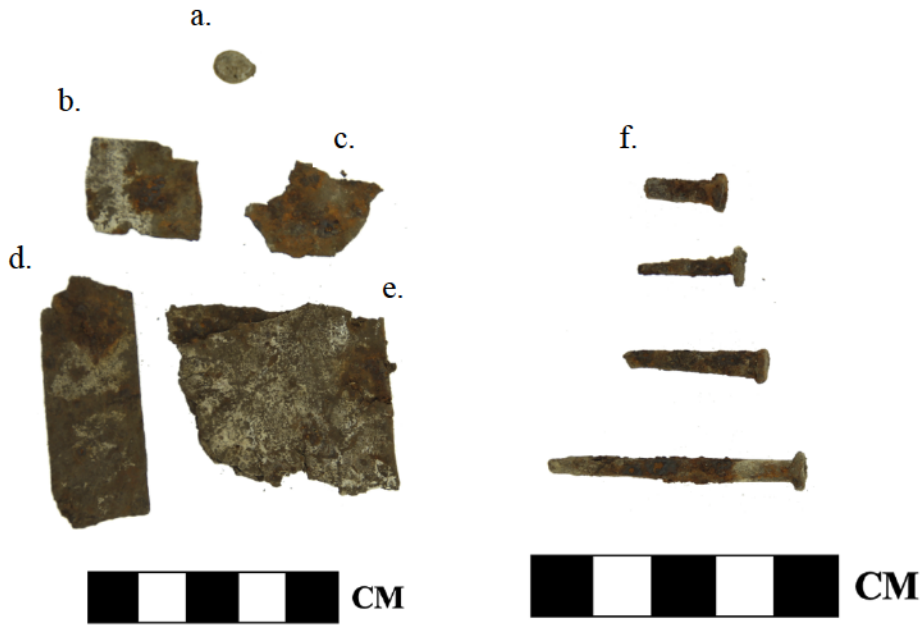

Figure 5.39 Metal fragments

a. Lead shot, flattened (DjOe-6683), b., c., d., e., Metal fragments (sequentially, DjOe-6:6556, 6553, 6555, 6554), f. Machine cut nails (top to bottom, DjOe-6:16017, 6387, 6407, 6417).

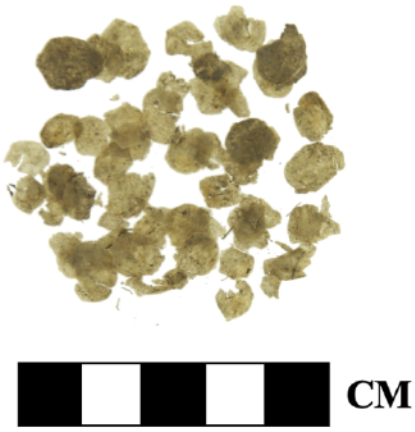

Figure 5.40 Fish scales

(DjOe-6:7040-7097).

5.4.5.5 Summary

The clear continuation of the woody trench feature found in 2017 was the most notable part of this unit. Despite the relative shortcomings of historic artifacts, this unit served its purpose in helping to answer the research questions regarding the proposed cabin. Much like EU1, most of the historic artifacts were in the northwestern quadrant, the only part of the unit along the woody trench feature. The lack of data in this unit still provided clear data within the larger context of the research project.

5.4.6 Excavation Unit 6

5.4.6.1 Unit Description

This unit was the second one of the 2018 field season to contain the woody trench feature. Based on the angle and direction of the feature in EU3 and EU5, this unit was predicted to be mostly within the cabin and to contain a high number of personal items much like EU3. Overall, this prediction held true as it contained the third highest number of beads and other personal items which was comparable to the other two units which were determined to be within the cabin, EU3 and EU4. The woody trench feature was present along the southeastern quadrant of the unit and continued along the predicted angle. This unit was placed directly west of the adjacent EU5.

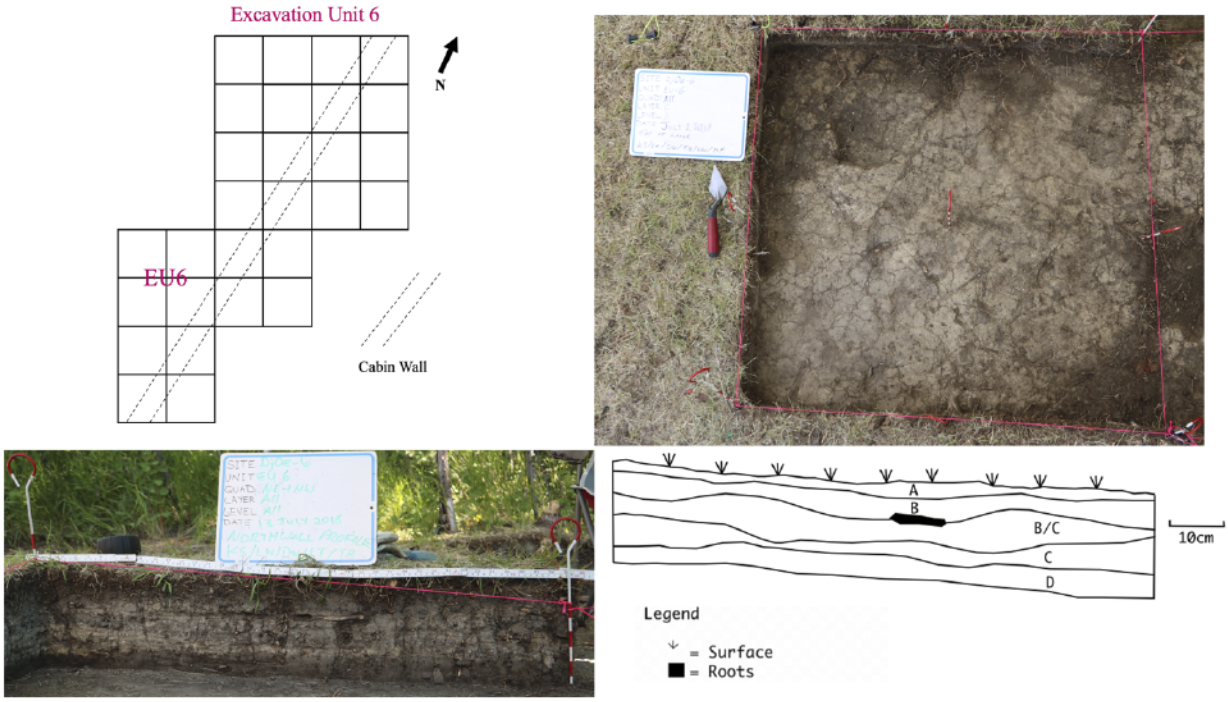

Figure 5.41 Excavation Unit 6: Location, overview, and north profile stratigraphy.

5.4.6.2 Unit Sedimentation

The first layer consisted of the typical loosely compact dark brown sandy loam topsoil interspersed with grass roots. From there, each subsequent layer was mostly intact and free of any natural disturbances. The second layer consisted of a dark greyish brown slightly sandy loam of medium compaction. Beneath that layer was the typical "C" occupation layer with the associated woody trench. Unique to this unit, based on the sedimentation, the occupation layer was only around 5 cm deep in this unit. Much like EU3, most of the unit was determined to be within the cabin and consisted of a light reddish brown and compact mottled loamy clay. Much like the other units, the woody trench feature contained a mostly dark brown medium compacted loam with many small wood fragments. The bottom layer contained the typical dark greyish brown chunky loamy clay and had a sudden termination of historic artifacts.

The stratigraphy along the northern and western profiles showed similar compaction to the profiles seen in the northern and western profiles of EU3. The southern profile showed similar compaction with the exception of an altered compaction of the woody trench feature in the eastern corner of the profile.

5.4.6.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.6. EU6 was almost fully within the cabin area and was expected to be more reflective of EU3 and EU4. This unit contained the fourth highest quantity of beads (n=573) with approximately 17% of all recovered. It also contained the fourth highest number of ceramics (n=55) at around 11% of all recovered. EU6 was exceptional for the number of straight pins found, containing the greatest quantity of straight

pins (n=18) at with 47.4% of all recovered. This was almost half of all pins found within the entire excavation. Surprisingly, this unit lacked any other unique personal items like special adornments. It mostly had common personal items found in other units such as comb teeth and kitchen items such as lead foil. This unit also lacked artifacts within the "Hunting and Defense" functional category. The greatest number of nails (n=20) were also found in this unit at 24.4% or almost one quarter of all nails found. Lastly, this unit had the second most amount of faunal remains (n=1144) which contrasts with EU4 which had the fewest and was also fully within the cabin. This might be on account of EU7, the adjacent unit, having the highest number of faunal (n=1258).

