

Contributions To Global Historical Archaeology

Harold Mytum  
Gilly Carr *Editors*

# Prisoners of War

Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of  
19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment

 Springer

# Prisoners of War

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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Editors

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19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment

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**Part I**  
**Introduction**

# Chapter 1

## Prisoner of War Archaeology

Harold Mytum and Gilly Carr

**Abstract** Prisoners of war represent an unusual category of the incarcerated in that they are normally fit, law-abiding, self-sufficient, and imprisoned only because of their allegiance in a conflict. How authorities manage such inmates, and how internees react to these unexpected and enforced conditions can be explored through material culture. Until the late eighteenth century, it was normal to have ad hoc and often short-term holding of PoWs. But with the development of substantial armies and navies and so the ability to take large numbers from even a single conflict, the concept of PoW camps developed in order to manage the captives. Moreover, in the twentieth century xenophobic concerns arose regarding citizens from enemy states, leading to internment of civilians. All these decisions and policies led to material changes—the construction and management of camps and the activities of ingenious PoWs from a wide range of backgrounds. Archaeology can reveal the actual practices of the authorities, and also the ways in which internees worked within and against the conditions in which they found themselves. Material culture can challenge established myths propounded by all sides in conflict, and can also assist in healing wounds and confronting our heritage.

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## Introduction

The image of a PoW often concentrates on captured military personnel, and numerous colorful stories of resistance and escape have been the subject of books and films (Brickhill 1950; Williams 1949). However, many of those taken prisoner had little desire to escape, and indeed the old traditions of licensing of officers on parole continued through much of the nineteenth century (Brown 1988). Whilst prisoners needed to be controlled to prevent their return to serve once more for their countries, the management of PoWs has always been as much about maintaining order, effective provisioning, and preventing the spread of physical diseases and mental conditions such as depression. Models for PoW management were put in place within the 1899 and 1907 Conventions, and in successive Geneva Conventions from 1906 (Fooks 1924), but some arrangements were in place from the Napoleonic conflicts onwards (Walker 1913). In contrast, however, the treatment of PoWs was less consistent and often extremely inadequate in the American Civil War (Hesseltine 1962; Sanders 2005; Speer 1997). Moreover, from the late nineteenth century states began to intern civilians, sometimes for their own protection as jingoistic attitudes were encouraged during times of conflict, but also to prevent espionage and subversion. For example, in the Boer War not only did the British intern white and black civilians in South Africa, but also Boers living elsewhere in the Empire and those considered sympathetic to their cause, with camps for Boers being set up in as diverse locations as India, Bermuda, and St Helena (Benbow 1982; Royle 1998; van der Merwe 1998). From this point onwards, decisions to intern alien civilians as a precautionary measure became common.

An archaeological consideration of the sites of confinement and the artifacts used and produced by those interned there can provide important counterpoints to the inevitably biased views of both the captors and the imprisoned. This is not to suggest that the archaeological evidence is neutral, but rather that it offers an alternative vehicle by which narratives, prejudices, and memories can be evoked, challenged, and reworked. There is little doubt that any study of the PoW experience is part of a dark and often difficult heritage, but one which historical archaeologists are now willing and able to take up and share.

## Historical Context

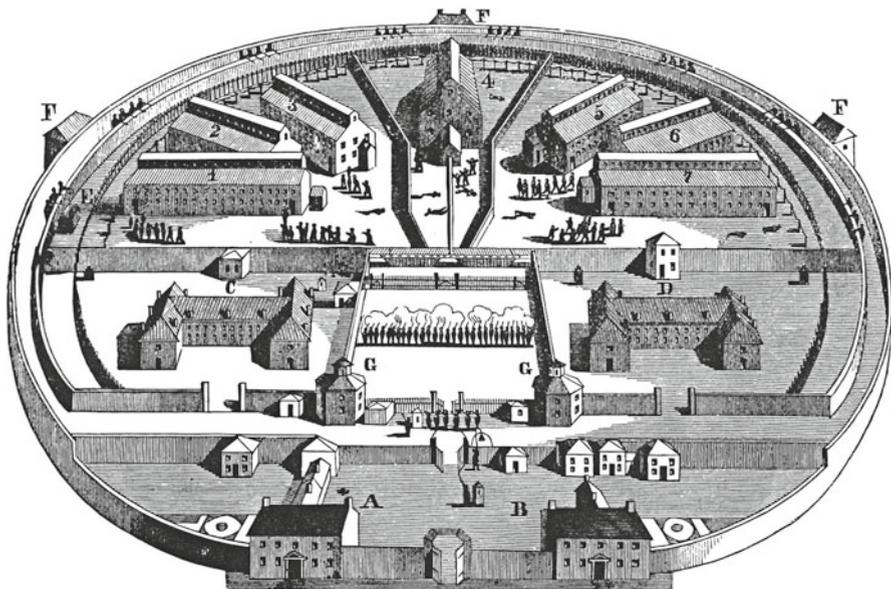
The archaeology of PoWs has developed as an aspect of military and conflict archaeology, at first largely concentrating on military prisoners but latterly also encompassing those of civilians. While prisoners have been kept from many conflicts throughout prehistory and history, often to be turned into slaves, in most cases the numbers were small and they were culturally of limited importance. The fates of some war captives attract attention because of their dramatic demise, whether in gladiatorial combat to delight the populace in Roman times or as sacrifices to the gods in the case of the Maya (Berryman 2007), but most are not visible as distinctive

groups in the historic or archaeological record until the eighteenth century. Even at this stage, most prisoners were not held in specially designed structures or sites, but were accommodated in *ad hoc* arrangements within existing places of incarceration or in buildings that could be easily adapted to this purpose. As warfare developed governments had to make alternative arrangements, however, as larger numbers of combatants were captured after successful set-piece battles and many more were seized in naval conflicts and by taking ships sailing under enemy flags.

It was during the Seven Years War (1756–1763) that PoWs had first begun to accumulate in some numbers in Britain, and at this time various buildings including Sissinghurst Castle and Liverpool were adapted to hold these prisoners (Abell 1914). In addition, naval ships shorn of their masts and rigging were utilized as floating prison hulks to hold many men (Branch-Johnson 1970; Campbell 1994; Garneray, I 2003). However, it was the scale of the Napoleonic conflict, considered by some historians to be the first global war (Bell 2007; Nester 2000), where the logistical problems of PoWs were fully confronted for the first time. The seizure of enemy naval and civilian shipping led to the capture of large numbers of men who were then transported to Britain from Continental Europe, and even from as far afield as the Caribbean, to prevent their return to the front.

Warfare in the later eighteenth century produced sufficient prisoners to justify concentrated investment on the part of the British, who were capturing far greater numbers of prisoners than their French enemies. Indeed, this imbalance of up to over 120,000 held by Britain at any one time as opposed to only 5,000 by France (Walker 1913:202) indicates why it is in Britain that the first PoW sites were erected, though hulks continued in use. The scale of the works within the walls of Portchester Castle and the newly constructed prison at Stapleton, near Bristol, both reflect the first substantial investments by the British government in providing bespoke accommodation for prisoners (Abell 1914; Cunliffe and Garratt 1995). While Norman Cross was built of timber and was demolished after the wars (Walker 1913; Chap. 5), Dartmoor was constructed of stone (Fig. 1.1) and has subsequently become one of Britain's most notorious high-security prisons, still largely formed from these early buildings (Evans 1982; Thomson 1907).

Archaeology can contribute to the study of confinement (Casella 2007), including that of PoWs, in buildings with complex multiple uses over time by studying adaptations of structures for this purpose or by the recording and interpretation of graffiti. However, subsequent reuse can obscure the PoW phase, which was often transitory, and analytical studies can be both more extensive and in greater detail when purpose-built sites are available for examination. Thus, Norman Cross (Chap. 5) in the British Napoleonic context, and the range of American Civil War camps (Chaps. 2, 4, 3), offer considerable opportunities to examine the early stages of mass imprisonment in the modern world. The greater planning for military forces and their permanent and temporary bases from the eighteenth century onwards created a framework of templates that could be applied in later conflicts, not only for military forces but also PoWs (Mytum 2011). Even then, however, the numbers of captives could overwhelm the military's plans and resources, leading to *ad hoc* solutions. This is most apparent in the American Civil War where the scale of the conflicts and



**Fig. 1.1** Sketch of Dartmoor Prison in 1815 (Waterhouse 1816). The main prison is at the top, with the PoW barracks placed radially in the northern half of the walled enclosure

subsequent prisoners was far beyond the logistical infrastructure required to support them adequately. Bush analyzes the impact of these pressures even on a well-planned prison away from the conflict zone (Bush 2000; 2011, Chap. 4) and the more chaotic arrangements at both Andersonville and Florence are explored by Jameson (Chap. 2) and Avery and Garrow (Chap. 3).

The temporary PoW camps in colonial situations such as southern Africa during the Boer War (Stanley and Dampier 2005; Weiss 2011) prepared the authorities for internment on some scale in World War I (Bird 1986; Panayi 1991). However, even these levels of incarceration were dwarfed by the mass imprisonment and exploitation of labor in World War II by the Nazi state and illustrated though a Norwegian archaeological example by Jasinski (Chap. 9), though Japanese and Soviet regimes were just as harsh. The scale and economic implications of these policies have been considered by some historians (Davis 1977; Herbert 1985; MacKenzie 1994; Soleim 2010), but the physical dimensions are still only now being researched archaeologically in any detail. The citizens of western powers were often better treated by the Nazis than captured Slavs, and were therefore more often able to offer some levels of resistance with escape attempts that leave archaeological traces demonstrated by Doyle et al (Chap. 8), and through material representations of independent thought and national identity in a range of material culture studied by Carr (2010, 2012; Chap. 11). The Allied powers were also presented with problems in managing PoWs, especially in the later stages of the war as the combined pressure of pushing on towards victory was matched with managing those areas and prisoners that were taken in the process. The top-down imposed order and the bottom-up adaptation in difficult circumstances are both considered by Early (Chap. 6).

Archaeology is also applied to the study of group and individual experience in the past, and with PoWs it is possible to examine reactions to sudden and unexpected incarceration and the alienation that this can produce. The unusual pressures that these circumstances create can evoke reactions that include increased or reformulated gender and nationalistic identities, reinforce or overturn class and ethnic divisions, and reveal previously hidden talents and skills that could be released through leisure and the training that some PoWs could offer to others (Carr and Mytum 2012). Most of these aspects have received relatively little attention as yet by archaeologists, though Mytum has applied medical and psychological models of coping strategies to the PoW experience (Chap. 10). These reactions, however, are far from even within the same interned community, as evidence from several well-developed projects focusing on the Japanese interned in America demonstrate (Burton 1996). There Beckwith, Kamp-Whittaker and Shew, and Slaughter all can identify the widespread maintenance of cultural traditions (Chaps. 15, 16, 17) but in contrast Burton and Farrell reveal diverse responses that reflected ambivalent and varied reactions to incarceration (Chap. 14).

In less benign circumstances, where inhuman treatment was the norm, the opportunities for individual and community expression were largely denied. Even here, however, there are occasional examples of resistance or of maintenance of distinctive cultural traits recovered from the structures made or used by those involved in enforced labor, whether in Norway as studied by Jasinski (Chap. 9), in Finland (Seitsonen and Herva 2011), or in the Channel Islands (Carr forthcoming). The scale and importance of labor mobilized to create infrastructure and facilities during World War II is only now being considered by archaeologists, although its importance has been noted by historians (Davis 1977; Herbert 1985; MacKenzie 1994; Soleim 2010). Jameson points out that African American slaves constructed the Andersonville enclosure to house the captured soldiers whose mission, at least in part, was to free them (Chap. 2). This is both ironic and instructive of the intricate web of power relations and actions that make up a conflict situation, seen subsequently in both Nazi and Soviet contexts where slave labor was again such a vital part of the economy.

## **Fieldwork and the Archaeology of the Ephemeral**

Many camps were planned as temporary features to last only the duration of conflicts that were themselves expected to be quickly over. Historic photographs, contemporary drawings and maps, and the archaeological remains mapped onto the topography, can together allow identification of areas of settlement, activities, discard and burial, even when all these may have been undertaken over a very short period. The remains of PoW camps can yield surprisingly rich amounts of data regarding the overall layout, construction and functions of buildings, use and discard of artifacts, and on issues such as hygiene and diet (Bush 2000; Waters et al. 2006). Archaeologists can also identify elements of resistance, adaptation, ingenuity and collaboration

through the material remains. Norman Cross was in use for a total of less than 20 years of the Napoleonic Wars and was only ever constructed of timber, with simple brick footings, as revealed in the excavations discussed by Mytum and Hall (Chap. 5). Most were occupied for much shorter periods—measured in months in the case of US Civil War camp in Florence where extensive excavations by Avery and Garrow took place in advance of development, ironically, as a veterans' cemetery (Chap. 3). They revealed many insubstantial features that shed light on the lives of the guards—a group largely neglected in other PoW studies. The World War II camps at La Glacerie revealed on excavation the evidence for sunken-floored structures which therefore have a clear archaeological signature identified by Early (Chap. 6), and similar sunken features have been noted as a way of creating living space in some American Civil War camps, identified by Thoms (2004) and also by Avery and Garrow (Chap. 3).

Field survey can locate camps where either structures or artifact scatters can be found. In some cases, where tents or temporary structures left no foundations, the artifact distributions can be the most informative. The Boer War camps at Brandfort, South Africa, where contemporary photographs indicate that rows of tents were set up for the white internees, produced very few artifacts because of a systematic removal of rubbish to middens, which were located through surface survey (Dreyer 2002:133). The distribution of grinding stones at the camp for Africans at Nooitgedacht 337 revealed the extent of that site, with middens and the burial ground located on the periphery to the south (Dreyer 2002:135). Surface collection has also been effective at Amache, where items of material culture have been identified by Slaughter as evidence for illicit *saké* drinking (Chap. 16) and Kamp-Whittaker and Shew identify the ways in which families maintained aspects of their traditional identity in the face of prejudice, confinement, and the onslaught of American cultural values (Chap. 17). Limited testing at the newly located American Civil War Camp Lawson has revealed surprisingly rich artifact collections even though no surface remains are visible (US Fish and Wildlife Service 2010).

The ephemeral can also be seen within and around more substantial, often concrete structures erected across the globe as part of military designs of camps, barracks, and elements of infrastructure. The rapidly incised graffiti of the Japanese construction workers in their North American Camps described and analyzed by Burton and Farrell (Chap. 14) represent moments of emotion, just as the determination of attempted escapers from Stalag Luft III can be revealed through the purpose-built tunnel structures with no long-term function, located and partially exposed by Dolye et al (Chap. 8). Jasinski contrasts the visible, recognizable and interpreted concrete military features of World War II occupation with the reused structures for PoW accommodation and the sites of temporary camps in Norway. The PoW presence remains elusive and only comes to light through intensive archaeological surface survey (Chap. 9). Geophysical survey can likewise identify traces, even if relatively slight, whether structures then confirmed by limited excavation reported by Mytum and Hall at Norman Cross (Chap. 5) or burials at Fort Pulaski researched by Jameson (Chap. 2).

## Interpreting Painful Heritage

The ethical issues concerned with PoW archaeology are similar to the wider concerns within conflict archaeology and indeed archaeology generally, but some are most relevant to those parts of the discipline also studying material remains where close descendants or even participants are still alive. Although Moshenska (2008) has argued that conflict archaeology has unique ethical problems, that assertion has been challenged by Carman (2009) and Anfinset (2009), and it is certainly possible to include other aspects of the archaeology recent times, including aspects of confinement archaeology, the archaeology of slavery and colonialism, and the archaeology of institutions that all can have similar concerns. Nevertheless, it is likely that most if not all PoW archaeology can be considered to be painful heritage, often contested in fact and interpretation and with many still strongly held opinions. Archaeologists require clear ethical frameworks to operate successfully in such environments. Moshenska (2008:162) critiques the value of duty-based ethics that underlie professional codes of conduct, though it can be argued that these do at least provide a baseline for minimum standards even though they may not be sensitive to all situations. He considers that virtue ethics, placing the onus of the individual practicing archaeologist and their intentions, is more effective, though the good intentions of most involved are also criticized, especially as they are often simplistically redemptive (Moshenska 2008:163–164).

Those studying PoWs need to be concerned with obtaining empirical facts about the recent past, and given divergent memories and both confusion and propaganda on all sides in conflicts this may itself be a challenge. But the possible next stage of apportioning blame should be applied with great caution; there are many levels of complicity, many degrees of involvement and compulsion that applied to all sides, not just the most obvious candidates. The complexity of these issues are revealed by Ulmschneider and Crawford in the self-censorship of Jacobsthal in his autobiographical writings (Chap. 13) and in the journey towards knowledge, understanding and reconciliation in Germany and the Channel Islands laid out by Rothenhäuser and Adler (Chap. 12). Jasinski argues that archaeologists should not be unquestioningly supporting nationalistic narratives and identities, and demonstrates the selectivity of national memory in Norway regarding World War II (Chap. 9), but he also indicates the sensitivity of alternative narratives and the wounds and guilts that can thus be exposed. Individual archaeologists and heritage interpreters need to consider their own motives and messages and how they can be heard or ignored, understood or misunderstood, and in all cases potentially have contemporary consequences at both the individual and communal level. These heritages are powerful and potentially as damaging as they can be healing, re-igniting xenophobia in the present as much as they may alleviate past injustices. Archaeologists must consider the pain of heritage in the present and future as much as they consider past pain and suffering.

A few British sites that were used to house military prisoners sites are interpreted for the public, largely because of more ancient remains on the site, such as Portchester

Castle. Some private museums are set within sites that had functioned as PoW camps, as with Eden Camp Modern History Theme Museum, Yorkshire, although only part of its remit deals with the camp and its inmates directly. Whilst the Imperial War Museum also recognizes the experience of PoWs during conflicts (Archer and Jeffries 2012; Dickson et al. 2012), the most extensive public interpretations are found in North America. Jameson notes that not only is there a national museum to PoWs at Andersonville, but also that the infamous camp has been partially excavated and then reconstructed to assist public understanding (Chap. 2). The US National Park Service not only preserves and interprets that iconic site, but identifies the PoW camp element in more complex site histories such as Fort Pulaski where this phase is both recognized as important and interpreted. The more recent internment on American soil is also interpreted by the National Park Service at the Japanese American camps of Minidoka and Manzanar.

In contrast to North America, the recent past and the part played by PoWs in national and local history is largely underplayed in Britain and Europe. This aspect of World War II heritage is shown by Jasinski to be largely underdeveloped in Norway (Chap. 9) in favor of the small-scale though more obviously heroic military resistance. Anfinset (2009) highlights this issue with regard to more problematic aspects of Norway's participation in the war using a topical example—the search for the remains of young Norwegians who died fighting with the Nazis to defend Norway from Soviet invasion. Were they heroes or traitors, who benefits and who loses from either the *status quo* or their return and, if the latter, how should they be commemorated if at all? The same applies to the many thousands of Russians, Poles, and others who died abroad while in work camps: to whose past do they belong? Likewise, the postwar efforts of the German PoWs in France in the rebuilding of that country's infrastructure and agriculture are forgotten; as Schneider points out (Chap. 7), it did not suit the local or national wartime narratives to paint the rank and file German soldiery as everyday human beings able to interact with and work alongside the French people as they recovered from the effects of years of not only occupation but also the destruction wrought during liberation.

In all cases there can be logical, ethical and practicable arguments put forward for many competing positions regarding the interpretation of PoW archaeology. Those professionally involved with this heritage need to be aware of the many stakeholders that also have an interest in the activities, results, and interpretations.

## Artifacts Beyond Typology

Artifacts may be recovered from survey or excavation, or can have remained in circulation from the time of their production or use at a PoW camp. Both types of evidence have their own biases and sets of taphonomic processes that condition what is available for study today, but they can nevertheless provide important insights into the PoW experience. Many artifacts are mass-produced and belong to the repertoires of the imprisoning cultural group, but others are alien items either brought with the

PoWs or sent to them by families or friends. Moreover, in many camp contexts the PoWs created their own items of material culture, often influenced by a mixture of cultural affiliations, problem-solving, and factors of supply. In a time when most material culture was mass-produced, these hand-made traditions borne out of necessity allowed a (re)flowering of folk art traditions and the associated techniques, meanings, and values associated with such material. The artifacts from PoW contexts often reveal far more than simplistic function, status, and dating.

Artifacts can be indicators of ethnic identities. Dreyer's work (2002) has already been discussed as methodology but is also important for demonstrating identities represented even within the constraints of PoW camp life. He notes that characteristic native upper and lower grinding stones indicated African settlement areas, and spongeware ceramics the Boer camp. Likewise, Slaughter shows how the use of *saké* vessels at Japanese American camps reveals maintenance of cultural values, customs, and identities (Chap. 16). The ways in which portable material culture could be created and used within camps can be approached by archaeologists using their skills in reading objects. Mytum has considered the ways in which internees coped with the stresses of incarceration using material culture, following medical and sociological studies of imprisonment and stress management (Mytum 2012a; Chap. 10).

The creativity of PoWs has long attracted collectors of products made in the camps, from the elaborate bone, paper and wood products of the Napoleonic camps made to sell at the gates of the camps (Lloyd 2007) and for which Mytum and Hall report archaeological evidence of the production at Norman Cross (Chap. 5). Trench art (Saunders 2003) includes the products of PoWs, and many are items designed to appeal to the potential purchasers (Cresswell 2005; Walker 1913) or for friends and relations, as with the "gutta percha" jewelry manufacture identified by Bush at Johnson's Island camp (Chap. 4). Other items, however, reveal elements of subversion or resistance that have been analyzed in archaeological ways (Carr 2010, 2012; Mytum 2012a, b). By appreciating the cultural backgrounds of the prisoners and the particular political and social contexts of their imprisonment, it is possible to evaluate motives and abilities of the producers, and consider the appreciation of the items by the consumers. For some, these were souvenirs of a visit to a camp of exotic aliens; for others it was a charitable act to assist those imprisoned, and yet in other cases it was a purely commercial choice to purchase from the camp.

It is notable how many materials that would not have been used to create artifacts were turned to good use in the camps. Refuse that would have been thrown away or fed to animals was instead recycled. The elaborate carved bone products from Norman Cross (Lloyd 2007; Chap. 5) and the World War I camp of Knockaloe (Cresswell 2005; Mytum 2011) were all produced from products left over from the butchery and cooking, and the World War II Red Cross parcels were sources for many items reworked from the contents and the packaging (Carr 2011; Chap 11; Doyle 2012; Chap 8).

The fragility of the PoW material culture is highlighted in products that would leave no archaeological trace in most contexts but have survived as souvenirs and family mementos, retained as they continue to act as physical reminders of individual and family histories; many are still in private possession even if museums and private collectors now hold such items. In the case of paper, a wide range of

items were produced: camp newspapers, photographs, paintings and other graphic art (Carr and Mytum 2012), and craft products including artificial flowers and origami (Dusselier 2008; Lloyd 2007). Textiles also were important, particularly embroidery (Archer and Jeffries 2012) and knitting (Cresswell 2005); straw plait-work for millinery was also important in the nineteenth century (Walker 1913). Work of esthetic quality could also on occasion be produced, whether furniture for Rennie Mackintosh in World War I (Cresswell 2005) or art from significant artists such as Kurt Schwitters in World War II (Behr and Malet 2004), but more often it is the ingenuity and creativity of the wider population of the PoW camps that offers the greatest archaeological potential.

## Material Culture, Autobiography, and Oral History

The PoWs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot now be interviewed regarding their experiences, though a few wrote letters from their camps (Bush 2011), diaries whilst incarcerated, or memoirs of their experiences, revealing their own experiences and perceptions of their confinement (Garneray 2003; Goss 2001; Waterhouse 1816). Though often told with a political point to make, they nevertheless give one set of perspectives from those who were literate enough to record their lives in exceptional conditions.

In the twentieth century, it is possible to use a wide range of sources including oral history. For some, such as the many intellectuals held during World War II even though they had fled Nazi oppression, internment was frustrating and counter-intuitive. Ulmschneider and Crawford highlight the complex writing and rewriting of feelings and impressions by Jacobsthal, both as a record of his experience of World War II internment on the Isle of Man and also as a vehicle to work through his emotions and identity (Chap. 13). Some scholars tried to work within the institutional structures of confinement, as was the case with Gerhard Bersu who took an alternative attitude to Jacobsthal and took advantage of his internment on the Isle of Man to conduct a series of important excavations using PoW labor (Fig. 1.2). With his wife, Bersu examined a series of late prehistoric and medieval sites (Bersu 1977; Bersu and Wilson 1966) and corresponded with many British colleagues regarding his findings (Evans 1998; Mytum 2012b). Here material culture from the remote past was uncovered as a by-product of modern internment; the scale of Bersu's productivity merely highlights the wasted potential of so many who were not able to turn their considerable talents to good effect, though it has been recognized that some artists and musicians were able to produce some significant work despite adversity (Behr and Malet 2004; Dickson et al. 2012; Snizek 2012). Burström (2009) also notes excavation by a camp occupant, Sverre Marstrand, at the Eckersta camp in Sweden; he suggests the choice of a Viking grave for study might have reflected the internees' nationalistic feelings, but there does not seem to have been any subtext for Bersu's work on the Isle of Man.



**Fig. 1.2** Photographs taken by Bersu of his excavations at Ballanorris, during his internment on the Isle of Man. (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

The power of material culture to evoke memory can be seen in many examples of PoW internment, but likewise such triggers can be denied and the process of forgetting can dominate. Issues of guilt and trauma can be formulated into deliberate strategies of forgetting at both individual and community levels, and in many cases this can be seen as a positive attitude to moving on from the experiences of the past (Connerton 2008, 2009). Many examples of oral history and memory involve both remembering and forgetting, and it is noteworthy that many of the studies—both archaeological and historical—are associated with those who have laid aside memories of their youth but wish to address them now, in old age. Also, as new generations follow on they want to understand more about their communal and familial pasts, and positive and negative experiences of their parents and grandparents can be faced with some sense of historical perspective.

One example of the materiality of commemoration being conserved and transformed, to then act as a trigger for memory and eventually reconciliation, is analyzed by Murakami and Middleton (2006). At one of the labor camps by the Thai–Burma railway a total of 16 Pows died, and before they left at the end of hostilities the survivors marked their graves with a wooden cross and plaque. The grave was later moved by local people but a large copper cross was erected, together with a marble slab that listed in English all those who were buried there. Years later, this memorial was noted by a Japanese woman married to a Briton and through her it became known in the British press; from this a whole series of visits and reconciliation processes began. The role of the surviving monument was a key factor in rediscovering the graves and memorial, but it is the latter that has been central as a location for and a symbol of the reconciliation (Murakami and Middleton 2006:283–387). The importance of particular structures as triggers for memory and symbols of experience, and now used as locales for reconciliation, is demonstrated by Rothenhäusler and Adler with schloss Wurzach and Lager Lindele in Biberach

(Chap. 12), or indeed in the ongoing reworking of history and relationships between north and south in the United States discussed by Jameson with reference to Andersonville and Fort Pulaski (Chap. 2). Even simple artifacts can evoke strong memories, as Moshenska (2007, 2009) discovered, and integrating fieldwork with interviews creates powerful emotions as Slaughter and Kamp-Whittaker and Shew acknowledge (Chaps. 16, 17).

Contrasting examples of forgetting can be seen in Scandinavia where issues of occupation, neutrality, and collaboration color perceptions and memories of World War II. In Norway, these issues are only now being confronted by Jasinski, both in terms of Norwegian participation in the Nazi agenda and in the use and abuse of PoW labor not only by occupation forces but also Norwegian private and state operations (Chap. 9). In Sweden, similar amnesias are only now being confronted, though even excavation of a refugee camp did not elicit a flood of memories of the camp for German women, even though the earlier one for Norwegian men was recalled. This suggests selective remembering of more laudable associations and the forgetting of more difficult ones (Burström 2009).

## **Prisoner of War archaeology Within Conflict Archaeology**

Conflict archaeology is one of a number of sub-disciplines that has evolved as specialization within archaeology has increased (Saunders 2007; Saunders and Cornish 2007; Schofield 2005; Schofield et al. 2002). In one sense, PoW archaeology sits within this field, as the internment of such large numbers of people only occurred because of war. However, by their very nature the camps are concerned with negating violence and removing people from combat to either enforced leisure or to varied levels of voluntary or enforced labor, so they offer distinct opportunities and insights (Moshenska and Myers 2011).

Military PoW camps offer opportunities to examine the survival and management of rank and class structures even when not within a typical environment. The captors maintained differences between officers and ranks in the Napoleonic Wars as well as the World Wars. It was attempted also in the American Civil War, but as Bush demonstrates, the numbers being captured meant that such divisions had to be abandoned at Johnson's Island (Chap. 4). Attempts at escape occur generally at military camps, and although some of the riots and mass resistance was often also linked to poor conditions and frustrations, there was always at least a minority who tried to break free. This was less common with civilian camps, where there was not the same developed sense of being part of a conflict, but such efforts did occur occasionally and justified the elaborate perimeter security even at such sites.

Artifacts reveal fragments of uniforms and some illicit weapons, and Avery and Garrow's excavation of the guards' camp at Florence highlights the military component of the PoW camp. These were part of the overall military infrastructure, and were often similar in terms of rations and internal layout. The differences between PoW camps and army camps (Mytum 2011) deserve further analysis, as do variations between military and civilian establishments. The leisure experienced by military

forces between phases of warfare could lead to the creation of material culture—the trench art brought to archaeologists' attention by Saunders (2003)—that can be contrasted with the products from camps. Indeed, in this way contemporary products by individuals in different situations can be compared to throw light on their aspirations and coping strategies.

## Prisoner of War Archaeology Within Archaeology at Large

Within its own narrow interest, PoW archaeology is exciting, innovative, and an evocative medium through which difficult aspects of the relatively recent past can be explored, interpreted, and confronted. It reveals an often-forgotten aspect of wartime countries, but offers more, however, than an eclectic diversion from mainstream archaeology. The very constraints that affected the internees create sets of defined variables within which behavior can be studied. The transient nature of many sites means that, unlike many prisons, orphanages, or boarding schools, PoW camps are institutional settings that have often been built in isolated locations and then abandoned, making them available for archaeological study and offering a limited time depth for the deposits and artifacts. These limited-duration sites with both high levels of authoritarian control and large numbers of not fully compliant occupants offer opportunities to study structure and agency that are just now being exploited (Mytum, 2011, 2012a, b). Given that those incarcerated were usually of a single sex, PoW camps provide unusual contexts in which to examine concepts of gender and how these were played out in practice. Just as Gilchrist (1994) took advantage of nunneries to examine medieval attitudes to gender, so it is now possible to consider gender in more recent contexts; this has been explicitly considered by cultural historians (Rachamimov 2006, 2012; Somma 2012) but not yet in any detail by archaeologists. Many elements of masculinity could be challenged in a context where protection and work, often defining features of male roles, were restricted or denied within PoW camps. Challenges to culturally expected gender roles are also revealed in the mixed camps, as noted by Kamp-Whittaker and Shew with male and female roles threatened by the institutional structures of the Japanese American camps (Chap. 17).

Archaeologists are increasingly interested in the social, political, and intellectual context within which research takes place (Diaz-Andreu 2007; Lucas 2001). What is done and why, what is retained and studied, and what ignored or discarded, all relates to the context of the archaeological actors in time, space, and culture. It is therefore relevant to consider where archaeology takes place within the context of war, as with the major rescue excavations that took place ahead of wartime construction (Grimes 1960; O'Neill 1948) and following bombing (Grimes 1968). Archaeologists suffering internment are now being studied, with Jacobsthal subject to renewed interest by Crawford and Ulmschneider and Crawford (Chap. 13) and there is ongoing research into the experience of Bersu (Evans 1998; Mytum 2012b). Archaeology by PoWs is also now being recognized, with not only their methods but also their interpretations being set within their wider context of the time (Burström 2009).