Functional Category	**Quantity**
Architectural	**20**
Machine Cut Nail	20
Kitchen	**58**
Ceramic	55
Lead Foil	6
Glass Container	1
Personal	**575**
Adornment	573
Seed Beads	572
Beads Other	1
Clothing	2
Clasps	2
Household Activities	**24**
Sewing	18
Straight Pins	18
Body Care	6

Comb	1
Comb Teeth	5
Miscellaneous	**1525**
Glass Fragments	232
Metal Fragments	11
Lithics	129
Faunal	1144
Fish Fragments	438
Others	706
Flora	3
Others	6

Table 5.6 Artifacts of EU6

5.4.6.4 Notable Artifacts

Five fragments of black vulcanized rubber comb teeth were found in this unit. Three of the teeth (DjOe-6:8049, 8454, 8455) resembled the others found in the excavation. Two of which were found to be from a different style of comb with thinner and more pointed teeth (DjOe-6:8962, 8686). Part of a louse bone comb (DjOe-6:8870) was recovered of the same or similar style as the one found in EU1 (DjOe-6:11359).

A significant find in this unit was a line of eight white beads found. It was recovered on the top of the occupation or "C" layer. This sting of beads (DjOe-8860-8868) was found inside the cabin and it is further representative of the cultural activity of beading which had occurred here. Much like the flower beadwork, this string of beads was found and recovered thanks to the careful excavation methods that were employed for this project. They were removed separately but catalogued and kept together.

As mentioned, this unit contained almost half of all the straight pins found in the excavation. Knowing that beading had likely occurred in this unit, it does not come to much surprise that so many pins were also found. Possibly used for sewing, the discussion surrounding the functional utility of straight pins can best be summarized in Weinbender (2003:95-98). Straight pins are strongly associated with various domestic skills and activities. As described by Weinbender (2003:95-98), Petite Ville was notable for the large quantities of straight pins found which had been seemingly bent in various shapes for unknown purposes. All the pins found during this research have been either straight, rusted, or had a slight bend. Only one pin (DjOe-6:7885), found in this unit, has been clearly bent in the shape of "U" or "J". The purpose or function of this pin is unknown.

This unit contained many of the same ceramic patterns as found in other units. The Honeysuckle pattern, produced between 1855 – post-1882 (Hamilton 1982:62; Sussman 1979:126), was the only newly identified pattern. Another sherd of the unknown red pattern (DjOe-6:8977) was found in this unit. A design of what appears to be a Grape Hyacinthe pattern can be seen on this pattern. Many rim sherds and two body sherds of a Shamrock patterned teacup were also found (DjOe-6:9080, 8974, 8997, 8050-8052, 8059, 7361).

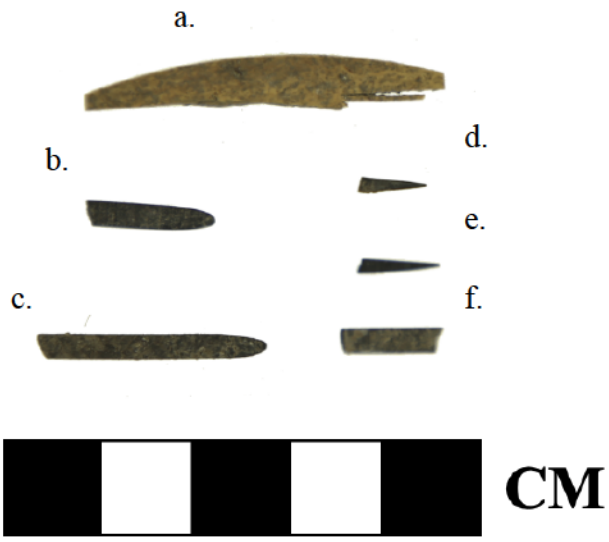

Figure 5.42 Comb

a. Louse bone comb (DjOe-6:8870), b., c., d., e., f. Black vulcanized rubber comb teeth (Sequentially, DjOe-6:8049, 8454, 8962, 8686, 8455).

Figure 5.43 Large unmarked glass bottom.

(DjOe-6:8976).

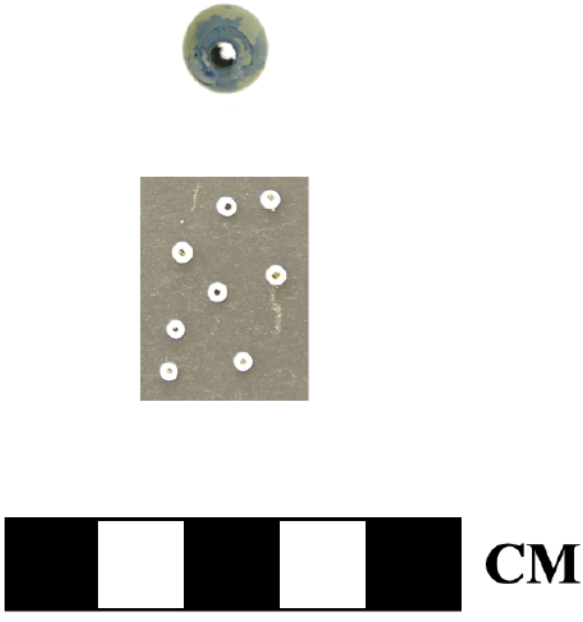

Figure 5.44 Beads

Wound bead, blue (DjOe-6:8000), White seed beads, found in situ in one sting (DjOe-8859-8866).

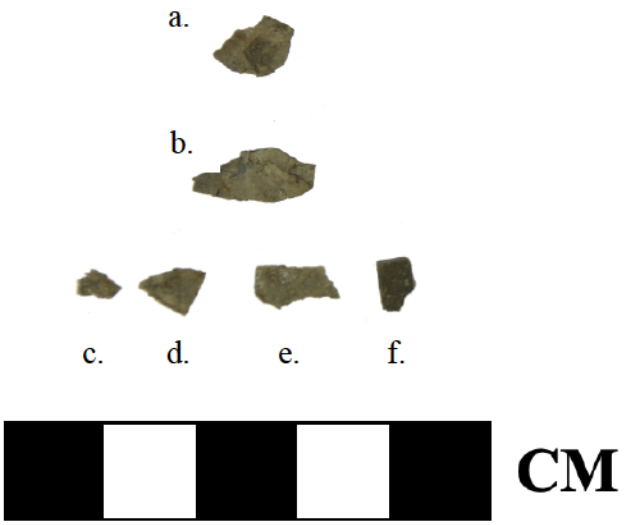

Figure 5.45 Lead Foil.

a., b. (DjOe-6:7798-7799), c., d., e., f. (DjOe-6:8889-8892).

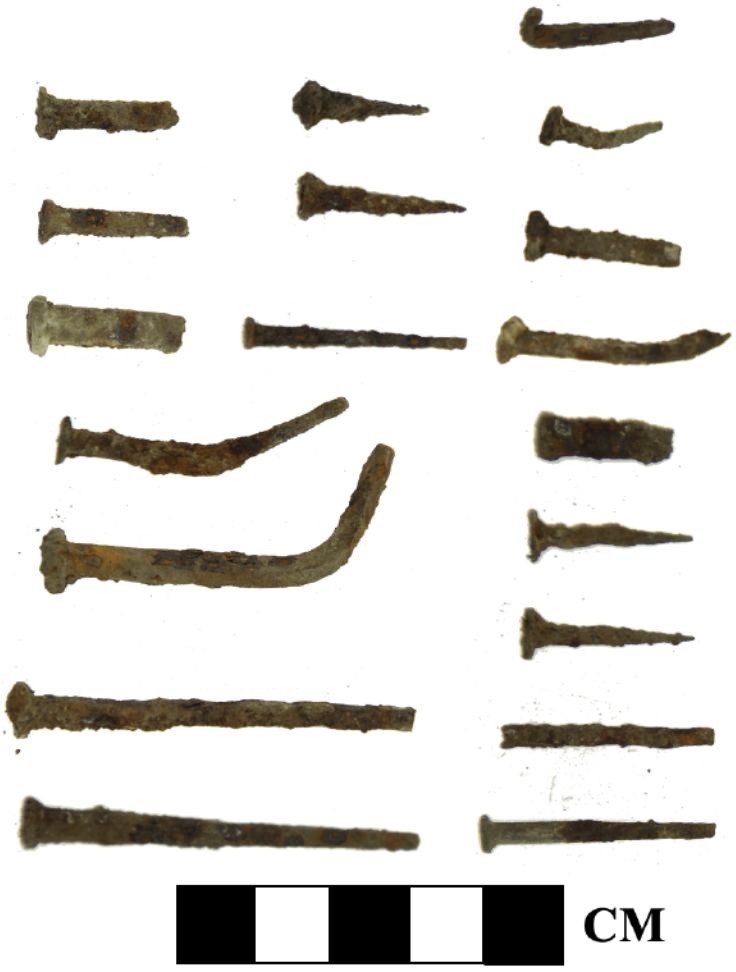

Figure 5.46 Machine cut nails.