## Conclusions

The archaeology of PoWs offers many ways in which the use of material culture in times of confinement and stress can be studied within the historic period. It also provides a vehicle by which the forgotten can be remembered, and that the casualties of war were not all on the battlefield. It is the opinion of all those contributing to this volume that PoW archaeology offers unique opportunities for both studying the past and making sense of the present. Historical archaeology often reveals the efforts and qualities of the undocumented or ignored, and this can certainly be one role of PoW archaeology. However, study of both the camp sites, and the artifacts used and made in them, reveal that it would be a mistake to see all PoWs as powerless victims. Instead, we can acknowledge and understand the complex and often competing feelings and actions as internees, both individually and together, attempted to survive unforeseen and often challenging conditions. Taking a self-aware, ethical approach to the physical evidence and to any survivors and interest groups, archaeologists can work within this at times difficult heritage, as revealed in the chapters that follow.

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**Part II**  
**Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century**  
**Experiences**

## Chapter 2

# Artifacts of Internment: Archaeology and Interpretation at Two American Civil War Prisoner-of-War Sites

John H. Jameson

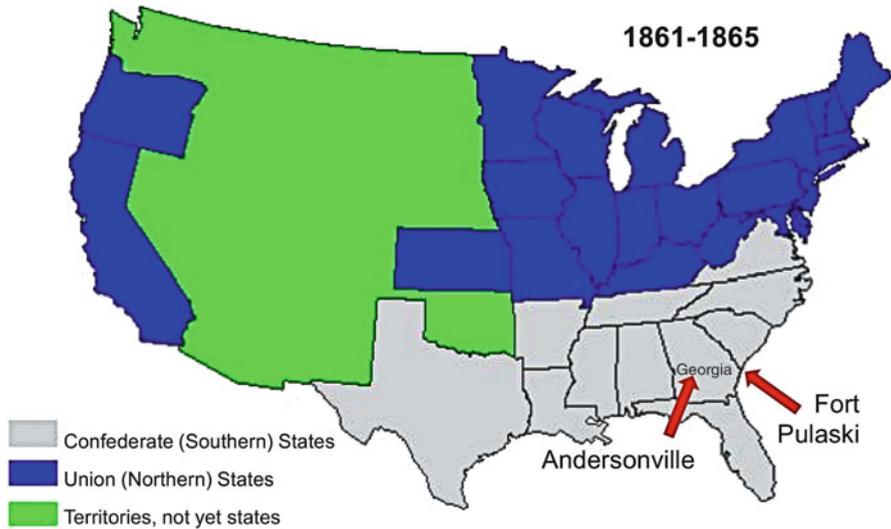
**Abstract** While the American Civil War (1861–1865) is best known for key events such as the Battle of Gettysburg, the horrid Civil War prisoner of war experience is also important, with 56,000 men perishing in Civil War prisons. At two PoW camp sites, managed and interpreted for the public by the US National Parks Service, archaeology has played an important role in enhancing understanding. Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia, perhaps the most notorious of the Civil War prisons, has few surviving records or remains of the stockade, but archaeology has revealed two construction phases and key architectural features and living areas. At Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia, the location of the graves of the Confederate PoWs who died at Fort Pulaski were revealed through archaeology and are now marked and interpreted for the public by an outside exhibit.

## Introduction

The American Civil War (1861–1865) marked an end to an economic and social era, that despite the principles espoused in the Declaration of Independence of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, could not be sustained. The Declaration and the US Constitution with its Bill of Rights were forged within an unspoken compromise over the issue of slavery. Slavery, as the backbone of the plantation and rural agricultural systems, was condemned by Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration and third president of the United States. Jefferson wrote of the “fireball in the night” that would bring ruin and devastation to the nation (Randolph 1829:323), yet he was

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**Fig. 2.1** Map of the United States in 1861–1865 during the American Civil War showing the states of the Confederacy (*grey*) and states loyal to the Union (*blue*) and locations of Andersonville National Historic Site and Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia

a slave owner, and his life personifies the great paradox of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, and these internal contradictions inevitably led to the Civil War between Confederate and Union states (Fig. 2.1).

While the war is best known for key events such as the Battle of Gettysburg and innovative military technologies such as rifled cannon, trench warfare, and submarines capable of sinking ships, the atrocities of the PoW camps should also be burned into the collective historical American consciousness. While the war etched names such as Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Antietam, and Vicksburg into history, the more subversive battles in the camps went relatively unnoticed. Of the more than 600,000 Americans who lost their lives in the war, an estimated 56,000 died in Civil War prisons, at a casualty rate much higher than on the bloody battlefields. Two Civil War PoW sites, Andersonville and Fort Pulaski, presently managed and interpreted for the public by the US National Parks Service in the state of Georgia, located in the southeastern United States, have benefitted from a combination of archaeological and documentary research to reveal the PoW experience (Fig. 2.1).

Andersonville National Historic Site (NHS) is the location of perhaps the most notorious of the Civil War prisons. With little surviving original records or remains of the stockade, archaeology has provided key evidence for two reconstruction phases as well as information on important architectural features and living areas. Besides the prison, the Andersonville NHS contains a national cemetery as well as the National Prisoner of War Museum. The exhibits in the National Prisoner of War Museum commemorate the sacrifice and suffering of American prisoners of war in all conflicts. Fort Pulaski National Monument is where the “Immortal 600”

Confederate (Southern) officers were imprisoned; their sad treatment was in part prompted by news of the horrors at Andersonville. The precise location of the graves of the Confederate prisoners who died at Fort Pulaski was finally revealed in the late 1990s through archaeology, and are now marked and interpreted for the public by an out-of-doors exhibit.

## Conditions in Civil War Prisons

### *More Horrible Than Battle*

Most American Civil War soldiers by far preferred to be on the battlefield rather than in a PoW camp. The Union's Fort Delaware, the PoW prison camp from which those at Fort Pulaski were derived in 1864, was dubbed "The Fort Delaware Death Pen." Another Union prison at Elmira, New York, experienced nearly a 25 % mortality rate. The South's infamous Camp Sumter, or Andersonville prison, claimed the lives of 29 % of its inmates. More than 150 prisons were established during the war; all were filled beyond capacity, with inmates crowded into camps and shelters with unhealthy conditions and meager provisions (Hall 2003).

The high mortality rate in Civil War prisons was generally not deliberate, but rather the result of ignorance of nutrition and proper sanitation on both sides of the conflict. While malice was seldom intended, ignorance, coupled with shortages of food, shelter, and clothing, produced cauldrons of disease and death. While previous wars had harbored similar prison conditions, the Civil War was unique in the sheer numbers of men confined. With the possible exception of the aftermath of the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, where thousands of British soldiers became PoWs, Americans had seldom been faced with what to do with more than 100 men in captivity. The hundreds of thousands of men imprisoned simply exceeded either side's ability or will to manage the crisis (Hall 2003; Ketchum 1997).

The North incarcerated most of its PoWs in an array of coastal fortifications (such as Fort Pulaski), existing jails, old buildings, and barracks enclosed by high fences (see Chap. 4). Both sides realized, however, that less formal and make-shift facilities would be required in many cases to house the overwhelming numbers of prisoners that were being captured. Union prisons such as Maryland's Point Lookout housed soldiers in tent cities walled in by high fences, while the South, lacking the means to build adequate structures, forced men into crowded stockades.

### *Depression and Dysentery*

Prison diets consisted of pickled beef, salt pork, corn meal, rice, or bean soup. The lack of fruits or vegetables often led to outbreaks of scurvy and other diseases.

In many northern prisons, hungry inmates hunted rats, sometimes making a sport of it. Starvation and poor sanitation inflamed outbreaks of diseases like smallpox, typhoid, dysentery, cholera, and malaria. If left untreated, sores led to gangrene—a disease curable only by amputation. Of all these afflictions, perhaps the most dangerous was depression. A good number of the prisoners became catatonic, wasting away, and some elected suicide as a remedy, taunting guards to shoot them.

Despite these insufferable conditions, prisoners on both sides coped as best they could. Inmates at Johnson's Island prison in Lake Erie were housed in one of the best-equipped prisons (Chap. 4) and formed a YMCA, a debating society, and a thespian troupe to pass the time. When snow was present, some even held snowball fights. At some prisons, such as those in the Richmond area, prisoners published their own newspapers and established libraries. Prisoners whiled away their days with games like chess, cards, and backgammon.

Problems of overcrowding were exacerbated by slow and inefficient prisoner exchange practices. Later in the war, when the Confederacy refused to exchange black prisoners, in some cases forcing them into slavery, the exchange system broke down. Knowing that attrition rates were affecting Confederate forces more severely than Union forces, Union generals became reluctant to enter into exchanges. General Ulysses Grant, senior commander of Union forces, refused to allow PoWs at Fort Pulaski to be exchanged. However, a good number of the Andersonville inmates were later exchanged through the port of Savannah in November 1864 (Derdén 2010).

Union propaganda campaigns both during and following the war decried the dire conditions of Confederate prisons while ignoring their own, as evidenced by the conditions and treatment policies at Fort Pulaski. Despite these horrific conditions, and evidence on both sides of cases of brutality and deliberate deprivations, only Major Henry Wirz, the Confederate commandant of Andersonville, was executed for war crimes and was later seen as a scapegoat (Peoples 1980).

## The Andersonville PoW Camp

Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia is the site of Andersonville prison, by far the most infamous of the American Civil War prisons. Officially known as Camp Sumter, Andersonville was one of the largest of many established prison camps during the American Civil War and was the largest Confederate military prison. It was built early in 1864 with slave labor after Confederate officials decided to move the large number of Federal prisoners kept in and around Richmond, Virginia, to a place of greater security and a more abundant food supply. During the 14 months of the prison's existence, more than 45,000 Union soldiers were confined there. Of these, almost 13,000 died from multiple factors including poor sanitation, diarrhea and other diseases, malnutrition and starvation, and exposure to the elements, all stemming from overcrowding (Fig. 2.2).

The first prisoners were brought to Andersonville in February 1864. During the next few months, approximately 400 more arrived each day until, by the end of June,



some 26,000 men were confined in a prison area originally intended to hold 13,000. Handicapped by deteriorating economic conditions, an inadequate transportation system, and the need to concentrate all available resources on the army, the Confederate government was unable to provide adequate housing, food, clothing, and medical care to their Federal captives. These conditions, along with a breakdown of the prisoner exchange system, resulted in much suffering and a high mortality rate.

Andersonville Prison, housing nearly 33,000 men at its peak in August 1864, became one of the largest “cities” of the Confederacy. Inmates were crowded into 26.5 acres (11 ha) of muddy land, constructing primitive shelters, “shebangs,” from whatever material they could find. Lacking sewers or other sanitation facilities, camp inmates turned “Stockade Creek” into a massive, disease-ridden latrine. Summer rainstorms would flood the open sewer, spreading filth across the settlement. Visitors approaching the camp for the first time often retched from the stench. Medical supplies were woefully inadequate as the Confederacy had great problems obtaining these after the Union naval blockade began to tighten in 1862. Medical personnel had to resort to remedies derived from indigenous plants and herbs for stimulants, tonics, and astringents, such as calamus, snakeroot, bearberry, sumac, dogwood, white oak, white willow, sage, and a host of others (Denney 1995:11). At Andersonville, “The supplies for a month are usually exhausted in 10 days, and the remainder of the time we are compelled to rely on such indigenous remedies as we can procure from the adjacent woods.” (Thornburgh 1864).

Inmates at Andersonville formed societies and ethnic neighborhoods. A polyglot of languages could be heard throughout the camp as German, Swedish, and Norwegian prisoners often conversed in their own tongues. In prison neighborhoods, barter systems developed as tradesmen and merchants sold primitive trade goods. Available shelter was limited to crude huts of made scrap wood, tent fragments, or simple holes dug in the ground; many had no shelter of any kind against the elements of rain, heat, and cold. No clothing was provided, and many prisoners were left with rags or nothing at all. The daily ration for the prisoners was the same as for the guards: one and one-fourth pound of corn meal and either one pound of beef or one-third pound of bacon. This sparse diet was only occasionally supplemented with beans, peas, rice, or molasses.

The guards, disease, starvation, and exposure were not all that prisoners had to face. A group of prisoners, calling themselves the “Andersonville Raiders,” attacked their fellow inmates to steal food, jewelry, money, and clothing. They were armed mostly with clubs, and killed to get what they wanted. Another group rose up to stop the larceny, calling themselves “Regulators.” They caught nearly all of the “Raiders,” who were then tried by a judge and jury selected from a group of newly arrived prisoners. This jury, upon finding the “Raiders” guilty, set punishments that included running the gauntlet, being sent to the stocks, wearing a ball and chain, and, in six cases, hanging. In the autumn of 1864, after the capture of Atlanta, Georgia, all the prisoners who could be moved were sent to Camp Lawton at Millen, Georgia, (discussed below) and Florence, South Carolina (Chap. 3). At Camp Lawton better arrangements prevailed and when the prisoners were returned to Andersonville, after General William Tecumseh Sherman began his March to the Sea, the conditions there were somewhat improved.



**Fig. 2.3** *Top row:* Sections of excavated in situ stockade remains and exposed banded soils (Prentice and Prentice, 1990); *Middle row:* Reconstructed stockade, prisoner huts, and an interpretive sketch “Crossing the Deadline”; *Bottom row:* National Prisoner of War Museum and sample of interior displays, Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia

## *The Stockade*

The stockade enclosure initially covered about 16.5 acres (6.7 ha) of land defined by a 15-foot (4.5 m) high stockade of hewn pine logs (Fig. 2.2, bottom); it was enlarged to 26.5 acres (10.7 ha) in June of 1864. The stockade was in the shape of a parallelogram 1,620 feet (494 m) and 779 feet (237 m) wide. Sentry boxes, or “pigeon roosts” as the prisoners called them, stood at 30-yard intervals along the top of the stockade. Inside, about 19 feet from the wall, was the “Deadline,” which the prisoners were forbidden to cross upon threat of death (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3). Flowing through the prison yard was a stream called Stockade Branch, which supplied water to most of the prison. Two entrances, the North Gate and the South Gate, were on the west side of the stockade. Eight small earthen forts located around the exterior of the prison were equipped with artillery to quell disturbances within the compound and to defend against feared Union cavalry attacks (Fig. 2.2).

## Archaeology at Andersonville PoW Camp

Work was carried out within three field seasons from 1988 to 1990 with the objectives of determining the nature and locations of the prison's stockade walls and gates; adding to understanding of prison conditions; and providing details that had escaped documentation. This information was vital to the park's interpretative programs in allowing for partial reconstruction of the stockade walls and the installation of associated exhibits that provide a sense of scale and spatial orientation for the visitor. This work also revealed important archaeological information about the different techniques used in constructing the original stockade, the main gates, and later expansions (National Park Service 2001; Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

### *Soil Color Banding*

The soil color banding observed in the West Stockade wall trench in plan view was duplicated in the cross-section trench profiles. These profiles made it readily apparent that the banding was the result of the manner in which the soils had been removed from the wall trench and backfilled around the posts. The soils in this portion of the site naturally grade from an orange color at the ground surface to a dark red color at a depth of 1.5 m (Fig. 2.3). The banding in the wall trenches indicates that when the wall trench was excavated the uppermost orange soils were thrown toward the exterior of the prison, while the deeper red soils were thrown toward the interior. When these soils were backfilled into the wall trench, the posts placed in the center of the trench prevented the two soil colors from mixing, thereby creating the banding effect noted near the surface (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

Artifacts recovered during the North Gate investigations included one iron axe head and an axe head fragment, a brass and iron buckle, cut nails, a brass utensil fragment, probably part of a spoon handle, stamped with a crown symbol and the letters GR (or GB), and an alkaline glazed stoneware sherd. The axe heads were probably the remains of tools used in the construction of the original prison stockade by the African American slaves encumbered with the task. The cut nails were also probably used in the construction of the prison (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

### *Slave Versus Prisoner Construction Phases*

During the 1989 investigations the original north wall of the prison was located, appearing as a whitish inner, central, fill zone (Prentice and Prentice 1990). The original north wall had been torn down by the prisoners following the building of the northern prison extension in July 1864. Trench 3 was excavated to examine the original north wall; the west profile exhibited the same wall trench shape and form as the western stockade trench, having a flat bottom with slightly inwardly sloping

sides. No posts were found in the trench, and the sides of the wall trench showed no signs of distortion or collapse. This suggests that when the prisoners pulled the post from this section of the original northern stockade wall trench on 1 July 1864, they pulled it to the east, thereby preserving the original trench shape. This is in contrast to the opposite or east profile where the northern side of the wall trench flairs outward near the ground surface. The flaring at this point in the trench suggests that when these posts were removed by the prisoners they were pulled toward the north. This flaring was probably the result of digging along the north side of the wall to loosen the poles so that they could be tipped or pulled out.

The profiles in Trench 3 also provided enough evidence to conclude that the method used to dig and backfill the wall trench of the original North Stockade was the same as that used for the original West Stockade—during the digging of the wall trench the uppermost soils were piled toward the exterior of the prison and the deeper red soils were piled toward the interior. When the soils were backfilled around the posts, these prevented the two soils from mixing, thereby creating a banding effect. Although the trench fills were later disturbed when the prisoners pulled out the posts on 1 July 1864, portions of the original fill zones were preserved at the bottom of each profile (Fig. 2.3). Numerous pig and cow bones, some with butchering marks, were recovered during the excavation of the stockade wall trenches. They were probably the remains of meals consumed by the African American slaves who built the original prison.

Trench 5 was placed parallel with the west stockade line at the point where the northern stockade extension intersected with the original northwest corner to reveal the method in which the stockade extension was added to the original corner of the prison stockade (Prentice and Prentice 1990). The point of intersection between the northern extension and the original stockade was evidenced in the west profile of Trench 5 by a vertical zone of red soil roughly 30 cm wide. South of the point of intersection, the remains of several posts showed that they had been hewn square before being placed in the trench. North of the point of intersection, the remains of several posts indicated that those posts that had been used in the construction of the extension had not been hewn square, as was noted by Walker during his 1987 investigations of the northeast corner of the camp (Prentice and Prentice 1990).

### ***Banded Soils Observed in the Southeast Corner Excavations***

Excavations were conducted at the southeast corner of the stockade in 1990, with surface deposits removed by machine with the trench then cleaned and investigated by hand excavation (Prentice and Prentice 1990). A consistent pattern of trench fill was revealed: a yellowish brown sand strip ran along one side of the stockade wall trench, and a band of whitish sand along the other side. The two bands were often separated by a band of grayish brown soil resulting from the decomposed posts located in the center of the trench. A similar banded pattern of stockade wall trench fills had been noted during the 1989 North Gate investigations.

As observed in the excavation profiles at the West Stockade, the banded pattern of wall trench fills found at both the southeast corner and the North Gate confirmed the consistent manner in which the stockade wall was constructed by the slave gangs. While digging the wall trench, the uppermost soils were consistently thrown to the outside of what would be the prison enclosure, while the deeper subsoils were thrown to the inside. The posts were then set in the middle of the trench and the fill on both sides of the trench was then packed around them. In the area of the southeast corner, where the deeper soils are naturally whiter than the light brown soils near the ground surface, this resulted in a white band on the interior side of the stockade posts and a light brown band of soil bordering the exterior of the posts. In the area of the northwest gate where the natural soil colors grade from orange to red, this resulted in an inner red band and an outer orange band of soil separated by posts (Fig. 2.3, top right).

### *Failed Escape Tunnel*

A failed prisoner's escape tunnel was discovered along the southern stockade wall during the 1990 excavations (Prentice and Prentice 1990). These excavations currently provide the only archaeological evidence thus far on prisoner escape tunnel construction at Andersonville. Within the excavations, the widest section of the escape tunnel was about 90 cm. Based on profile map reconstructions, the height of the tunnel was approximately 40–50 cm—just big enough for a man to crawl through. This corner of the prison was apparently chosen as a tunnel location because of the soft, easily dug, sandy soils. Unfortunately for the attempted escapees, the soft soils also caused the downfall of the escape attempt. Digging just deep enough to pass beneath the bottoms of the stockade posts, the sandy soil and several stockade posts collapsed into the tunnel before the tunnel could be extended more than 1 m past the stockade line.

### *Locating the “Deadline” Posts*

During the southeast corner investigations, an attempt was made to locate some of the deadline posts by excavating six 1-by-1 m units within the stockade enclosure. Two post locations were found: posthole 1 and feature 4. Both post locations were cross-sectioned, and flotation samples were collected for analysis. Artifacts recovered posthole 1 included a metal button, some bone fragments, some unidentifiable metal fragments, and a silver-filigreed writing instrument. Feature 4 yielded a metal button, a cut nail, cloth fragments, carbonized floral remains, and two pieces of bone, one of which exhibited evidence of butchering. The carbonized floral materials consisted of pine straw, pine bark, beans (*Phaseolus* sp.), and unidentified plant remains. These items were probably contemporaneous with the prison's occupation (Prentice and Prentice 1990, 2000).

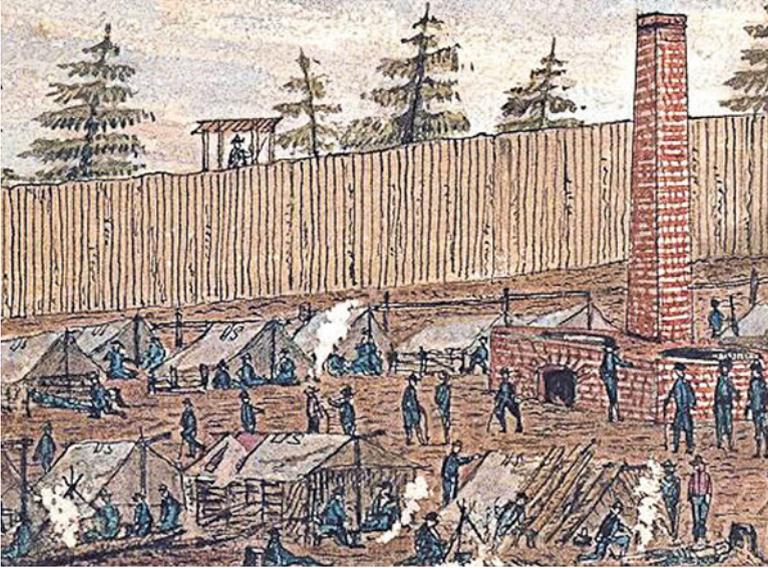
## Public Interpretation

Public interpretation until the early 1990s consisted of a few outdoor wayside exhibits and a map showing the location of the stockade and fortified compound. Visitors saw a large grassy field with these few visionary and interpretive aids, and they no doubt took away the mental image of that big, grassy, and fairly empty, landscape. In January 1987, the National Park Service proposed that certain portions of the inner prison stockade at Andersonville National Historical Site be reconstructed (Fig. 2.3 middle row) to enhance visitor understanding of the prison and prison conditions of the infamous Civil War prison camp (National Park Service 1988:1). Three of those portions of the prison were slated for reconstruction: the northeast corner, the southeast corner, and the North Gate. In 1970, Andersonville National Historic Site was designated by the US Congress as a memorial to all PoWs in American history (Fig. 2.3, bottom row). Park programs interpret the accounts of other Civil War PoW camps, both Northern and Southern, as well as the accounts of more recent conflicts.

Today, Andersonville National Historic Site offers three distinct localities within the park for interpretation: the Camp Sumter Civil War prison and landscape, including historic earthworks, monuments, and several reconstructed structures (Fig. 2.3, middle row); the National Prisoner of War Museum (Fig. 2.3, bottom row); and Andersonville National Cemetery, located about a quarter mile from the prison site and visitor center. The cemetery includes Civil War gravesites and monuments as well as twenty-first century burial spaces. A common visitor center within the museum building serves all three locations with a staffed reception desk, regularly scheduled interpretive tours, self-guided tour materials (print and CD), and a bookstore and gift shop. The visitor center also houses a small research library and archives, although with limited capacity for public access. Current interpretation programs and exhibits, with the benefit of the archaeological work, depict the grim life suffered by prisoners of war, both Southern and Northern, during the war (National Park Service 2010).

## Archaeology at Camp Lawton, Georgia

Camp Lawton, a successor PoW camp to Andersonville that operated for 6 weeks in October and November 1864 at Millen, Georgia, approximately 150 miles (240 km) northeast of Andersonville, has only recently received systematic archaeological study. Conditions at the camp were only mildly better than Andersonville (Fig. 2.4), and in the only existent official report 10,299 PoWs were listed at the prison, of whom 349 had enlisted in the Confederate Army, 486 had died, and 285 were working at the prison. When Confederates attempted to recruit their captives for military and other service, some joined the Confederate Army while others signed paroles and worked as butchers, administrative clerks, or cobblers. In the middle of November, shortly before the arrival of Union forces under General Sherman and



**Fig. 2.4** Inmate drawing of scene at Camp Lawton, Macon, Georgia, showing structures reminiscent of Andersonville. (Courtesy Virginia Historical Society)

the evacuation of the PoW camp, an exchange of sick prisoners was arranged. Many Camp Lawton inmates were among the several thousand Union and Confederate PoWs who were exchanged through the port of Savannah (Derden 2010).

Archaeologists from Georgia Southern University conducted a combination shovel-testing and metal-detecting survey program at the site of Camp Lawton in 2010 (Chapman 2010). The results of the survey were surprising given the pattern and paucity of artifacts, at Andersonville. An impressive assemblage of artifacts has been found at Camp Lawton, including keepsake items such as pipes, a tourniquet buckle, and bullets. Coins of German or Austrian origin would have come with the large number of recent immigrants who had enlisted on both sides. Artifacts such as a private coin minted in Columbus, Ohio and a New York State button suggest the geographic origin of some of the prisoners.

## Archaeology at Fort Pulaski National Monument

Fort Pulaski fell to the Union in 1862, in the process exposing the total obsolescence of masonry fortifications against rifled cannon that could penetrate masonry walls. Following the Civil War, with the advent of longer ranging cannon, Fort Pulaski fell into disuse. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, public relief projects such as the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) were wide ranging and many of them were occupied with the restoration of historic sites. Work at Fort Pulaski aimed to restore and stabilize the fortifications complex, including restoration of the wet moat and tidal gate system (Fig. 2.5).



Fig. 2.5 Aerial view of Fort Pulaski

### *The “Immortal 600”*

The “Immortal 600” was a group of 520 Confederate officers held as prisoners of war at Fort Pulaski during the bitterly cold winter of 1864–1865. They were moved there from Charleston, South Carolina, where they had been placed in a pin in the line of artillery fire in retaliation for what was viewed as similar treatment of Union PoWs in the city. The Confederate officer PoWs were treated harshly, partly as a result of news coming out of Confederate prisons, especially Andersonville, and they were given a 6-week diet of rancid cornmeal and pickles. While some Union officers tried to lessen the misery, they were generally overruled by superiors in favor of harsher treatment. Prisoners suffered from dysentery, chronic diarrhea, scurvy, and pneumonia, and 13 of them died while imprisoned at Fort Pulaski. They were buried in a cemetery near the fort, and the location of the burials of these men has been an important focus of much of the research done at the cemetery of Fort Pulaski (Groh 1999, 2000; Kane and Keaton 2005).

### **The Search for the “Immortal 600” Grave Sites**

#### *1994 Remote Sensing Investigations*

Remote sensing survey at the eastern end of the cemetery area was undertaken by the NPS Southeast Archeological Center archaeologists in 1994 to locate the section containing the “Immortal 600” burials. The survey was unable to locate the area

**Table 2.1** List of “Immortal 600” Confederate dead buried at Fort Pulaski (after Groh 1999)

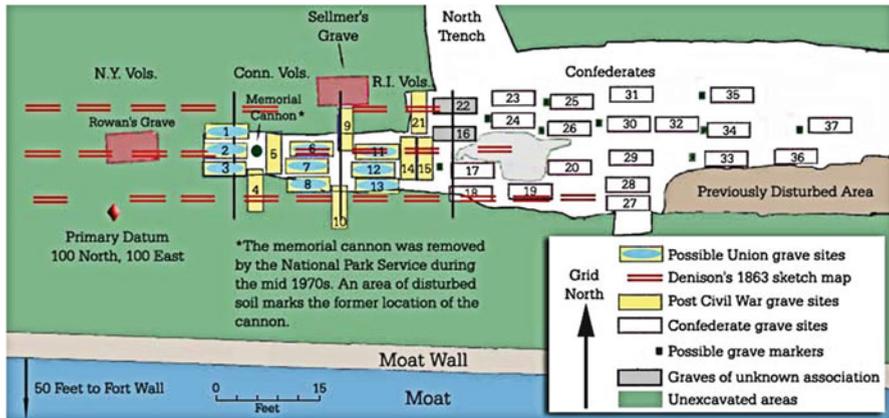
Name	Grave no. in Joslyn	1873 Burial list no.	Roster date
Burney, I.L.	–	11	Nov 12, 1864
Fitzgerald, George	3	–	Nov 13, 1864
Lane, C.C.	–	13	Dec 8, 1864
Burgin, John M.	–	–	Jan 28, 1865
Legg, Russell W.	5	–	Feb 7, 1865
Bradford, Moses J.	6	12	Feb 13, 1865
King, Alex M.	7	–	Feb 15, 1865
Rosenbalm, E.A.	–	10	Feb 18, 1865
Goodloe, T.J.	–	8	Feb 27, 1865
Brumley, O.R.	–	6	Mar 4, 1865
Eastham, C.B.	–	7	Mar 6, 1865
Gannoway, J.T.	–	9	Mar 10, 1865
Tolbert, J.H.	–	–	Mar 14, 1865

of the Confederate graves due to the past introduction and mixing of multiple soil types, although it did identify an area of 1930s disturbance in the southeast portion of the cemetery.

### *Archival Research and the 1998 Investigations*

Research performed at the National Archives by Mauriel Joslyn (1996b) and John Jameson (1997, 1998) identified information relating to the Fort Pulaski cemetery. While initially focused on materials related to the “Immortal 600,” Joslyn and Jameson also showed that most if not all of the Union soldiers buried at Fort Pulaski were exhumed following the war. Joslyn’s research pointed specifically to the removal of burials from the Rhode Island section of the cemetery. In addition, she compiled a list of the 13 members of the “Immortal 600” who were known to have died at Fort Pulaski (Table 2.1). Jameson recovered a list of burials in the Fort Pulaski cemetery initially dated to 1873, but containing two additions from 1879; the eight members of the “Immortal 600” on the 1873 list are indicated in Table 2.1 with a corresponding number. A newspaper article reported the names on eight Confederate grave markers as well, but the names appear to be derived from the 1873 burial list because of the spelling inconsistencies seen in both.

A few days since, while on an excursion with some up-country friends to Fort Pulaski, our attention was attracted by a neat enclosure containing several graves marked with head-boards, marking the graves of deceased soldiers. Upon enquiry of Colonel Howard, Commandant of the Fort, we learned that the graves were those of Confederate officers, whose remains had been gathered and buried there by his direction (*Savannah Morning News*, July 16, 1874).



**Fig. 2.6** Confederate prisoner cemetery grave location map, also showing Denison's 1863 sketch map

This implies that United States troops stationed at Fort Pulaski after the Civil War possibly moved some of the burials and placed grave markers showing their locations. Furthermore, the presence of an enclosure indicates that there may have been some additional disturbance caused by its construction. These inconsistencies could have occurred due to the fact that the Confederate troops imprisoned at Fort Pulaski were not allowed to place grave markers at the burials of their deceased comrades. When markers were finally placed years later, the exact information and spelling was sometimes lost.