Left column (top to bottom, DjOe-6:8021, 8056, 8063, 8981, 8022, 8024, 7812), Middle column (top to bottom, DjOe-6:9310, 8909, 8887), Right column (top to bottom, DjOe-6:7771, 7901, 7922, 7902, 9123, 9120, 9119, 9124, 8993).

Figure 5.47 Straight pins

Left column (top to bottom, DjOe-6:7354, 8885, 7772, 8810-8811, 8682-8685, 8057), Right column (top to bottom, DjOe-6:8342-8343, 8452-8453, 7885, 7928, 7929, 7763).

Figure 5.48 Ceramics.

a. Shamrock pattern (DjOe-6:9080), b. Shamrock pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:8974), c. Shamrock pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:8997), d. Shamrock pattern, rim sherds (DjOe-6:8050-8052), e. Shamrock pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:8059), f. Shamrock pattern (DjOe-6:7361), g. Unknown red pattern (DjOe-6:8977), h. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:8989), i. Elcho pattern (DjOe-6:7350), j. Honeysuckle pattern (DjOe-6:7356-7359), k. Continental Views/Louis Quatorze pattern, rim sherd (DjOe-6:8965), l. Macaw/Pagoda pattern (DjOe-6:8023), m. Thistle pattern (DjOe-6:7912).

Figure 5.49 White bead string in situ.

5.4.6.5 Summary

This unit further helped to give weight to the idea that this was a *hivernant* cabin based the artifacts found. EU6 contained a high number of personal artifacts comparable to EU3 and EU4. All three of these units lay on the western side of the woody trench feature and, collectively, contain the overwhelming majority of domestic associated artifacts. The string of white beads helped to compliment all the previous evidence that suggested the occupants of the cabin were engaged in beading activities at the time of deposition. This unit was also remarkable for the number of straight pins found. Overall, this unit provided a valuable sample of artifacts to support this study.

5.4.7 Excavation Unit 7

5.4.7.1 Unit Description

This was the last unit excavated in the 2018 field season. The woody trench feature crossed through all but the northwestern quadrant with approximately 60% of this unit being within the cabin. Sedimentation was comparable with what had been seen in the previous units. The historic artifacts were somewhat lower than expected in this unit. The totals were more comparable to EU1 and EU5 which were almost completely outside of the cabin. Overall, this unit continued to support the previously observed trends in this study.

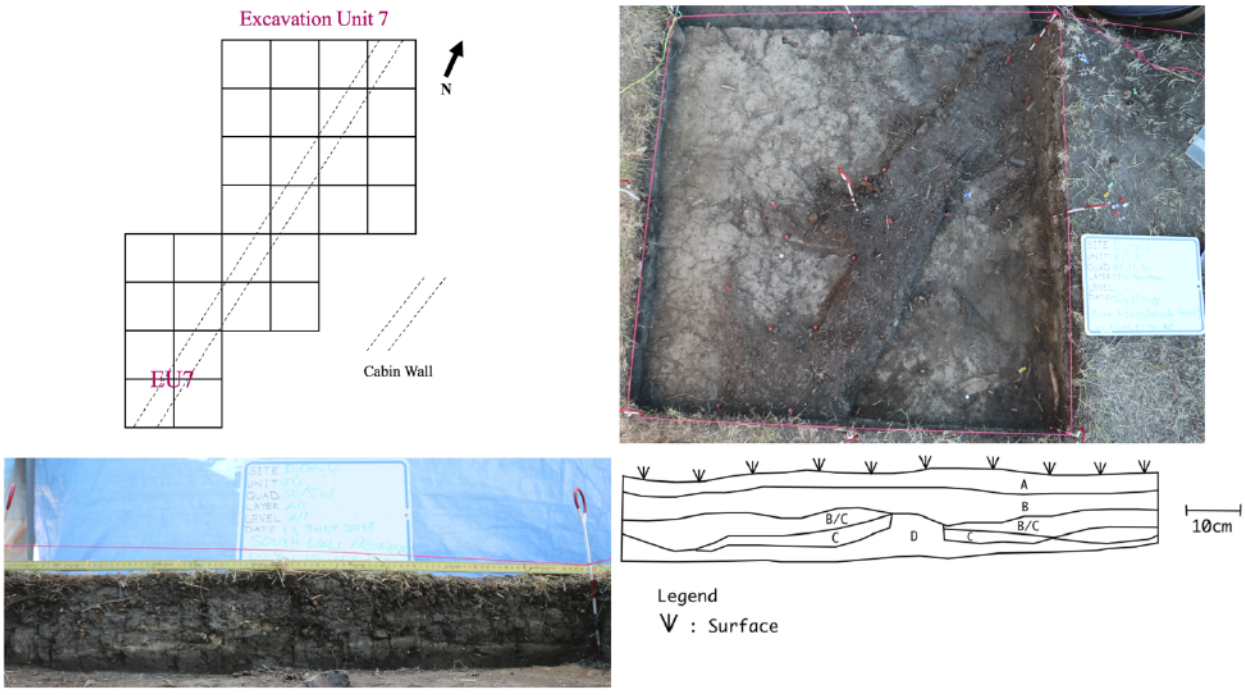

Figure 5.50 EU7 location, overview, and south profile stratigraphy.

5.4.7.2 Unit Sedimentation

The topsoil layer contained the typically observed loose dark brown loam. The second layer contained dark greyish brown loamy clay of medium compaction with some patches of sandy

loam. Additionally, this second layer also contained a surprisingly diagnostic artifact in the form of a container bottle which will be discussed later in this section. The occupation "C" layer was smaller than expected but followed a northern sloping trend observed across all units. This layer was mostly a light reddish brown and compact mottled loamy clay in the roughly 60% of the unit determined to be within the cabin. The woody trench feature within the occupation layer was a mostly dark brown loose to medium compacted loam. The feature was exceptionally apparent in this unit and well documented as a result. The southeast corner of the occupation layer was a greyish brown compact loamy clay. The bottom layer saw the typical termination of historic artifacts and contained a dark greyish brown chunky loamy clay.

The stratigraphy was comparable to what was observed with the other units transected by the woody trench feature. The western profile showed a clear compaction representative of the occupation layer while the eastern profile lacked any signs of this. The southern profile was a comparable split between the two with the trench feature as the dividing line.

5.4.7.3 Artifact Totals

The total artifacts found in this unit are presented in Table 5.7. EU7 was another unit that was mostly half split inside and outside of the proposed cabin much like EU2. Surprisingly, this unit contained the second lowest number of beads found (n=117) at around 3.5% of the total recovered. EU7 was also one of two units that contained no straight pins. This was unexpected as the adjacent unit, EU6, contained the greatest number of straight pins. In contrast, this unit contained the third highest number (n=96) of ceramics found at around 19.3% of all recovered.

All functional categories in this unit are represented. Additionally, this unit contained the highest quantity of faunal remains recovered (n=1258).

Functional Category	Quantity
Architectural	**52**
Machine Cut Nail	11
Chinking	41
Kitchen	**104**
Ceramic	96
Lead Foil	4
Glass Container	4
Personal	**117**
Adornment	117
Seed Beads	117
Household Activities	**2**
Body Care	2
Comb Teeth	2
Hunting and Defense	**1**
Ammunition	1
Miscellaneous	**1558**
Glass Fragments	90
Metal Fragments	21
Lithics	147
Stone Fragment	4
Wood	22
Faunal	1258
Fish Fragments	204
Others	1054
Flora	3
Modern	3
Others	10

Table 5.7 Artifacts of EU7

5.4.7.4 Notable Artifacts

This unit has two diagnostic glass containers that were recovered inside the cabin area. The first is a cylindrical glass bottle bottom (DjOe-6:9379) with the letters "G.W." impressed onto it. This mark corresponds with the Great Western Glass Company/Great Western Glass Works in St. Louis, Missouri (Whitten n.d.). Fort Benton in Montana Territory had been receiving supplies from St. Louis by steamboat since the 1860s which likely highlights the path this product took (Corbin 2006:24-30). This company produced many bottles of medicinal products such as Castor Oil for export to the frontier during this time. Interestingly, the date of production for this bottle are the years between 1874 – 1887 (Whitten n.d.). It took several months for a steamboat to reach Fort Benton from St. Louis so the earliest this bottle could have arrived at the site was likely 1875 (Corbin 2006:24-30). This date range corresponds with the second (1874-1878) and third (1878-1882) occupation period of this site as identified in Chapter 3. The fact that this bottle was found in the "B" layer above the main occupation layer "C" gives more weight to idea that this cabin was primarily occupied during the second and not the third period. The second glass container (DjOe-6:9714) has a rectangular shape impressed with "411". To date, nothing can be found positively identifying artifact to a manufacturer. This container was also found in the "B" layer.