There are eight possible grave markers in the Confederate section of the graveyard (Fig. 2.6). These markers probably coincide with the eight names in both the 1873 cemetery list and the 1874 newspaper article, though whether these eight names actually correspond with those buried in these locations may never be known.

With the available archival and remote sensing information, the 1998 field season sought to pinpoint the cemetery location and the location of the "Immortal 600" burials. Specifically, the archaeologists' main goals were to locate the unmarked graves of the Confederate officers imprisoned at Fort Pulaski and to define the boundaries of the cemetery. Much of the search for the Confederate graves was confined to the eastern half of the cemetery, based on a sketch map produced by Reverend Frederic Denison, Chaplain for the third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (Denison 1863). The map indicated that the eastern section of the cemetery was reserved for Confederate burials, of which there were four dating to the time before the arrival of the "Immortal 600"; the 1863 map indicated the position of a memorial cannon, buried muzzle down, marking the location of the cemetery. This cannon was removed by National Park Service staff in the 1970s and conserved, and now sits atop the walls of Fort Pulaski.

A number of burials oriented perpendicular to the previously discovered east–west burials were located and mapped during the 1998 excavations. The north–south graves were probably coffin burials used by post-Civil War military personnel and their families.

### ***The 1999 Investigations***

Extensive excavations were conducted in 1999, leading to the complete delineation of the cemetery’s boundaries. Thirty-seven separate burials were identified, including the ones recorded during the 1998 field season (Fig. 2.6). Of these, 19–21 lie in the general area of the Confederate section and are therefore thought to be burials of Confederate prisoners at Fort Pulaski. To date, however, only 17 Confederate dead can be accounted for in the archives. Based on documentary research and the 1999 excavations, most of the Union troops who died during the Civil War were probably exhumed and their cemetery plots reused by civilians and post-Civil War military personnel. This interpretation is based mainly on the nonstandard orientation of burials going north–south as opposed to east–west (Groh 1999, 2000).

The disturbances in the middle of the cemetery, such as the pit dug to remove the cannon, and the addition and subsequent removal of the Fort Screven monument, probably affected the surrounding burials.

The cemetery at Fort Pulaski is an incredibly complex archaeological and historical site. Only through the combined efforts of archaeology and archival research will its many and varied uses be more fully comprehended. Archaeological investigations defined the extent of the burials so that future maintenance and restoration work at the fort would not disturb the cemetery area. This helps to ensure that the information contained within this area will be preserved for further study (NB Southeast Archeological Center 2003).

### ***Need for Additional Research***

The majority of the known cultural resources located within and around the monument are related to the construction and functioning of the Civil War fortification of Fort Pulaski. Former Park Superintendent Ralston B. Lattimore and historian Rogers W. Young have carried out research on the construction history and events relating to the fort. However, outside these aspects very little is known regarding the Civil War era archaeological resources. Systematic subsurface testing should be conducted on all of Cockspur Island where Fort Pulaski stands to identify and determine all aspects of the resource. Archaeological investigations that focus on identifying construction methods and materials, site boundaries, structure function, and structure associations would greatly aid current site interpretations. The resulting data recovered from the investigations would also aid in evaluating the national, state, and local significance of archaeological resources associated with the Civil War era at Fort Pulaski National Monument.

## Public Interpretation

Interpretation at the cemetery is aided by an on-site wayside exhibit that includes an artist's rendering of a scene showing the burial of one of the Immortal 600 (Fig. 2.7). Although evidence of wooden grave markers was found at eight grave locations in the Confederate section of the cemetery during the 1999 archaeological investigations, the grave markers may have been placed by Federal troops after the war (Groh 1999:68; Joslyn 1996a:234).

## Conclusions

That the subject of treatment in war camps, of war detainees, and of PoWs, is still a contentious issue today explains, some believe, why relatively little scholarship and research has been conducted to date, though this volume indicates a welcome rise activity in this field. Over time, with continuing archival and archaeological research, the cruel legacy of Civil War prisons on both sides is being revealed. The healing process for all Americans continues with every generation. It is the comprehension of the benchmark of suffering set during the Civil War that continues to shape American self-questioning and introspection on modern-day wars. Just as Andersonville and the story of Civil War PoWs are of great interest within historical research, the issue of fair and ethical treatment of PoWs continues to be a concern around the world today. Indeed, it was Andersonville, and the public interest in the treatment of prisoners of war associated with it, that contributed to worldwide concerns and eventually to the Geneva Convention.



**Fig. 2.7** Artist rendering of Confederate prisoners at Fort Pulaski burying one of their own. Oil painting by Martin Pate

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## Chapter 3

# Life and Death at the Florence Stockade, American Civil War, Prisoner of War Camp, South Carolina

Paul G. Avery and Patrick H. Garrow

**Abstract** Extensive excavations of a guard camp at the site of Florence Stockade, South Carolina, in advance of development revealed extensive traces of Prisoner of War (PoW) activity despite an occupation of only from September 1864 to March 1865. Evidence from features, particularly pits, and from artifacts, can be combined with documentary sources to reveal many aspects of PoW life within this crowded and unsanitary camp. The excavations demonstrate that even such transitory sites can yield much information to illuminate the PoW experience.

No official provisions existed for exchanging PoWs until July 22, 1862, when the Dix-Hill Cartel was signed. The agreement spelled out the mechanism for PoW exchange whereby those of equal rank could be exchanged on a one-to-one basis, while officers could be exchanged for specific numbers of enlisted men depending on their rank. Prisoners could be paroled under that system until they could be officially exchanged and rejoin their units. The cartel of exchange was ended by the US Secretary of War in May, 1863. The breakdown of the cartel is attributed to different causes by different researchers. Lincoln had been opposed to it because he felt that the signed agreement gave the Confederate government a degree of legitimacy that he was loathe to confer. Ultimately, the policy stated by Jefferson Davis to treat black PoWs as runaway slaves and to charge their commanding officers with leading a slave insurrection was a major cause, as was Abraham Lincoln's desire to deny the South much needed replacements for their decimated armies (Martinez 2004; Sanders 2005; Speer 1997).

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Whatever the reason for the breakdown, both sides were faced with dealing with large numbers of PoWs after May, 1863. According to Martinez (2004:ix), up to 210,000 Union and 220,000 Confederate troops were captured after the collapse of the Dix-Hill Cartel. That total does not count civilians arrested by both sides during the war.

Many types of facilities were used to house PoWs during the Civil War. Existing prisons, forts, camps, and industrial buildings were used, and new camps were constructed. Open air stockades were used by the Confederacy to supplement other types of prisons because they were cheap and easy to build. Camp Sumter, better known as Andersonville Prison (see Chap. 2), was built in early 1864 and was the first and most notorious of the open air stockade prisons (Sanders 2005; Speer 1997). The Florence Stockade was yet another expedient answer to the overwhelming question of how to deal with PoWs during the Civil War.

The Florence Stockade was built to house Union enlisted PoWs who had primarily been shipped east from Andersonville after the fall of Atlanta in early September, 1864. The PoWs were first sent to temporary quarters in Charleston, which were quickly filled beyond capacity and plagued by outbreaks of smallpox, yellow fever, and other diseases. Major Frederick F. Warley was ordered by the commandant at Charleston to construct a prison at Florence, where three railroads crossed. Warley assembled a work force of 1,000 slaves from surrounding plantations and began construction. The first PoWs were shipped to Florence on September 15, 1864, well before the stockade could be finished and before an adequate guard force could be assembled (King 1974:35–36). Ezra Hoyt Ripple was among the first 1,500 PoWs sent to Florence, and he indicated that the first group volunteered to go to Florence from Charleston. The PoWs were initially held in a cornfield surrounded by a small number of guards (Snell 1996:62); mass escapes were attempted by the PoWs while they were held there, but all were eventually recaptured and they were all moved into the unfinished stockade on September 18 (King 1974:36).

The stockade encompassed approximately 23½ acres, with palisades that were 1,400 feet long by 725 feet wide. The palisades were made of heavy, undressed timbers that extended 3–4 feet into the ground and projected approximately 12 feet high above ground. A ditch was dug 5 feet deep and 7 feet wide, with the excavated dirt thrown against the palisade to form a walkway for guards that extended within 3 feet of the top of the palisade. A “deadline” was placed 10–12 feet inside the palisade, and the guards were instructed to kill any PoW who crossed this. The palisade included a stream, Pye Branch, that ran through the prison to provide water for PoWs on the upstream (north) side and to drain sinks (privies) placed on the downstream (south) side. Approximately 6 acres of the camp around Pye Branch was swamp, and the stream separated the main living area of the camp to the east, from the hospital and other facilities to the west. There were 50 guard posts established around the stockade, with 29 picket posts, manned only at night, placed approximately 20 yards outside the stockade to guard against tunneling. Platforms were erected in each corner of the stockade for artillery that could rake the camp in case of an uprising or attempted mass escape (OR II, Vol. VII 1899:1097–1099; Snell 1996:62).

Images of the camp were prepared as watercolor prints by Sneden (Bryan et al. 2001:235–236) based on sketches he made while a PoW at Florence. His overall image of the camp appears to be grossly inaccurate, which places his other images in doubt. What is probably a more accurate map of the stockade was drawn by Sergeant-Major Robert H. Kellogg (1868:318) of the 16th Connecticut Infantry, showing the perimeter of the stockade and its interior layout (Fig. 3.1).

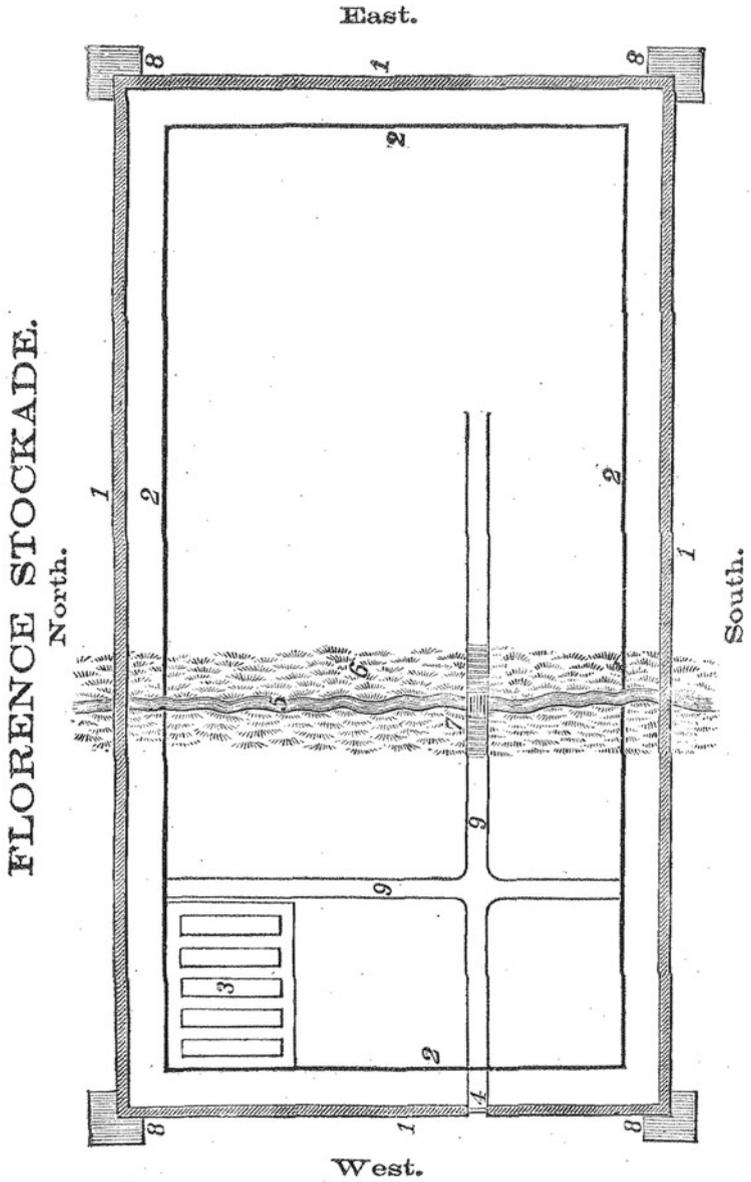
The camp hospital was located in the northwest corner of the enclosure and consisted of five sheds used to house patients at the time of Kellogg's (1868:318) map. Andrews (2004:94), based on a visit to the stockade on October 19, 1865, noted that the hospital complex included seven log buildings that each measured 40 by 20 feet. He indicated that the buildings had been partially burned when the stockade was abandoned. Two intersecting streets were present in the section west of Pye Branch, and one of the streets extended across a causeway over the stream and into the eastern part of the camp that housed the PoWs. Kellogg remarked on the similarity of the layout at Florence to that at Andersonville, an observation shared by other PoWs who left journals. No shelter was provided for the PoWs save the hospital (Cook, 1996:62; Goss 2001:217; Kellogg 1868:317–319; Miller 1900:21).

The fortifications built to protect the camp from attack were described as being on “two sides of the stockade” (OR II, Vol. VII 1899:1097–1100). Earthworks are still visible near the east end of the stockade. Those earthworks are slightly north of the northeast corner, and probably represent defensive trenches or extensive rifle pits. What may be faint earthworks are present in the same relative position on the west side of the camp, and run parallel to an existing dirt road which may have been the original road between the stockade and the cemetery to the north.

Guard camps were located on both sides of Pye Branch. Very little historical information has been found about the guard camps, and much less is known about the guards than the PoWs. According to Kellogg (1868:237), the slaves who built the stockade and outer defenses lived in a camp that was “a few rods from the north side of the stockade.” It is likely that the guard camps were also located north of the stockade, given the fact that Pye Branch was probably heavily polluted by the time it flowed through the stockade to the south.

Sydney Andrews (2004:93) toured the South after the war and wrote articles for the Chicago Tribune and the Boston Advertiser. He visited the abandoned Florence prison on October 19, 1865, and noted that the stockade, the PoWs' huts, outer defenses, and the guard camps were all still standing at that time. He observed that there were earthworks standing “twenty rods” outside the stockade to both the east and west, and that the earthworks were fronted by rifle pits. He placed the main entrance at the northwestern corner of the stockade, and said that there were two guard camps made up of “log houses” near the main entrance and beyond the northeastern corner of the stockade. An additional stockade entrance was located in the southeastern corner of the stockade.

Cemeteries were established north of the stockade for burial of the Union dead. The main cemetery was located along the road from Florence to Georgetown, and is preserved today as part of the Florence National Cemetery. Additional cemeteries, containing from 10 to 400 graves, were placed mainly between the stockade and the



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|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. STOCKADE.    | 6. SWAMP.                           |
| 2. DEAD LINES.  | 7. CAUSEWAY AND BRIDGE.             |
| 3. HOSPITAL.    | 8. ELEVATED PLATFORM FOR ARTILLERY. |
| 4. PRISON GATE. | 9. STREETS.                         |
| 5. BROOK.       |                                     |

Fig. 3.1 Plan of the Florence Stockade (Kellogg 1868:318)

northern burial area, though their exact locations are no longer known (Congressional 1868:982–985; Rusling 1866). The total number of dead at Florence cannot be absolutely determined. Power (1991:16) has estimated the death toll among the PoWs to be 2,800, and that number seems reasonable considering the numbers held and mortality rates that are partially known.

The camp was also supported by a number of facilities. It is known there was a sutler present, and there was an early hospital placed outside the stockade. There are references to a headquarters that was probably located to the west. Storage facilities for rations were probably also present. Sadly, no map or images of the overall stockade complex have survived.