Another diagnostic artifact found was the spent .44 Henry centre-fire cartridge. This type of ammunition was common for the period and found at other *hivernant* sites (Weinbender 2003:102; Doll et al. 1988:86-89). The range of production for this ammunition was 1860-1898. For more discussion regarding Henry rifles and their known use among the Métis, see Doll et al. (1988:86-89). EU7 also contained many other commonly found artifacts such as comb teeth, lead

foil, and machine cut nails. The identifiable ceramics found in this unit were all patterns found throughout the excavation in other units. At least two new unidentifiable patterns were recovered (DjOe-6:9679 & 9334, 9745, 9729).

This unit also contained the only modern artifacts found in the entire excavation represented by a sherd of brown beer bottle glass (DjOe-6:9386), a wire cut nail (DjOe-6:9382), and a bottle cap (DjOe-6:9383). They were all found at the transitional area between layers A/B on top of the "B" layer. Clearly 20th-century intrusions, they represent the settler history of when this site was part of a ranch and then later as a popular hangout spot for local youths. Lastly, another lithic scrapper was found in this unit, and it appears to have been made from some type of white chert or Swan River chert (DjOe-6:9700). It was found at the bottom of the "B" layer in the area outside of the cabin.

Figure 5.51 G.W. bottle base.

Found in top of "B" layer in the northwest quadrant on the inside the cabin (DjOe-6:9379).

Great Western Glass Company/Great Western Glass Works: 1874 – 1887. St. Louis, Missouri.

They primarily made medicine such as Castor Oil (Whitten n.d.).

Figure 5.52 Glass Container with the number "411" on it.

No history of manufacturer was found (DjOe-6:9714).

Figure 5.53 Henry Rifle Casing.

(DjOe-6:9717).

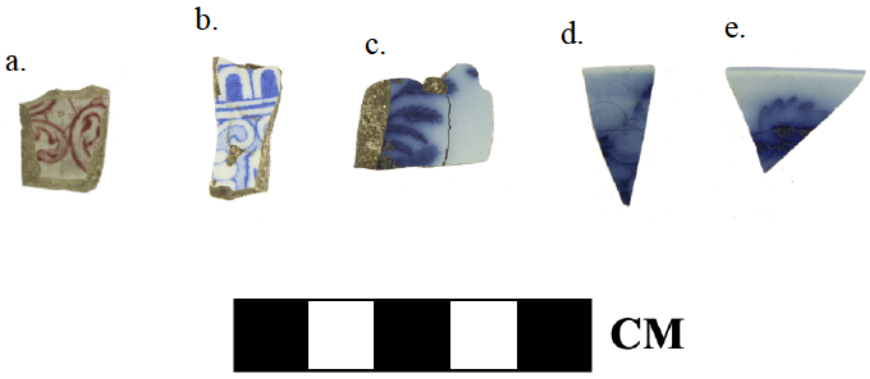

Figure 5.54 Ceramics.

a. Unknown red pattern (DjOe-6:9722), b. Honeysuckle pattern (DjOe-6:9347), c. Unknown blue pattern (DjOe-6:9679, 9334), d. Unknown blue pattern (DjOe-6:9745), e. Unknown blue pattern (DjOe-6:9729).

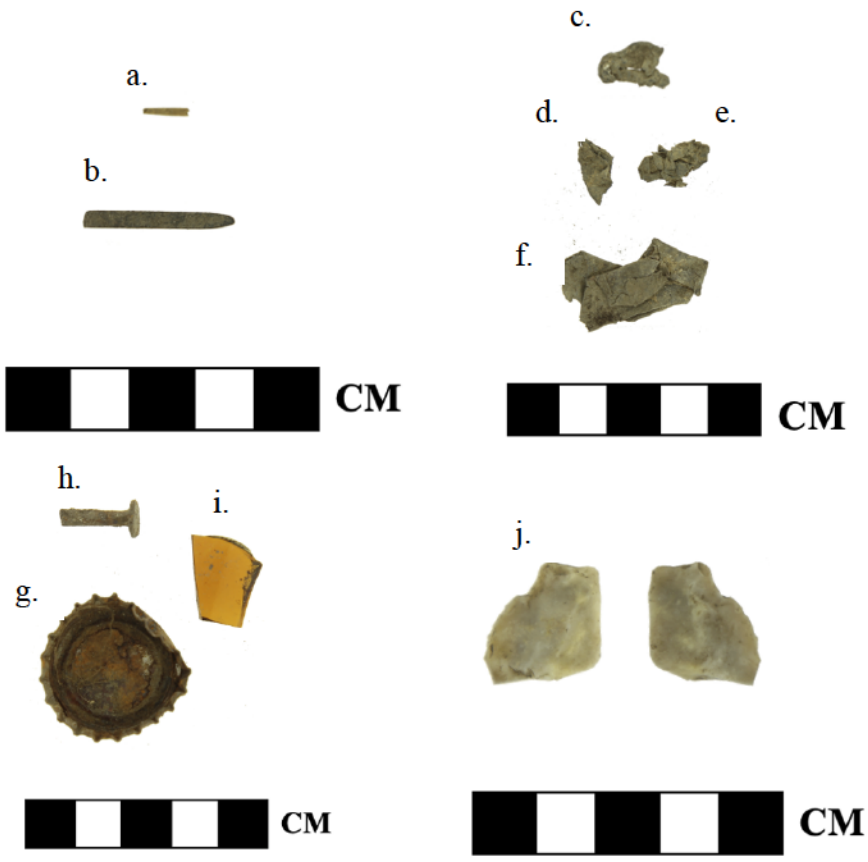

Figure 5.55 Other artifacts of EU7

a. Bone comb tooth (DjOe-6:10996), b. Black vulcanized rubber comb tooth (DjOe-6:9413), c. Lead foil (DjOe-6:10533), d., e. Lead foil (DjOe-6:9790-9791), f. Lead foil (DjOe-6:9794), g. Bottle cap, modern (DjOe-6:9383), h. Wire drawn nail, modern (DjOe-6:9382), i. Beer bottle glass, modern (DjOe-6:9386), j. Lithic scrapper, white chert possibly swan river chert (DjOe-6:9700).

5.4.7.5 Summary

This unit was largely unremarkable but still important in attempting to answer the research questions laid out in the 2018 field season. It supported all previously inferred trends except for having fewer than expected historic artifacts. The artifact totals could be within an expected range of a unit being partially within the cabin, but it could also be reflective of a gradual change in activity areas. Regardless, the few diagnostic artifacts found in this unit helped to give a better understanding of the date of occupation of this *hivernant* dwelling.

Figure 5.56 Measuring tape across all units showing the location of the woody trench feature.

Mel Fitch, Eric Tebby, and Elizabeth Bryan in photo.

5.4.8 Excavation Totals

The following table outlines the total artifact assemblage from all seven units. In total there were 12013 artifacts recovered, of which 7835 (65.22% of the total assemblage) were in the "Miscellaneous" category as they were highly fragmented and unidentifiable or were outside of the scope of this study. A total of 4178 (34.78% of the total assemblage) were in other functional categories. Of these, 80.56% (n=3367) were in the adornment sub-category of the "Personal" category. The next largest non-miscellaneous sub-category was "Ceramic" (n=498) and it

accounted for 11.9% artifacts within an identified functional category. A spatial analysis and comparison between sites will be addressed in the following chapter.

Functional Category	Quantity
Architectural	**194**
Chinking	107
Machine Cut Nail	82
Window Glass	5
Kitchen	**521**
Ceramic	498
Lead Foil	13
Glass Container	10
Personal	**3379**
Adornment	3367
Seed Beads	2982
Seed Beads in flower beadwork	376
Beads Other	5
Brass Ring	1
Earring	3
Clothing	10
Button	4
Clasps	6
Ritual	1
Rosary	1
Miscellaneous	1
Household Activities	**69**
Sewing	38
Straight Pins	38
Body Care	22
Comb	2
Comb Teeth	20
Lamp Glass	9
Hunting and Defense	**18**

Lead Shot	15
Percussion Cap	1
Ammunition	1
Miscellaneous	1
Miscellaneous	**7835**
Glass Fragments	701
Metal Fragments	184
Lithics	619
Stone Fragments	123
Wood	461
Faunal	5470
Fish Fragments	1633
Others	3837
Flora	58
Charcoal	91
Modern	3
Others	125

Table 5.8 All artifacts from EU1 – EU7 recovered in both field years.