A report on the Florence Stockade, submitted to Lieutenant-General Hardee by Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Pickett on October 12, 1864, provides insights into the status of the prison at that time. He reported that the stockade was approximately a week from completion, but housed 12,362 PoWs. That number included 860 men who were sick in the hospital and 20 men who had been paroled, but excluded the 807 men who had taken an oath to the Confederacy and enlisted in the Confederate Army. The guard force consisted of five battalions of the South Carolina State Reserves with about 1,200 effectives and additional regular troops that brought the total number of guards to about 1,600. The health of the PoWs was noted as “generally poor,” and blankets and clothing were in short supply. The death rate among the PoWs at that time was between 20 and 50 per day. The PoWs lacked shelters and cooking utensils, and their rations were issued raw (OR II VII 1899:972–974).

By late December, 1864, concern of the Confederate officials shifted to the advancing Union forces under the command of Major General William T. Sherman. As early as December 23, 1864, plans were discussed to move the PoWs back to Andersonville, but logistical problems and then events prevented that from being done. The flurry of correspondence concerning the need to remove the PoWs from Florence continued into February, 1865. The Assistant Secretary of War, J. A. Campbell, finally ordered the removal of the PoWs to North Carolina on February 13, 1865, and the PoWs who were able to travel were transported to Goldsborough, North Carolina, via the North Carolina Railroad on February 15, 1865. There were 7,187 PoWs at Florence when the evacuation began. Approximately 700 PoWs were left at Florence as they were too sick to travel. The PoWs were paroled at Goldsborough and sent on to the Union lines at Wilmington. The last of the PoWs did not leave Florence until early March (OR II VII 1899:1262, 1270–1271, 1286, 1302–1304, 1219–1221; OR II VIII 1899:13, 96, 127, 161, 172, 181, 191, 210–213, 218, 224, 225, 234, 238–239, 244, 449–454).

Numerous diaries and letters have survived that chronicle the life and death of Union PoWs at the Florence Stockade (Cook 1996; Elliott 2002; Fosdick 1887; Goss 2001; Hoster n.d.; Kellogg 1868; McElroy 2003; Miller 1900; Moore 1972; Newton 1896; Snell 1996; Stewart 1999). In contrast, only a few useful guard accounts survived from Florence. The best information available from the Confederate guards is contained in a series of articles written by Second Lieutenant Thomas J. Eccles, of Company D of Gill’s (3rd) Battalion of the South Carolina State Reserves for *The Yorkville Enquirer* under the name “E” (Eccles 1864–1865).

He chronicled life at the camp from a decidedly southern viewpoint, but provided at least some information useful for this discussion. Rev. N.J. Holmes (1920) wrote a brief account of his experiences as a young guard at Florence that was published in 1920, and Walter D. Woods (1947), who was among the first Confederate soldiers assigned to Florence, also published an account of the events at the stockade. Information from the guards is supplemented by official Confederate reports, and the few records of the camp that have survived.

The day-to-day operation of the stockade would have been impossible without the cooperation and aid of at least some of the PoWs who filled a number of jobs within the stockade. The 200 members of the Police Club patrolled the inside of the camp, stood guard at posts in the swamp, the main street, the gates, and the hospital. They also regulated commerce within the camp and maintained general order. They were responsible for seeing to the welfare of PoWs who could not care for themselves. Other jobs filled by PoWs included working on the firewood and burial detail, serving as clerks and hospital staff, and even serving as camp musicians. Prisoners received extra rations for their work that, in the case of the Police Club, even included rations of beef that were denied to the PoWs at large. The available records reflect that 500–600 extra rations were dispensed on a daily basis in the camp, which may reflect the size of the prison workforce. The sergeants who were elected to distribute rations to detachments of PoWs organized into 1,000s and then into 100s also received extra rations. The members of the Police Club probably benefited from this arrangement more than the other classes of workers, and were held in the lowest regard by their fellow PoWs (Goss 2001:221–222; Hoster *n.d.*; Kellogg 1868:340; Snell 1996:103–105).

Both PoWs and guards had to build their own shelters at Florence. The PoWs made do with whatever they could scavenge within the camp, including trees and stumps left over from clearing the stockade. A few brought tents with them, but most built their “shebangs” by digging a hole the size and shape of their blankets or tents, using forked sticks to support their blankets or tents as a crude roof (Hoster, *n.d.*:11–112, 131; Kellogg 1868; Snell 1996:66). Shelter provided to the guards never amounted to more than a few tents, and most apparently fashioned crude cabins built of logs and organized into “villages” to the east and west of the stockade. The roofs of the guard cabins were covered with wooden slabs, blankets, tent halves, or whatever else was available (Eccles 1864–1865). An important difference between the guards and PoWs when building shelters was that the guards had free access to the timber in the forests around the camp, while PoWs had to use whatever they could find in the stockade to build their shelters. The guards were also able to dig wells to secure safe drinking water.

The types of foods available to the PoWs were probably not very different from the basic rations provided to the guards, although the latter probably drew larger amounts. The guards had more meat and in greater variety than the PoWs, and probably had access to greens and other foodstuffs that the PoWs could not gather on their own. Meat was very scarce in the Stockade, and Hoster, as a member of the Police Club for a period of time, had beef for meals over 14 days while beef was rarely available to other PoWs. Goss (2001:240) states that beef was only issued three times to the general population within the Stockade.

It is impossible to reconstruct the quantity of food issued to the individual PoWs at Florence Stockade, as no detailed records concerning rations have survived. Hoster (n.d.:113, 128, 129), who recorded what and how much he ate each day in his diary, recorded that he received 1 quart of beans,  $\frac{3}{4}$  pint of molasses, 2 “sanitary cups” of meal, 1 “sanitary cup” of hominy, and a tablespoon of salt as extra rations from the Police Club on October 15, 1864. After leaving the Police Club he drew 1½ pints of meal plus an unspecified amount of molasses as regular rations on January 18, 1865 and 1½ pint of meal and a gill (a quarter of a pint) of beans on January 25, 1865. It appears that the amount of any one foodstuff varied with the strength of supply, and that mixed rations in small amounts were given to the PoWs at any given time.

The diet of the Confederate guards is less clear. Archaeological excavations of a guard camp at Florence indicated that they had access to much more meat than has been described for the PoWs (Avery and Garrow 2008). The relative diet of the guards can be inferred through discussions of health issues. It is known that the PoWs suffered from a broad range of ailments, and that the death rate was extremely high. Malnutrition and scurvy, which resulted directly from inadequate and insufficient diets, were major killers among the PoWs. Inadequate shelter and a contaminated water supply contributed to a number of fatal illnesses. In contrast, the general health of the guards was relatively good. Eccles (1864–1865) indicated that “fever, measles, and mumps” were the major ailments recorded among the guards, although there were a few deaths from typhoid fever. At least some of the guards lacked adequate clothing and even shoes, but their diet was clearly sufficient to meet their needs and few guards are known to have died at Florence.

The guard force assembled at Florence was a ragtag group of reserves composed of boys too young to serve in the regular army or men who were too old to post to regular units. A report on Company A of the 3rd Battalion of the South Carolina Reserves filed by Captain M.W. Coleman of the 4th Battalion of the South Carolina Reserves on December 31, 1864 stated that the discipline of the company was “good,” their instruction was “fair,” their military appearance was “ordinary,” their arms were “inferior,” their accouterments were “none received,” and their clothing was “private” (Friends of the Florence Stockade 2006:11).

An “invoice of ordnance and ordnance stores” turned over by Captain H.S. Ingraham, Assistant Chief Ordnance Officer, to be sent to Florence provides one of the few insights into military items provided at Florence for use by the guards. The items on the list included one 6 pounder iron Napoleon cannon and a second 6 pounder gun; two 6 pounder carriages and limbers; four rammers and sponges; one gunner’s gimlet and four handspikes; one gunner’s level and four priming wires; four landyards and two tube patches; four thumbstalls and two vent patches; two field worms and two vent covers, 22 spherical case shot, fixed; 112 6 pounder canister, fixed; 300 muskets and bayonets, caliber 0.69; 12,000 musket buck and ball cartridges, 0.69 caliber; 100 friction primers; 40 paper fuses; and 35 packing boxes (Florence Military Records 1864–1865).

It appears that the reserves were not issued military accouterments, and had to supply much of their own gear. They arrived at Florence with inadequate clothing and some even lacked shoes. They were probably armed with a patchwork of obsolete military weapons and private arms. A monthly report prepared by Captain John

C. Rutherford on November 5, 1864, indicated that the duty roster consisted of six commissioned and 17 noncommissioned officers, with 336 privates. Those on duty manned the sentry posts around the prison and served on other assignments inside and outside of the prison. The 300 0.69 caliber muskets issued to the camp on September, 1864, were nearly sufficient to arm the sentries that were on duty at any given time. That supply was probably supplemented with additional issues of weapons and private weapons brought by the guards because of the ever-present threat of Union raids.

The traditional southern view of the way PoWs were treated in the Confederate prisons differs radically from that expressed by the former PoWs. There is ample evidence, as reflected in the official records, that at least some Confederate officials worked hard to improve the lives of those incarcerated at Florence, but there is also ample evidence of cruelty and neglect on the part of the guards and Confederate officials. At the same time, the Union policy of suspending PoW exchanges led to a high mortality rate and a great deal of misery for their troops held in southern prisons.

## **Archaeology in the Camp**

In 2005, the US Department of Veterans Affairs planned to expand the Florence National Cemetery in Florence, South Carolina. The proposed 10-acre expansion area, located south of the existing cemetery, included a portion of Site 38FL2, the Florence Stockade. Although the project area was north of the stockade itself, it was believed that part of the support system for the prison was located between it and the cemetery. Phase II archaeological testing (Grunden and Holland 2005) was conducted on the expansion area prior to construction, although ground clearing had already taken place. Testing revealed the presence of numerous Civil War-period features, but did not reveal the function of the area.

During the spring and summer of 2006, MACTEC Engineering and Consulting conducted a Phase III archaeological data recovery on the project area (Avery and Garrow 2008). The research design called for the stripping of the plow zone from the 9-acre portion of the project area within the boundaries of Site 38FL2, the recording of all identified features and the excavation of 150 of them. The small tract adjoining the southern edge of the existing cemetery that was determined to be outside the site boundary was also monitored while construction was taking place. The types of features present and their locations revealed that the area had been part of a camp of the Confederate guards.

## ***Features***

In total, 521 features were recorded, including the 149 recorded during testing. During the main excavations 179 features were investigated, although some of these were determined to be trees or other non-cultural disturbances (Fig. 3.2).

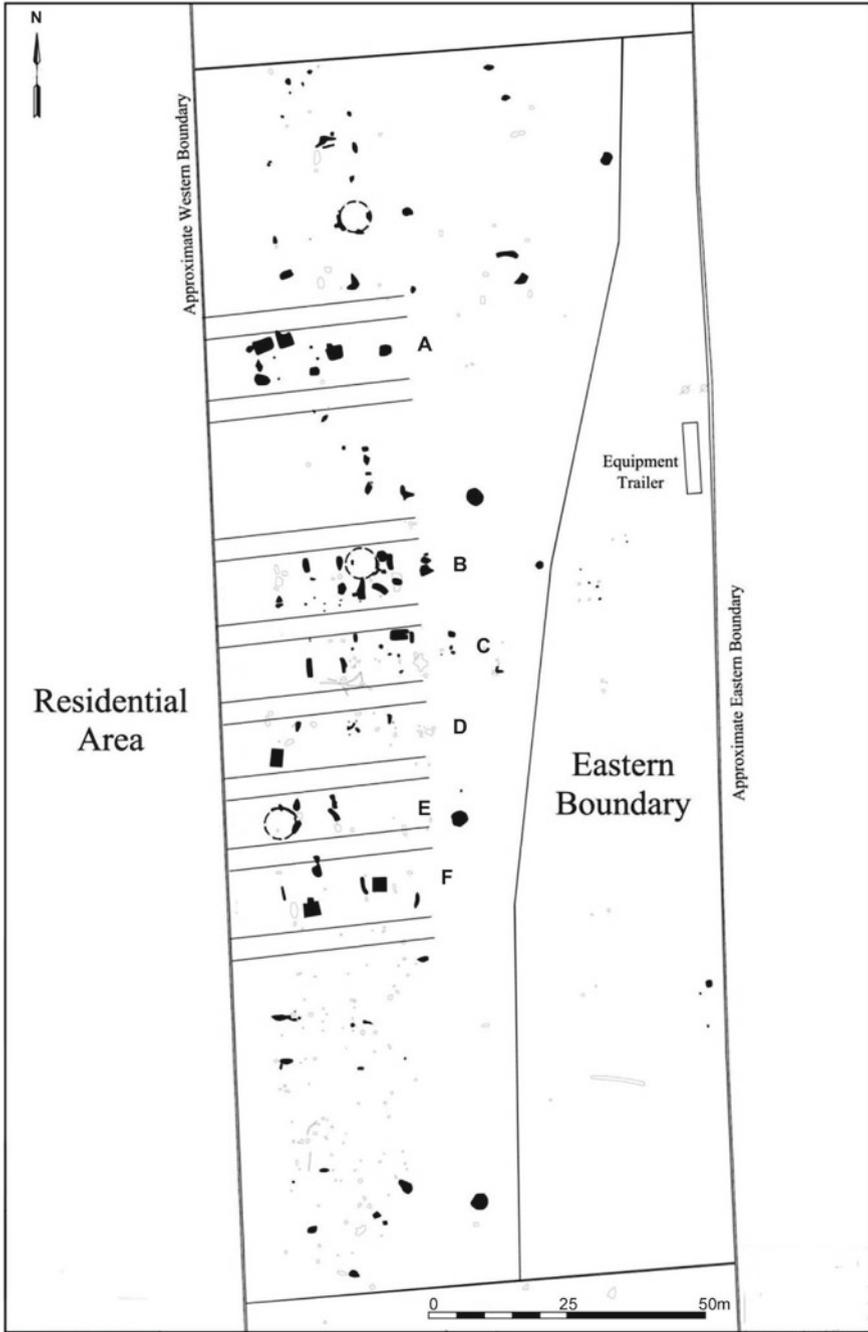


Fig. 3.2 Feature location map

The excavated features were assigned to one of ten general categories based on size and shape in both plan and profile. Feature types included structures, trenches, privies, slit trenches, wells, pits, posts, trees, other disturbances, and prehistoric pits. While some categories provided more specific typological or functional information, such as privies or posts, others such as structures, trenches, and pits required further definition and interpretation.

Mapping of the structural features at Florence revealed that the camp was arranged in company streets, but did not apparently strictly follow military rules. The location of the structures strongly influenced the positioning of the other features. Military regulations dictated how a camp was to be arranged, but these rules were often changed based on terrain, the number of men encamped and the duration of the occupation. For the Civil War soldier in camp, shelter took many forms, ranging from a shelter half to a log cabin, depending on the season, the tactical situation and length of deployment. The guards at Florence were far from the front and were there for a relatively long period of time which extended into the winter.

Excavated features revealed that several structural types were constructed. Three curved, shallow trenches probably marked the location of Sibley tents. Measuring approximately 18 feet in diameter, Sibley tents were conical in shape with a round base. They were often placed on top of a short wall of vertical logs that were placed in a trench. Sibley tents could accommodate at least 12 men but they were expensive and heavy, so they were relegated to use by rear echelon troops through most of the war (Nelson 2006; Whitehorne 2006). Each of these trenches had an elongated protrusion perpendicular to the main trench that probably marks an entryway.

More permanent structures included semi-subterranean huts and possibly small log cabins. With sawn lumber scarce, logs were the basic building material for these structures. Semi-subterranean huts consisted of a hole excavated 3–4 feet into the ground with short log walls on the surface. A roof, usually consisting of combined shelter halves or pine boughs, was placed on poles across the top of the wall. The dirt walls and floor were clad in boards if available. Chimneys were typically placed at a gable end of the hut and were constructed with bricks, mud-coated barrels or boxes, or sticks and clay (Nelson 2006; Whitehorne 2006). Feature 223 was a clear example of a semi-subterranean hut (Fig. 3.3). Measuring 10 feet by 10 feet and extending to a depth of 38 cm below the truncated ground surface, this hut was one of the largest structures recorded and was the deepest. Burned wood located on the floor of the structure, including fragments of bark and possible boards, may indicate that the walls or floor were covered as described above. The hearth of this hut was extremely well preserved.