5.5 Conclusion

In total, seven 1.0 x 1.0 metre units were excavated across the two field seasons. Three were excavated in 2017 and four in 2018. They were excavated with trowel and three-point provenience with all but the top layer of sediment being collected and fine screened through (<1.5mm) window mesh. The 2018 excavation was conducted with a total station for more accurate artifact recovery. Over 12000 artifacts were recovered in the seven excavation units. Artifacts were placed into six different functional categories with the most falling into the highly fragmentary "Miscellaneous" category. The other five categories consisted of over 4000 artifacts

which reflect a known Métis *hivernant* assemblage. The most notable artifact found was a unique flower beadwork pattern made in a distinctive Métis style (Figure 5.10 and Figure 5.11).

The presence of a woody trench feature was found across the excavation. First identified in the 2017 excavations, the 2018 excavation was conducted along the length of it. The feature appeared in a straight line and is interpreted as the poorly preserved remains of a cabin wall. This is supported by the stratigraphy as more compaction is noted on the western side of the feature. Additionally, the vast majority of personal associated artifacts lay on the western side of this feature reflective of the interior living space of a cabin. The following chapter discusses the spatialized nature of the artifacts and discusses the overall interpretations of this study.

CHAPTER 6 SPATIAL OVERVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter looks at the spatialized overview of the artifacts recovered, followed by an analysis based on some diagnostic attributes, a comparison with one other *hivernant* site, a discussion how this study fits within a theoretical framework of Métis identity, and an overall conclusion of the study. The data presented from a spatialized overview is conducted to explore the distribution of artifacts throughout the units. This is to show how the artifacts alone, in absence of the cabin wall feature, can present a story from the spatialized data and to guide possible interpretations. Following that is a discussion of the total artifacts. Much of the total artifacts recovered reflect what have been found at other *hivernant* cabins studied. What makes these results unique is the sheer quantity but also the unique quality of artifact recovery which can be attributed to the methods and care put into this study. The successful methods applied here was due in part to a similar site, Petite Ville. A brief side by side comparison of the results between that site and this show similar but different qualities. This is followed by some recommendations for expanding future work on this cabin and other *hivernant* sites. Lastly, the conclusions of this study are presented.

6.2 Spatialized overview of results

The following figures are a spatial representation of the artifacts of the various functional sub-categories. The previously mentioned woody trench feature is an assumed cabin wall and will not be highlighted in these overview maps. This is for the reader to identify patterns presented

from the artifacts alone. Additionally, all the beads (n=376) from the Flower Beadwork pattern have been removed from the adornment category in Figure 6.2. This is done to see how all other beads recovered generally represent those which have been lost individually and how they relate to the household context. A logarithmic scale of colour has been used to provide better visual clarity.

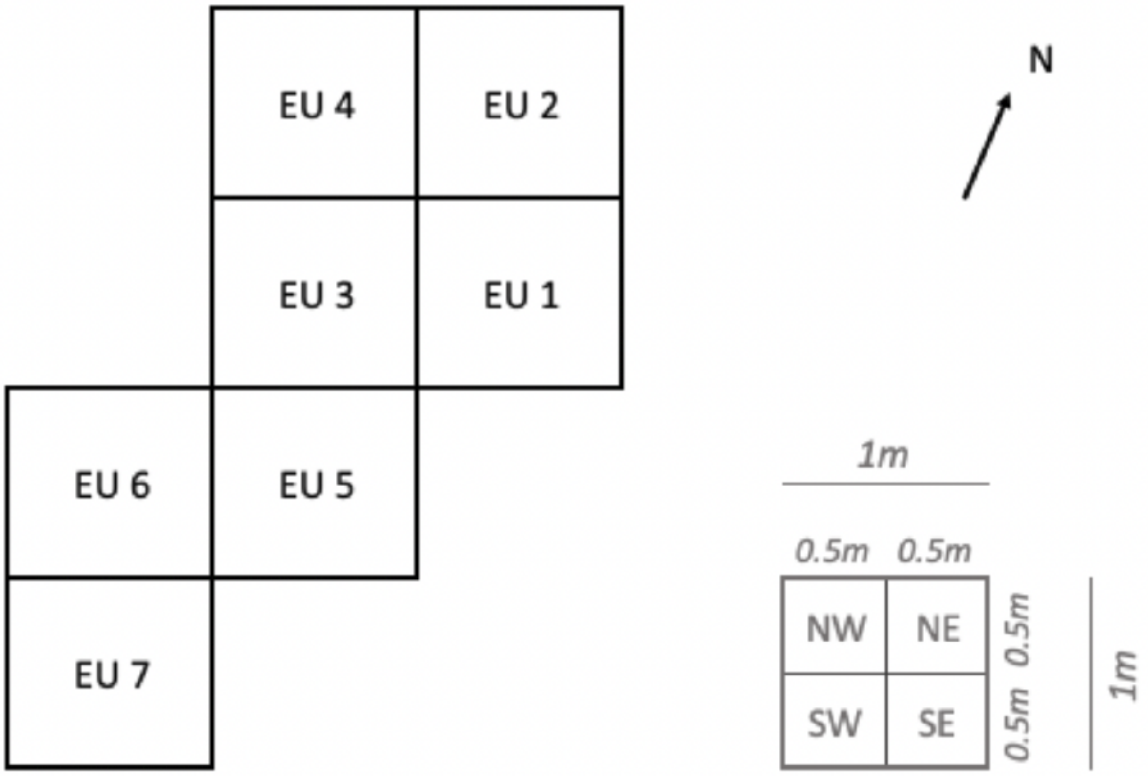

Figure 6.1 All seven excavation units and quadrant reference.

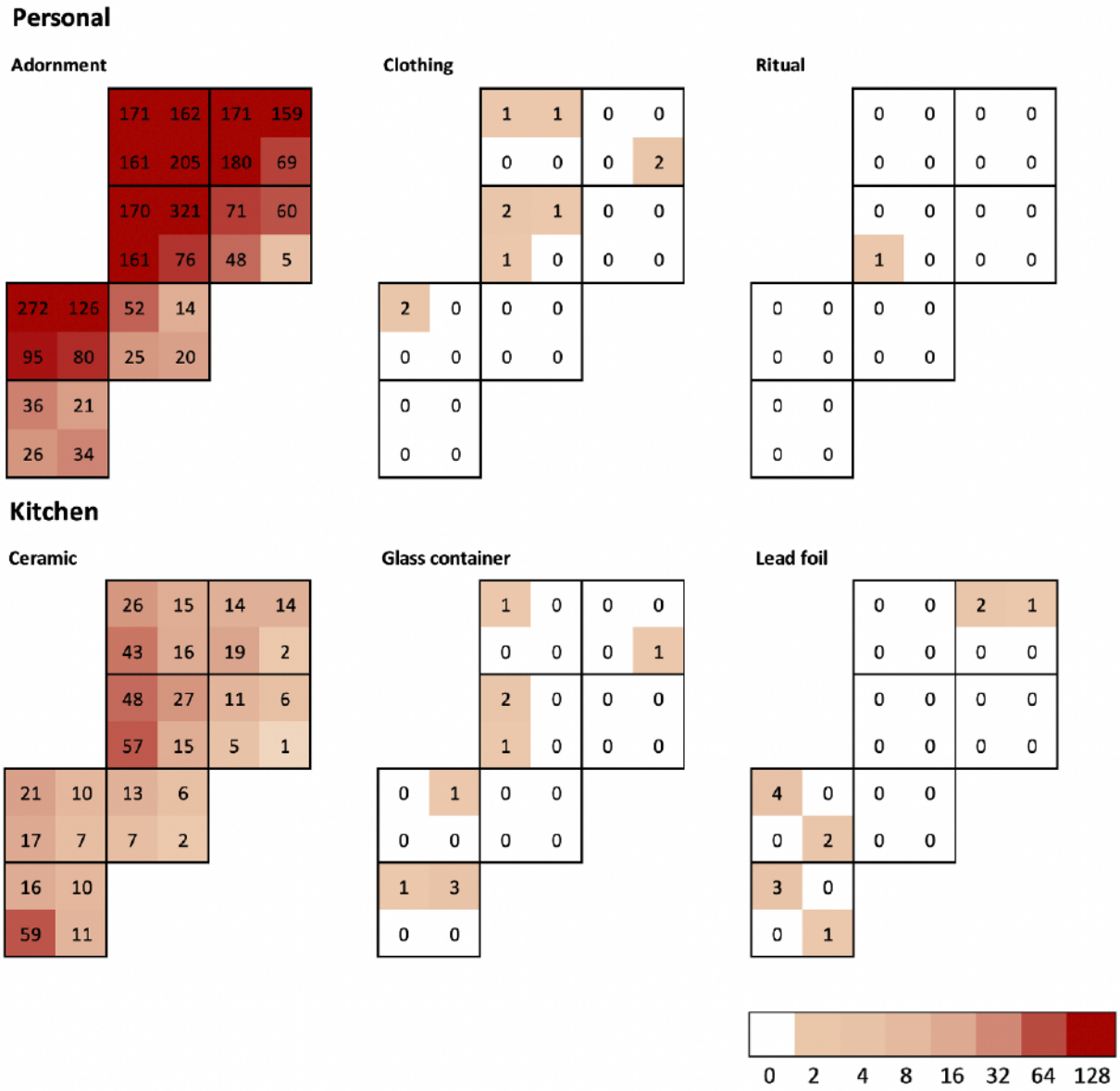

Figure 6.2 Artifact totals in for the Personal and Kitchen functional categories and their sub-categories.