Similar features were excavated but were generally much shallower. These may represent cabins constructed above a shallow excavation or may simply indicate that more of the feature was lost to plowing. One large example, Feature 540, may have been used as a guard house based on its location north of the main residential area and its large size. This structure measured approximately 10 by 15 feet and had a small pit cellar near its center.

The most common features recorded at Florence were pits, which ranged widely in shape, size and profile. Specific functions were determined for some, but the



**Fig. 3.3** Pre-excavation view of Feature 223

purpose for most of them was unclear. Many were probably excavated specifically for the disposal of refuse, while others may have served as sources of fill or other unknown functions. One pit, Feature 215, appears to have been excavated specifically for the disposal of trash as it was basin-shaped and contained discrete layers of artifact-rich fill. Two others appear to have been used as a source for clay based on their shape and depth. Feature 217 was excavated well into the hard, red clay subsoil and was bell-shaped in profile. Wooden planks were located on the base of the pit, which may have been used as a work surface. Feature 425 lacked the bell shape, but was dug well into the clay. Clay was widely used in the construction of stick or barrel chimneys and was not readily available in this area of the camp. An easy solution would have been to dig through the soft sand to the clay that lay below.

Clues to the function of another pit were provided by a historic photograph. Feature 286 was a long narrow pit with larger, oval ends. The base of one end was baked hard and a concentration of ash and charcoal was noted within the rest of the pit. The feature was presumed to have been used for cooking, but what form was unclear. A historical image of a soldier with the 153rd New York cooking on an oval stove indicates that the feature was likely used for that purpose.

### *Artifacts*

In addition to providing a wealth of information on the material culture of the Confederate soldiers stationed at Florence, it was hoped that the 5,828 artifacts recovered would provide some information on the function of the features excavated. The distribution of the different artifact groups among the features was examined using South's (1977) functional groups. Although South's classification was

designed for domestic assemblages it was deemed appropriate for this project due to the site's overall domestic function within a military framework. The average number of artifacts from each group was calculated for each feature type to provide the basis for the analysis of distributions. The locations of certain individual artifact types were also examined in order to assist with the interpretation of feature types and the location of activity areas within the site.

Artifacts of the Activities group were most frequently located in pits. This is probably due to the recovery of a large number of metal fragments as a result of the discard of sheet tin items in refuse pits. The relatively high frequency of these materials recovered from the structures can be explained in the same way.

The Architectural group was more evenly distributed among the various types of features, but the majority of the material was recovered from the wells, with most of the remainder recovered from pits, privies and slit trenches, and the structures. Most of the architectural artifacts consisted of nails and brick fragments that were common across the site. The presence of these materials in the wells and pits is primarily from the dumping of refuse, although the base of at least one well was probably lined with a wooden crate or box held together with nails. Likewise, one of the privies was apparently lined with a wooden crate. The bricks and nails recovered from the houses may represent primary deposits derived from efforts to improve the structures with board walls and brick hearths.

The majority of the Arms group artifacts were recovered from houses and pits. Those recovered from the houses consisted primarily of ammunition components, such as percussion caps and bullets—small items that were easily lost. While ammunition was recovered from pits, canteen parts (Fig. 3.4) and cartridge box parts contributed to the assemblage from the pits, where these items were intentionally dumped.

Exactly one half of the Clothing Group artifacts were recovered from structures, although this figure is primarily due to the relatively large number of buttons and button fragments directly associated with the burial in Feature 95. If the buttons from Feature 95 are omitted, the majority of the Clothing Group would have been recovered from pits, followed by privies and slit trenches. It would be expected to find these items in the houses as this would have been where the maintenance of clothing took place, and buttons were certainly easy to lose if dropped. Those found in pits suggest that they were intentionally disposed of, while those in privies and slit trenches may have been lost while unfastening and fastening garments.

All feature types contained Kitchen group artifacts but they were most commonly recovered from pits. Most of these materials were fragmentary glass containers and ceramic vessels that were probably thrown into the pits after they were broken elsewhere. However, a few pits appear to have been directly associated with the preparation of food. The high frequency seen in posthole fill was unexpected and consisted almost exclusively of container glass.

Artifacts from the Personal group were relatively evenly divided between privies and slit trenches, houses, and pits, although they were recovered from all feature types. The majority of the personal materials were located in privies or slit trenches and were probably lost from pockets or disposed of intentionally, while artifacts

**Fig. 3.4** Canteen recovered from Feature 502



recovered from the houses were more likely lost. Broken tines from hard rubber combs were the most commonly recovered personal artifact and were primarily located in pits and houses.

Only a small number of tobacco pipe fragments were recovered, with the vast majority located in pits. No intact or complete specimens were recovered, indicating that they were broken elsewhere then disposed of in the pits. The next most frequent location for them was in houses, which more probably represents their location of use and presumably breakage.

### **Artifact Patterning**

The distributions of some specific artifact types were selected in order to determine if patterns were evident that might provide information on the camp. This approach was of little analytical value using artifacts such as nails or container glass that were distributed widely across the site. Therefore, smaller assemblages and those with specific functions were examined.

Although a very small number of window glass sherds were recovered, their location is informative. All the sherds were found in structures, with 12 of the 13 fragments coming from Features 223 and 540 which may indicate that these structures

were built with glazed windows. It was common for officers on extended duty, such as winter quarters, to place windows in their cabins or huts, often with window frames scavenged from other buildings (Nelson 2006; Whitehorne 2006). It was much less common among enlisted men. Feature 540 was large in plan but shallow, which may indicate that it was a fairly substantial cabin or guardhouse built primarily above the ground surface. As described above, Feature 223 was the largest of the subterranean huts and apparently had board walls. These two features apparently represent substantial structures and may very well have included glazed windows.

Only two calibers of bullets were recovered besides small buckshot. The 0.54 caliber bullets were probably used in either Mississippi/Palmetto rifles or Lorenz rifles. The 0.69 caliber balls could have been fired by a wide variety of older weapons, but were probably used in Model 1842 muskets (Coates and Thomas 1990). This disparity in weaponry may indicate the presence of different units of infantry, although a single reserve unit might be issued a mixture of weapons based on availability, especially late in the war. The distribution of the different calibers further suggests that at least two different units were present in the portion of the camp investigated (Fig. 3.5). The 0.54 caliber ammunition was concentrated in the northern portion of the site, specifically in and around Block A. This type was recovered only from structures and the large pits encountered in this block. One 0.54 caliber minie ball was recovered from Feature 540 within the northern perimeter of the site as well.

The 0.69 caliber ammunition was much more widely dispersed across the site than the 0.54 caliber bullets. Ammunition in this caliber was recovered from as far south as Feature 109 and as far north as Feature 212. It was also recovered from a wider variety of features including structures, pits, and a privy. This may indicate that this caliber was more commonly in use, at least in this portion of the camp. It is interesting to note that no features contained both 0.54 and 0.69 caliber ammunition, but two 0.69 caliber balls were recovered from Feature 212, which is located in Block A immediately adjacent to two features that contained 0.54 caliber bullets. The presence of differing ammunition calibers within the same block may indicate that different units occupied this area over the time the camp was occupied.

The distribution of Kitchen group artifacts was more difficult to analyze because of their sheer numbers. For example, no attempt was made to pattern the container glass as it was recovered from every type of feature in every area of the site. Ceramics, however, provided a better opportunity for analysis. The distributions of refined wares and utilitarian stoneware were plotted separately. Refined ceramics were widespread, but were concentrated in the northern area of the site, including Block A. All of the wells contained small amounts of refined ware, including a blue transfer printed plate, while ten sherds from another blue transfer ware plate were recovered from Feature 239, a slit trench associated with a possible Sibley tent in Block E. The concentration of these materials in the structures and associated pits in the Block A area may mark a different status between the soldiers who lived on this block as opposed to the others. What this difference might be is unclear; these soldiers possibly held a higher rank than those to the south. Conversely, it could mean that these soldiers were relatively new recruits that arrived from home carrying their private dinnerware.

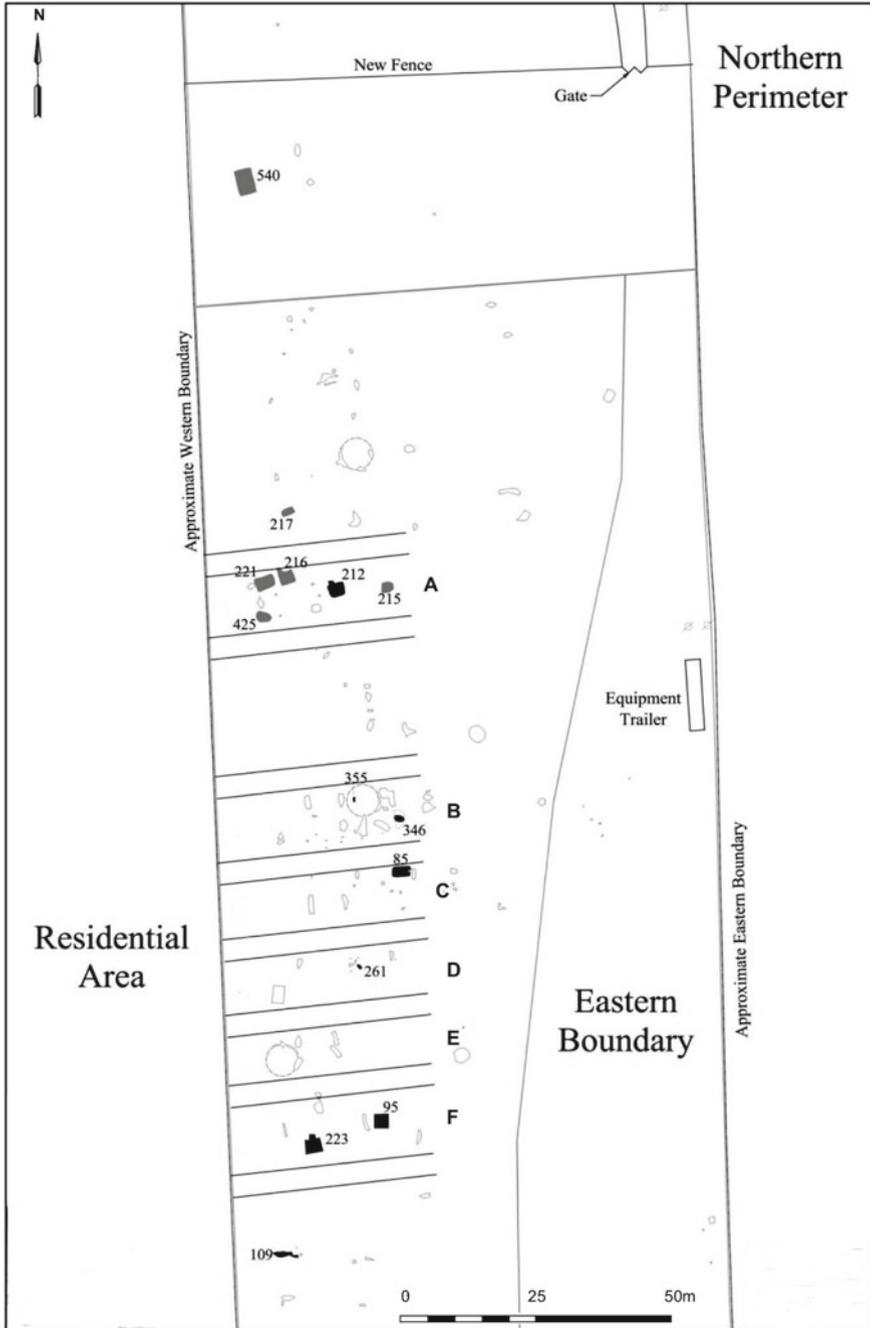


Fig. 3.5 Distribution of small arms ammunition. Light shading: features with 0.54 caliber ammunition; Dark shading: features with 0.69 caliber ammunition

Stoneware was much more common than refined wares and was more widely distributed. However, it was concentrated in the northern portion of the camp that includes Block A. It was recovered from Features 223 and 95, but only as single sherds. Two of the wells, Features 518 and 502, both produced stoneware and tended to yield larger sherds and more complete vessels, such as the nearly complete jug and jar recovered from Feature 502. The largest number of sherds was recovered from Feature 376, a pit in Block B that produced 162 sherds from a single vessel. Likewise, the 22 sherds recovered from Feature 425 represented two vessels that were deposited in two discrete areas of the feature. What the distribution of stoneware implies is unclear, although it probably simply indicates that more of this material was in use on the northern end of the site than elsewhere.

Kitchenware, those items used to store, prepare, and consume food, was widely scattered from as far south as Feature 485 and north to Feature 217. Utensils were recovered from Features 212, 215, 223, 239, and 248. Most of these were forks or spoons, but a folding corkscrew was located in Feature 223. Two fragments of a kettle or dutch oven were recovered from Feature 217 while a portion of an iron spider skillet was found in Feature 518. The remaining kitchenware consisted of a nearly complete tin can and fragments of another. The actual number of tin cans and other food containers should probably be much higher as a very large number of tin fragments were recovered that could not be identified as to form or function.

## Conclusions

The spatial information gathered during the archaeological work in the guard's camp at the Florence Stockade has provided some insight as to its layout and who might have been living in that area. This camp was located just west of Pye Branch, while another was located to the east of the creek. Defensive earthworks were located to the west and north of the camp, as it was anticipated that any Federal attack would come from those directions. Army regulations of the day called for a camp to face the direction of a perceived threat, with the enlisted men to the front and the officers to the rear (United States War Department 1861). As no indication of habitations were located east of the wells during the archaeological research, it is possible that the portion of the camp excavated was inhabited by officers, assuming that some effort was made to lay the camp out according to regulations.

The distribution of the artifact groups among the various feature types provided valuable information for defining general activity areas across the camp and produced some intriguing evidence as to which units were living within the project area. However, it was less successful in determining feature function. The main difficulty was the lack of obvious primary depositional deposits within the features. While some primary deposits were certainly encountered, they were often impossible to separate from the secondary refuse dumped into the feature later. This is not a major concern with the more obvious features such as the structures, privies, or wells, where the morphology of the feature itself is usually sufficient to determine

its function. But in features such as the pits where the main function of the feature generally cannot be determined by shape alone, the lack of primary deposits makes any interpretation much more problematic. Many of the pits, for example, may well have been intended as receptacles for secondary debris but this cannot be assumed. In other cases, the artifacts can be misleading, as with several post holes that were encountered that contained complete liquor bottles and animal bone.

The excavations conducted in the campground of the Confederate guards at the Florence Stockade provided a unique opportunity to examine the day-to-day life of rear echelon soldiers during the latter days of the Civil War. The short period of occupation and the relatively small number of men who inhabited the campground have provided a discrete sample of documentary, spatial and material data that is being analyzed in great detail. While much has been written by and about the Union PoWs who suffered and died within the prison walls, the Confederate guards have remained conspicuously silent through history. Excavations within their camp have shed some light on them and the conditions under which they served, and this research can serve as a starting point for more consideration of PoW guards in the future.

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# Chapter 4

## Johnson's Island US Civil War Military Prison

David R. Bush

**Abstract** Throughout the United States' Civil War, the treatment of prisoners of war varied. Confederate and Union soldiers captured early in the war had a preconceived notion of how they were to be treated. As the war progressed, the Union changed their policies of treatment toward POWs. From Lincoln on down, those in charge struggled with this newly defined class of formerly recognized the US citizen. Johnson's Island prison, as the only stand-alone facility constructed by the Union, encapsulated their early commitment to the "humane treatment" of prisoners. As the Union's treatment policies changed, so did the physical landscape of Johnson's Island. The long-term archaeological exploration of Johnson's Island addresses changing prisoner treatment through this altered landscape.