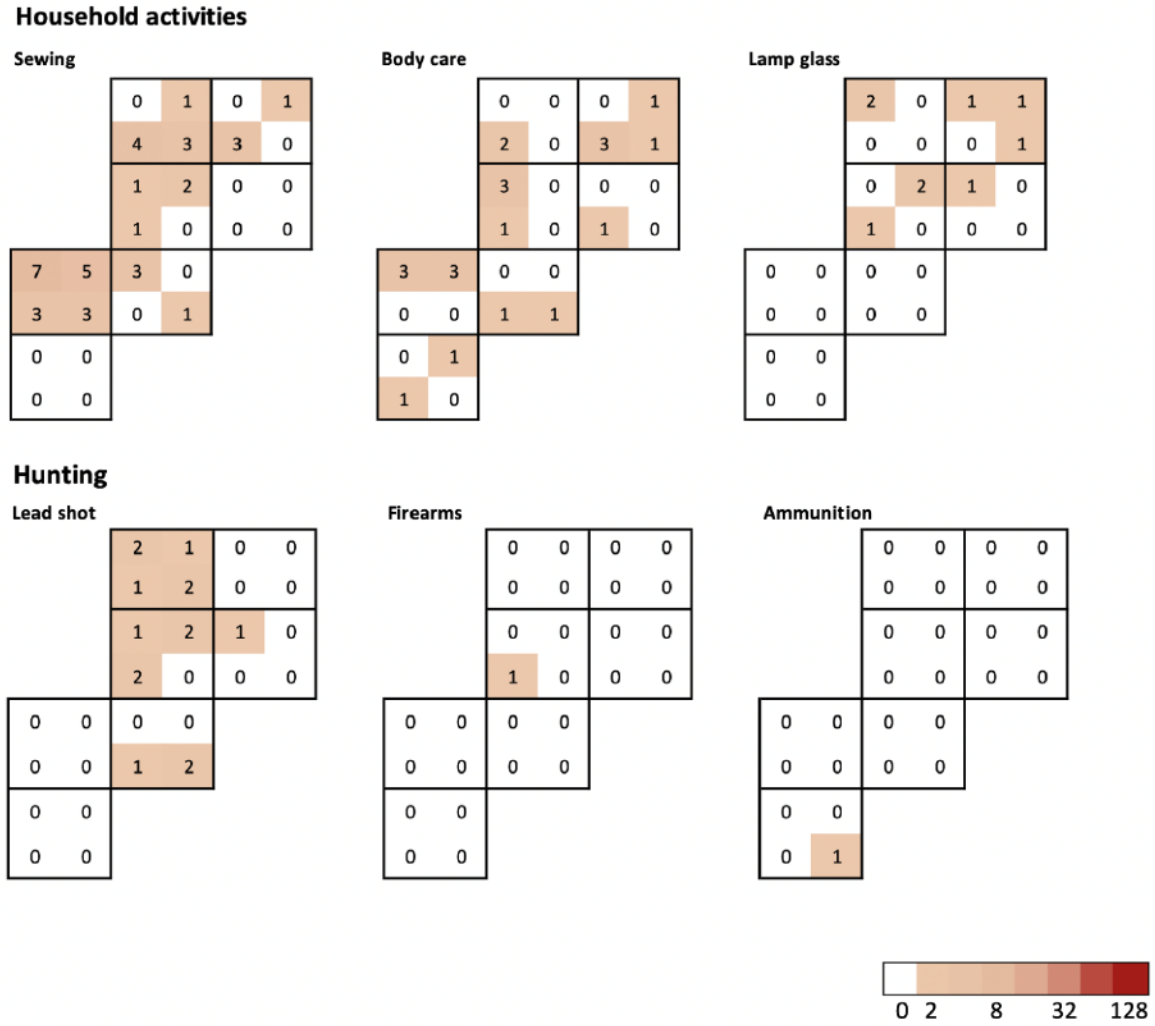

Figure 6.3 Artifact totals in for the Household and Hunting and Defense functional categories and their sub-categories.

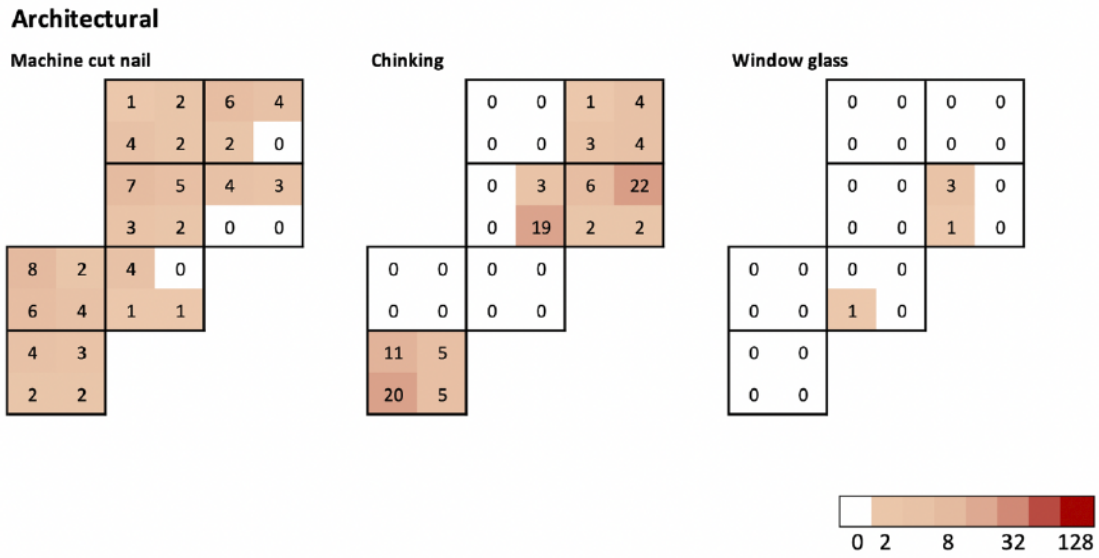

Figure 6.4 Artifact totals in for the Architectural functional category and its sub-categories.

As seen from a spatialized presentation of the artifacts, there appears to be a trend of artifacts recovered. In particular, the functional sub-categories of adornment, clothing, ceramic, glass container, and sewing all show a clear trend. These categories are overwhelmingly found on the west side of the cabin wall feature which is found in a straight line from the top right to bottom left of the entire excavation block (see Figure 5.3). All of these functional sub-categories represent activities that are found within a household or domestic context. Based on this alone, it can be assumed that the inside of the cabin can be found west of the cabin wall. The compaction and stratigraphy presented throughout Chapter 5 further supports this interpretation. This artifact pattern was mostly assumed by the end of the 2017 field season but lacked sufficient data to properly support this idea. It formed the basis of the main research question for the 2018 field season.

Diagnostic Artifacts (EU1 – EU7)	Date of first manufacture
Ceramic	
British Flowers	ca. 1829
Continental Views/Louis Quatorze	ca. 1845
Elcho	ca. 1863
Flower Vase	ca. 1828
Honeysuckle	ca. 1855
Pagoda/Macaw	ca. 1837
Thistle	ca. 1869
Shamrock	ca. 1861
W.E. Corn whiteware	ca. 1864
Glass Container	
G.W. Glass Works	ca. 1874
Ammunition	
.44 Henry centre-fire cartridge	ca. 1860
Architectural	
Machine cut nails	ca. 1835
Personal	
Vulcanized rubber comb	ca. 1844
Prosser button	ca. 1840

Table 6.1 Earliest date of manufacture for diagnostic artifacts from this study.

(Adams 2002:68; Barker 1940:34-35; Doll, Kidd, and Day. 1988:86; Hamilton 1982; Sprague 2002:123; Whitten n.d.)

6.3 Discussion of the results

The following is a general discussion regarding the total results of this study. Apart from the exceptional flower beadwork pattern, the material remains from Chimney Coulee match much of what has been recovered at previous *hivernant* studies. The overall results contribute to, and

reaffirm, a known Métis *hivernant* assemblage representative of the 1870s. The data has established what this cabin is, when it was occupied, and, in a general sense, what activities occurred here. When compared to other sites, many of the same functional categories and sub-categories overlap but with smaller overall numbers. The Petite Ville site, as an example, contains a much more robust overall representation of the functional categories. High proportions of beads relative to their total assemblages have been noted at other sites (Wambold 2022:83-86) but what makes the Chimney Coulee assemblage unique is overall density of artifacts within only seven 1.0 m x 1.0 m excavation units. This is certainly clear when looking at the drawn glass seed beads. A high degree of fragmentation of many artifact types such as glass, metal, ceramics, faunal, and others, combined with an effective fine screening method, artificially inflates overall numbers which is noted at other sites by other scholars (Wambold 2022; Weinbender 2003:75, 118-119).

Activity areas are difficult to discuss as no clear pattern exists apart from the cabin wall division. One could possibly say that beading occurred along the north side of the cabin in the area around EU4 but similarly high returns in EU6 also exist alongside a string of beads found. The physical ground slopes slightly northwards which could be a factor in artifact deposition. Without more of the cabin area excavated, it is difficult to make any conclusions to activity areas. One could make the case that ceramic use was more concentrated to the area of EU3 and EU4. While size and weights were not considered, the largest ceramic fragments were all found in EU4 (Figure 5.26-Figure 5.28, Figure 5.30-Figure 5.31). A high ceramic fragmentation inflates the overall totals for the southwest of EU7.

Dating of this cabin based on the artifacts is straightforward (see Table 6.1). Several of the ceramics effectively rule out an 1860s occupation. The presence of several sherds of the Thistle pattern, first produced in England in 1869, were found in multiple units and provides a good estimation on its own. One needs to correct for the time of first manufacturing until it would arrive in the possession of a Métis family in the Canadian West. As an example, it would not be unreasonable to assume its arrival a couple of years after its first date of manufacture at the HBC post at Fort Qu'Appelle, where the Wood Mountain based Métis would often trade at. With this in mind, it could have arrived at the site at the earliest during the years of the occupation period I timeframe (1870-1874). Despite this, accounting for the large number of domestic related artifacts in the main cabin layer "C", which is the highest concentrations of artifacts, the dating of this cabin best fits the historical occupation period II (1874 – 1878). Again, it was during this time that most Métis families with women and children moved into the Cypress Hills *en masse* and the assemblage here best reflects this movement. Additionally, the upper "B" sediment layer contained a bottle fragment and makers mark from the Great Western Glass Company found in EU7 (Figure 5.51). The earliest date of manufacture for this artifact dates to 1874 made in St. Louis, Missouri (Whitten n.d.). Steamboat travel during this time would take an entire summer season and would bring products such as this to Fort Benton, Montana in 1875 at the earliest (Corbin 2006:24-30). This bottle was likely deposited at the site sometime after 1875 and could correspond to either occupation period II or III. These are narrow timeframes of a few years but show some consistency as the later manufactured bottle was found in the upper "B" layer above the main "C" occupation layer which contained the earlier produced materials. Taking these data together, it can be argued that this *hivernant* cabin was likely

occupied primarily during the years of 1874-1878 which created the entirety of the "C" layer. It was then frequented during the latter years which contributed to artifacts in the "B" layer.

As mentioned, the successful fine screening method resulted in a high artifact return but overinflated amounts of highly fragmented materials. The "Miscellaneous" functional category accounts for 65.22% of the total assemblage (n=7835) of which the largest sub-category is faunal. While an analysis of the faunal remains was not included in this study, it still warrants a brief discussion. The vast majority of these remains were highly fragmented and unidentifiable. It is of no surprise that the larger, identifiable mammalian remains can be positively identified as Bison (Figure 5.22). The remains of fish were a notable feature of the Chimney Coulee assemblage and fortunately have a clear historical explanation. A historical account of a NWMP officer living at the site during the winter of 1879-1880 clearly describes the methods and means of catching and eating large quantities of whitefish from the nearby lake (Fitzpatrick 1921). It would be reasonable to assume that this common practice was learned from the Métis already residing there.

The other artifact type that had been mentioned previously was lithics. Some that were recovered in a clear context within the occupation layer were shown (Figure 5.23 and Figure 5.32). The vast majority of the lithics listed in the overall totals have not been adequately inspected and at best represent broken debitage from underneath the occupation layer where nearly all the pre-contact artifacts were found. There is an ongoing discussion about what role lithics played in the *hivernant* lifeways with uncertainly regarding whether they were deliberately sought out, used in an expedient manner, or are just intrusive to the assemblages (Supernant 2018). The case for this assemblage remains unclear as there is a clear pre-contact

component underneath the cabin layer and evidence of post-depositional disturbances in the form of gopher holes.

6.4 Comparison to the Petite Ville site

As described in chapter 4, the only a handful of *hivernant* sites have been excavated over the past 50 years. Comparisons between sites are difficult to make with such a small sample size of these cabins excavated, across several decades, in largely different geographical areas, and with different methods. Regardless of this, many comparisons between these sites have been done (Doll et al. 1988; Burley et al. 1992; Weinbender 2003; Supernant 2014; Wambold 2022). It is best to compare the results from this site to the Petite Ville site. The primary reason for this is the similar screening methods used in both studies. Additionally, both cabins are well represented as likely family spaces with a large variety of domestic activities. For this comparison, the Petite Ville data has been corrected and modified into the template used in this study to better match the results. Additionally, only the 62 m^2 from the cabin proper from the 1998, 1999, and 2000 excavations were used. This comparison also removes all pre-contact components and does not compare floral or faunal remains.

Several interesting comparisons are found with looking at both studies. The adornment category is the largest component in both cabin locations. For the Chimney Coulee cabin, ceramics represent the next largest category while hunting is the next largest at Petite Ville. When comparing density of artifacts across the whole study, the Chimney Coulee cabin has much higher ceramics and beads. Particularly for beads, it is important to note that at Petite Ville, only 4 out of 62 units contributed to approximately half of the entire bead count

(Weinbender 2003). Without more units excavated from the Chimney Coulee cabin, these comparisons are limited but it can help to show the overall differences in density of material artifacts. More functional categories and sub-categories are represented at Petite Ville but more excavations at the Chimney Coulee cabin might reveal a more representative sample of the entirety of activities that were present.

	Chimney Coulee		**Petite Ville**	
	artifacts	artifacts/m^2	artifacts	artifacts/m^2
Architectural				
Chinking	107	15.3	32	0.5
Machine cut nail	82	11.7	383	6.2
Window glass	5	0.7	27	0.4
Other	0	0.0	75	1.2
Total	194	27.7	517	8.3
Personal				
Adornment	3367	481.0	9530	153.7
Clothing	10	1.4	102	1.6
Ritual	1	0.1	2	0.0
Other	1	0.1	168	2.7
Total	3379	482.7	9802	158.1
Household activities				
Sewing	38	5.4	479	7.7
Body care	22	3.1	17	0.3
Lamp glass	9	1.3	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0	37	0.6
Total	69	9.9	533	8.6
Hunting and Commerce				
Lead shot	15	2.1	772	12.5

Ammunition	1	0.1	10	0.2
Firearms	1	0.1	22	0.4
Miscellaneous	1	0.1	32	0.5
Total	18	2.6	836	13.5
Kitchen				
Ceramic	498	71.1	183	3.0
Lead foil	13	1.9	262	4.2
Glass container	10	1.4	30	0.5
Other	0	0.0	42	0.7
Total	521	74.4	517	8.3

Table 6.2 Artifact counts and density of the Chimney Coulee and Petite Ville sites.

6.5 Discussion of *hivernant* identity

Current data from our limited examples in Métis *hivernant* studies, including this study, seem to suggest that the artifact assemblages within these cabin spaces reflect a distinct Métis identity. The close similarity of artifact types and quantities displayed across the sites of Buffalo Lake, Petite Ville, and Chimney Coulee show this. However, this currently only reflects one specific type of residence and identity, that of a domestic *hivernant* family space. Currently the range and artifact types have only a foundational baseline and would more greatly benefit from further studies. Defined as the flower beadwork people, they were unique in their practice of floral beaded patterns alongside the consumption of other material culture such as transferware ceramics and straight pins within a cabin context. As other scholars have highlighted, there are strong assemblage similarities between the few *hivernant* sites studied despite great geographical distances and access to different markets (Weinbender 2003; Supernant 2018; Wambold 2022). As mentioned in Chapter 2, other cabin types exist beyond the domestic spaces seen in this study

and at Petite Ville. If one were to recover an assemblage of a mostly lone male hunter-trader it might not be as easily identifiable as being associated as a Métis *hivernant* space. Certainly, different spaces exist and some research has examined this (Supernant 2018). Much more research into these types of non-domestic *hivernant* residences are needed. Future studies relating to the topic of *hivernant* archaeology will undoubtably contribute to the limited material culture dataset and questions surrounding Métis identity.

A focus on material culture and Métis identity could greatly benefit from more modern interpretations. With better screening methods, the largest artifact category at *hivernant* sites is the personal adornment. Modern scholarship in historical archeology examines how personal artifacts that are worn on the body are important in how they are a display of one's cultural identity. Modern scholarship surrounding worn objects and identity are summarized by White and Beaudry (2009). In general, modern studies on material cultural focus on how people interact and express themselves, including their identity, through these small and personal objects. With an abundant sample of small and personal items now being retrieved at *hivernant* sites, ample opportunities now exist for a closer examination of these questions of identity. No doubt a deeper interpretation of the objects found during the analysis would greatly enrich our understanding of the Métis occupants of this cabin, but it falls outside the scope of this study. For further discussion on modern interpretive material cultural studies in contemporary historical archaeology, including studies involving small personal adornment and identity, see Cochran and Beaudry (2006) and White and Beaudry (2009).

6.6 Future excavations

This cabin and site can still provide many good opportunities for future research. Various new and non-invasive methods were applied during a 2019 field season on this cabin site. Some results from that study can be found in Wadsworth (2020). The purpose of that study was primarily to test various non-invasive methods which proved successful in locating the chimney at this cabin. One excavation unit, 1.0 m x 1.0 m in size was placed on top of the chimney associated with this cabin but was only partially completed. Further excavations at the site were additionally conducted during the 2022 field season but not on this cabin location.

More excavations at this cabin location would greatly help and contribute to the limited sample size of Métis *hivernant* assemblage. The methods of excavation and screening were successful in retrieving the highest density of artifacts ever recovered from a *hivernant* cabin. Any future investigations should retain the successful methods applied during this study.

Overall, this site has seen a rich and tragic post-depositional history. It was first part of an active ranch and pasture and then a recreational site which attracted many historical advocates and pothunters. The early 1970s saw a large area of the site destroyed by the expansion of the nearby range road (Burley et al. 1992:90). Locals and non-locals alike have enjoyed recreating at the site for decades and especially so since it gained government protection after 1986. While this site has been contaminated with some modern artifacts in its post-depositional history, it has provided good opportunities to create a new generation of Métis archaeologists and methods which can be applied elsewhere.

6.7 Conclusions

The assemblage presented here matches previously studied Métis *hivernant* sites. The presence of various artifacts including drawn glass seed beads, transferware ceramics, straight pins, lead tea foil, a catholic rosary, and various personal items including an earring and a flower beadwork pattern all reflect a known historic Métis material culture. Apart from the presence, the sheer quantity of these items is highly suggestive of a Métis *hivernant* assemblage. Petite Ville was the first of these sites to employ fine screening methods and greatly improved on the artifact yields of these small materials. This study improved on it further and recovered among the highest artifact densities among all studied *hivernant* sites. The historical data presented in Chapter 3 outlined three general occupation periods by the Métis at this site. With the high density of traditionally domestic related artifacts recovered, this cabin would best fit within the historical occupation period II (1874 – 1878). From some of the diagnostic artifacts recovered, this is also the logical timeframe of the main occupation years. It was during this occupation period that many Métis families, including many women and children, moved away from other *hivernant* locations into the Cypress Hills. This assemblage matches that. One diagnostic artifact found in the layer above the main cabin layer was found to reasonable fit the end of occupation period II or occupation period III (1878 – 1882). Either case, this cabin was likely occupied within such a narrow time frame of just a few years during the mid-1870s where many hundreds of Métis families called Cypress Hills their home in a swiftly changing and uncertain future. During this time, members of the Marion/Oulette brigade appear to be the main occupants of this site. This cabin and these belongings recovered were likely owned by various members of this extended

family at one point. After 1878, the Laframboise family became the main occupants of this site until 1882 when it was permanently abandoned.

This conclusion is adequate for understanding the greater picture of the site and its residents, but little discussion has been made for what the artifacts tell about the activities within this cabin space and what they can tell us. The various quotations and activities discussed in Chapter 2 conjure vivid images of what life was probably like in this cabin. The abundance of beads suggests that someone within this cabin was a prolific artist who worked long hours by the firelight, or by the window in daylight, and might have been assisted by a lamp. The flower beadwork is certainly a testament to her skills and artistic eye. The many straight pins found were likely used for mending clothes during the long prairie winters and could have assisted in the beading process. The earring found could have been worn by this artist while the brass ring was possibly worn by her partner. That being the same man who called upon his kin to help build this cabin with the machine cut nails, chinking, and window glass. Many of these materials were brought with them from previous settlements in the east and purchased from the HBC post in Fort Qu'appelle. While some were purchased from the traders who had traveled from Fort Benton. For food they hunted bison and various other local game which were then brought back and butchered, while fish from the nearby lake were caught and consumed. For the meals, they used the ceramic bowls and plates possibly reusing the various glass containers multiple times. Tea drinking was enjoyed in the matching ceramic cups with the dried leaves being wrapped in the lead foil. Prayers were made with the rosary and the thin wispy hair of an unruly infant might have been combed with the bone louse comb. These interpretations can help give an imagine of what life was like in this cabin and brings a sense of humanity to the numbers and data presented

here. Wambold (2023) also gives a personalized analysis of some of this assemblage and the belongings from other *hivernant* sites from a Métis woman's perspective. Detailed interpretations of the day-to-day lifeways of *hivernant* residents are a fascinating and generally understudied approach to sites such as these.

In conclusion, this study helps to add to the limited database of *hivernant* archaeology and expands our knowledge of the known assemblage. It also hopefully fills a poorly understood or misunderstood area of Métis and Canadian history during the 1870s. Orser (2010:114-117) highlights the importance of modern historical archaeology which aims to help answer questions of identity and relationships between groups and within cultures. The nature of studying *hivernant* lifeways assists in doing just that, as the people and their kinship ties are key in understanding motivations and tracking mobility across time and spaces. However, we are just as limited in written sources as we are in the artifacts that we find. The historical background for this study was especially restrictive on this. Many other authors highlight the difficulty of getting accurate and abundant written sources in Métis history (MacDougall and St-Onge 2013; Burley et al. 1992). Historical archaeology on a Métis *hivernant* site is not for the faint of heart. All processes are time consuming from the sparse history to the small and tedious material remains. These are important considerations for future scholars. The author hopes that this research can greatly assist in being a baseline for future studies on this site or any of the other *hivernant* sites in the Cypress Hills.

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Winnipeg, Manitoba
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  - LeStanc, Jean-Marie, Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface
- Provincial Archives of Manitoba
  - Urquhart, William Thornton, Alexander Morris fonds

Periodicals

Helena, M.T.
Helena Independent

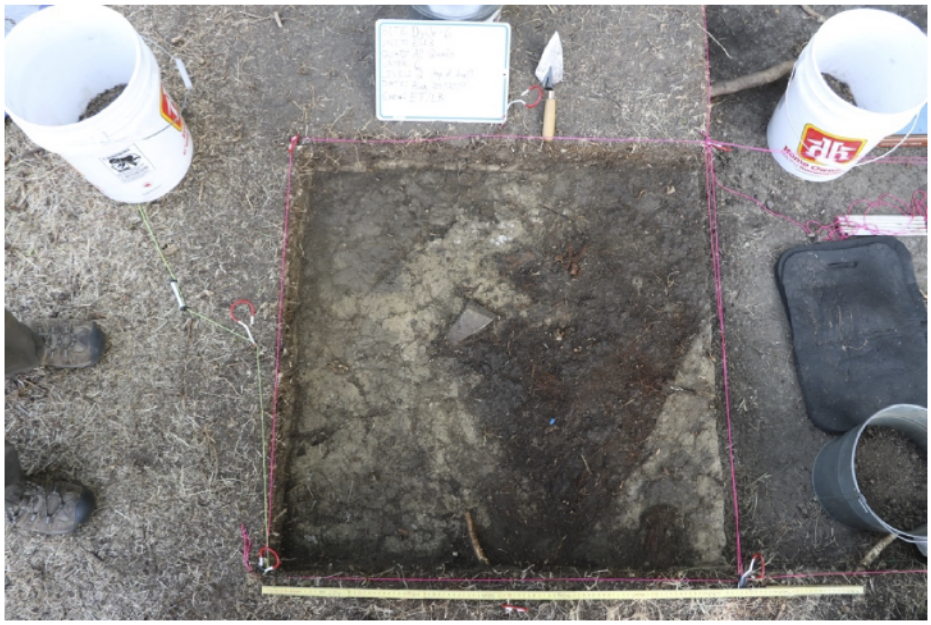
Benton, M.T.
Benton Record
Benton Weekly Record

Portland, Oregon
New Northwest Newspaper

Appendix

Complete EU1

Complete EU2



EU3 in layer C with wooden trench feature

Complete EU1-3 from the 2017 excavation

Nearly complete EU5 in layer D

Woody trench feature in the SE corner of EU6


Complete EU6

Highlighted woody trench feature in EU7

Complete EU7