### Introduction

Abraham Lincoln faced something which no other president of the United States before or since has had to face—the citizenry divided and at civil war. Early in the insurrection, Lincoln's administration wanted to keep the conflict defined in terms of rebellious acts rather than recognize the Confederacy as a separate country. An early major hurdle for the Union was defining the status of those captured committing defiant acts. The South had granted ship owners letters of marque and reprisal

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if they were willing to engage the United States and seize goods. Lincoln's policy, in attempting to maintain this was not a war with a sovereign nation, pushed to have the crews of captured ships tried under municipal law (Hesseltine 1930:8). In response to the Union's capture of the Savannah, a vessel operating under the authority of the Confederate States, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, expressed to President Lincoln his desire to "mitigate the horrors" advocating these imprisoned privateers be treated as PoWs and not tried as pirates and potentially hung as traitors (ORA, Series II, Vol. III:6). President Davis was attempting to ensure President Lincoln would not embark on a policy of treating men operating under the authority of the Confederacy as criminals instead of providing them with the status of PoW and all the humane treatment military regulations provide.

Throughout the last half of 1861 and the early part of 1862, the Union participated with the South in unofficial special exchanges, being careful not to create a formal system of general exchange of prisoners which would at the same time recognize the legitimacy of the Confederacy. After some reluctance of the Union, they finally agreed to engage with the Confederacy in exploring how to resolve the growing numbers of captured prisoners. The exchange system for the American Civil War was fashioned after the one established in the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain (ORA, Series II, Vol. IV:824). The Dix-Hill cartel was signed on July 22, 1862 stating all captured prisoners were to be officially exchanged or paroled within 10 days (ORA, Series II, Vol. IV:267–268).

The formalization of the cartel initially helped to waylay some of the fear of retaliation postured by both sides as well as the soldiers' desire to know if captured, exchange would occur. Unfortunately, almost to the day the cartel was signed and came into effect, problems arose. Even with the problems, this did not keep both sides from attempting to institute the cartel, realizing they were not well equipped to handle the thousands of prisoners.

## Prison Facilities

Both the Union and Confederacy had to manage the escalating numbers of PoWs even before the cartel was established. On July 12, 1861, Quartermaster General M.C. Meigs wrote Secretary of War Simon Cameron

At present persons arrested on suspicion of disloyalty are kept in the common jail of Washington. I am endeavoring to procure some building here more suitable for their temporary safe-keeping. Prisoners of war are entitled to proper accommodations, to courteous and respectful treatment, to one ration a day and to consideration according to rank (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, p.8).

Here, Meigs not only defines how PoWs are to be physically treated, he also notes their treatment is contingent upon rank. Meigs requested a Commissary of Prisoners be appointed and a site in the western Lake Erie area be chosen for a new

prison facility. By October 1861, the Union determined it needed to construct a facility specifically designed to confine PoWs. In the official correspondence between Quartermaster General M. C. Meigs and Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman, Commissary of Prisoners, little direction was given to Hoffman on specific design concerns for the prison. Meigs expressed his interest that the prison be as economically constructed as possible and also located at a latitude that did not offer too harsh an environment (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, p49); the Confederate soldier was not accustomed to the harsh winters of the North. Since those confined at Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio complained of the severe cold during the winter of 1861–1862, there would be little hope of establishing a prison in the western end of Lake Erie that did not include a harsh environment from a Southerner's perspective (ORA, Series II, Vol. I, PP 544–545).

Hoffman chose Johnson's Island after he had surveyed Put-in-Bay, Kelley's Island, and others north of the Marblehead Peninsula. Looking just to the south of the peninsula, he found Johnson's Island favorable due to its lack of inhabitants, close proximity to Sandusky allowing for provisions to be more easily obtained on a regular basis, and the ability of the Army to control the entire island and those that would have access to it (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, pp. 54–57). Quartermaster General Meigs immediately authorized Lieutenant Colonel Hoffman to proceed with the construction of the prison. He reminded Hoffman that the construction should be completed with "the strictest economy consistent with security and proper welfare of the prisoners" (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, pp. 122–123).

There was very little in the official records or other historic resources addressing the specific design concerns for the Johnson's Island prison. Exchange of prisoners was how captured soldiers were treated in past wars. Those that were retained were housed in facilities temporarily converted for prisoners or in civilian jails. At the beginning of the American Civil War, prisoners were housed in barracks or lands associated with military mustering stations. The increasing numbers of prisoners were housed in local jails and penitentiaries. The advent of the Union to construct a facility for all PoWs necessitated at least to some degree a definition of exactly how these prisoners would be handled.

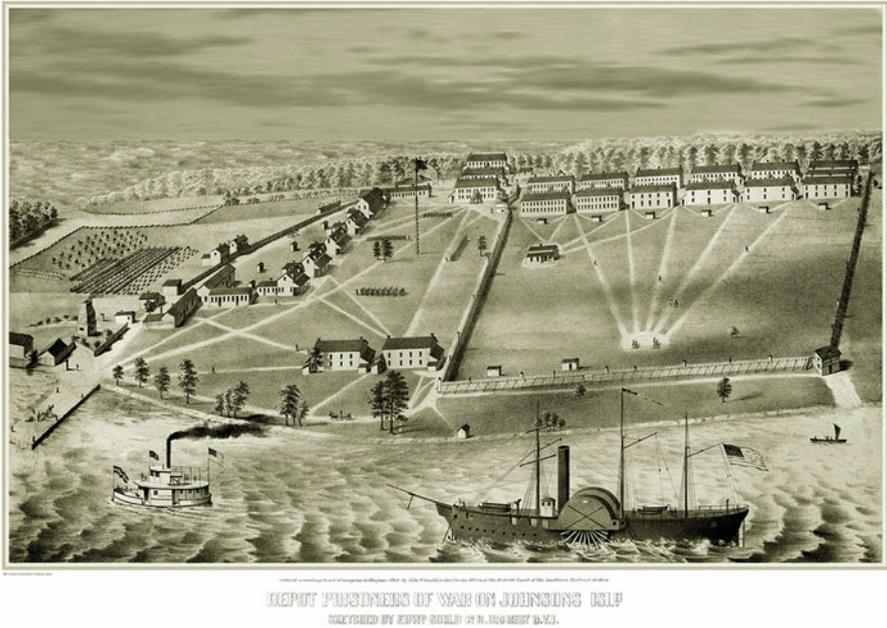
Two separate approaches collided in the construction of the Johnson's Island prison depot. First, the concept of a prison structure was evolving as societies were struggling with the incarceration of criminals as well as other marginalized groups. The nineteenth century saw the use of the Panopticon as a means to house those needing removal from society for criminal acts (Foucault 1977:200–201). The Panopticon solidified the concept of observing the prisoner and thus exerting power over the incarcerated. This design had the central guard "tower" encircled by the housing units of the inmates. There were issues related to whether prisoners should have contact with other inmates, and two approaches appear in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. The Philadelphia system advocated complete isolation, whereas the Auburn model allowed for contact with fellow inmates during the day (Foucault 1977:238). Although prisoners captured by the

Union in battle were not being rehabilitated, their imprisonment in established criminal prisons certainly had an effect on how they viewed their role as PoWs.

The second major focus affecting the construction and imprisonment at Johnson's Island was its military affiliation and the fact the PoW was not jailed for committing a crime. In fact, these men were part of a new category of "ambiguously defined noncitizens" (Casella 2007:33). There was no standard military PoW facility design and the regulations did not consider the citizenship of the captives. The regulations authorized one ration regardless of rank, adequate medical treatment, and respect of the private property when captured. Initially the planning of Johnson's Island included accommodations for both officers and enlisted men. The prison compound was planned to have an interior stake line separating the officers occupying Blocks 1–4 from Blocks 5–13 for the enlisted men (Frohman 1965:11). Hoffman's overall design of the prison allowed for constant surveillance of the prisoners from a high stockade wall surrounding the prison compound (Taylor 2011:70; Hunter 1971:27). Unlike a Panopticon construction, the prison facility at Johnson's Island did not allow constant surveillance or individual cells, and there was no attempt to restrict individuals from contact with others. There was an initial recognition that officers would be segregated and treated differently from the enlisted. As a military facility, the objective was to incarcerate the prisoners in as humane a condition as was possible.

The combination of civilian prison design with military needs for housing officers and enlisted men resulted in a facility where both the guard and captive struggled with their identity and control. Overall, the Union and Confederacy had no policy on adequate housing for those captured (see also Chaps. 2 and 3). The Union had been months into the war, and had already captured thousands of Confederates, before a Commissary General of Prisons was even appointed. One year of the war had passed before the first constructed prison specifically designed to house the PoWs was operational and receiving inmates. Prisoners were captured at rates much higher than adequate facilities could be constructed to contain them. The Union was unable to standardize management, leading to the mistreatment of those under its care. Casstevens (2005) identifies six categories of prison types used by both the Union and Confederacy: civilian jails, coastal fortifications, converted warehouses, enclosed barracks (as at Johnson's Island), walled tent camps, and empty stockades.

Johnson's Island demonstrates the military's attempt to create a humane PoW facility. The Union lacked a consistent approach to the treatment of PoWs with Johnson's Island being the only stand-alone prison complex that was built. Other facilities designated as PoW depots were typically adapted from other uses or built onto existing military installations. Large open stockades or tent camps were less than ideal in terms of how the Union envisioned prisoner treatment. Nevertheless, Johnson's Island had not even been operational a week before its role as the main PoW facility changed; the Union sacrificed its plan for humane treatment for a more practical resolution to the growing numbers of PoWs (Fig. 4.1).

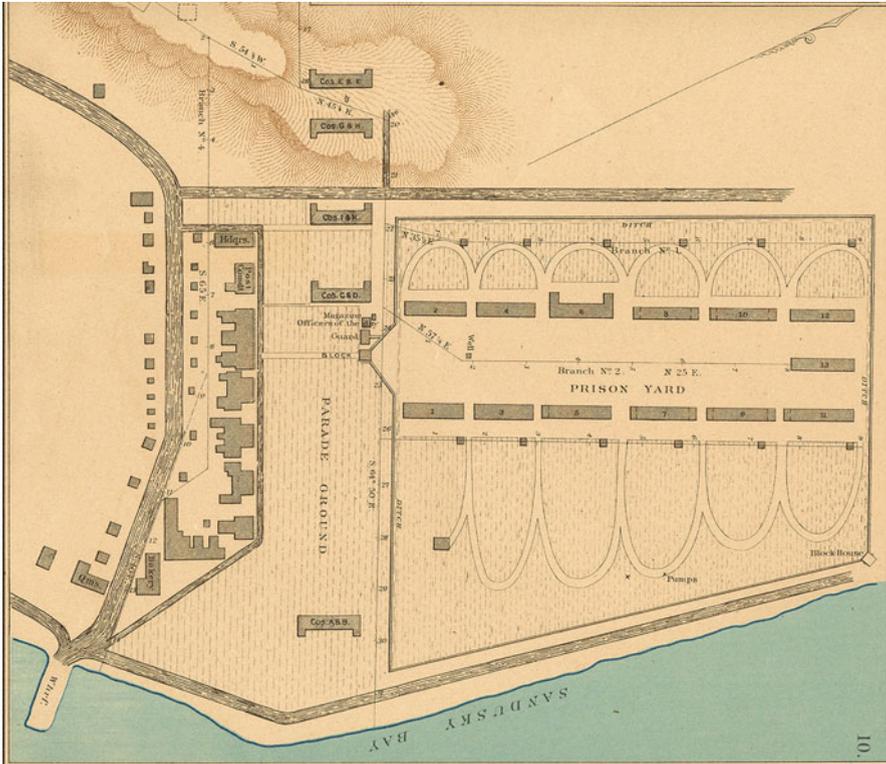


**Fig. 4.1** “Depot Prisoners of War on Johnson’s Island” by Edward Gould. (Courtesy the Friends and Descendants of Johnson’s Island Civil War Prison.)

## Johnson’s Island Prison Design

The location of the Union’s prison on Johnson’s Island met one of the major military concerns, that of protection. Surrounded by water meant escaping prisoners would have more difficulty making good on their unannounced departure. Even prisoners finding themselves on the outside of the stockade wall still needed a means to get off the island and onto the mainland. The island also served as protection from invading forces attempting to free the prisoners. Located so far north, and not within any major city or along easily accessed rail lines resulted in fewer guard and support facilities being required. Thus, from a military perspective, the selection of Johnson’s Island was almost ideal for the placement of a military depot for captured Confederates.

The Union did not want the prisoners to have unlimited access to the entire island, even though it was only 300 acres. They designed a facility to house both officers and enlisted men within a stockade, providing housing considered fit for both classes of military personnel. Unlike fortifications constructed to protect the occupants inside, this stockade was designed to serve the Union guard’s need to keep close watch on the captives (Hunter 1971:27). A 15-foot wall was constructed around the prison compound with a sentinel walk on the outside, allowing the guard a constant view of the captured occupants. The first four blocks nearest the main gate were constructed to house officers, and the next four to house the enlisted men. The officer



**Fig. 4.2** U.S. War Department, Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington D.C., 1891), 66 (Courtesy the Friends and Descendants of Johnson's Island Civil War Prison.)

blocks were divided into 22 rooms each, resulting in prisoners in those blocks having fewer roommates. Eventually, five more barracks were constructed to much the same design as the enlisted blocks, resulting in a total of 12 housing barracks and one hospital within the prison compound. Barracks for the enlisted men were divided into three large rooms per floor. These rooms could accommodate as many as 60 prisoners. Sinks (the latrines) were placed behind each building in the two rows of barracks. The rows of blocks were positioned off-center, closer to the western portion of the prison compound, affording the guards an opportunity to view prisoners approaching the stockade wall on the bay side of the camp (Fig. 4.2).

The Union had chosen the southeast side of the island to place the prison complex to avoid the worst of the winter weather. They constructed each prisoner housing block with both cooking and heating stoves vented by brick chimneys. Each block had at least two mess rooms. Bunks, tables, benches, and utensils furnished each quarters. Rations provided to the prisoners were reported to be the same as that of the guard, both in quantity and quality (ORA, Series II, Vol. VI:759–760).

The Johnson's Island Military prison never operated as it was originally designed. The day the first prisoners arrived (April 10, 1862) at Johnson's Island was the day

that Quartermaster General Meigs made the suggestion to Lieutenant Colonel Hoffman that Johnson's Island be used to house officers only (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, p. 439). Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton communicated to Lieutenant Colonel Hoffman 3 days later that the Johnson's Island prison depot would serve only as an officers' prison (ORA, Series II, Vol. III, p.448). Prisoners arriving at the Johnson's Island depot discovered some accommodations within the prison walls were better suited for their comfort. This inevitably created some tension between prisoners, particularly those who felt that their rank was not being adequately honored. Private Thomas C. Skinner, 8th Kentucky Infantry, who was transferred from Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio wrote to his father on April 15, 1862 just days after his arrival, "We are in very comfortable quarters only four in a room. The houses are two storys [sic] high large windows and are plenty nice for soldiers" (Skinner 1862). Even though he came with the first prisoners, he ended up housed in one of the officers' barracks. After their arrival, no attempt was made to segregate the officers from the enlisted until the enlisted were shipped back to Camp Chase. From a slightly different perspective, Captain John H. Guy, Virginia Artillery, wrote in his diary on April 29th, 1862:

The prisons are quartered in eight large buildings. Four of these were built for officers and four for privates. Those built for officers are divided into small rooms, with a cooking room and a dining room to every eight rooms. The rooms are occupied by 5 persons, so that, 40 use the same cooking and dining rooms. Those quartered in these four buildings are very comfortably fixed. These four buildings intended for privates are divided into six large rooms which are occupied by from 30 to 60 prisons each. The occupants are divided into two large messes and for cooking have each the use of a cook room attached one to one end and another to the outer end of the main building. They have no separate dining room. They are so crowded in these four buildings that it is very disagreeable.

Strangers from all parts of the country are huddled promiscuously together; and many of them are very far from being pleasant companions although officers. For these four buildings are now occupied by officers. Those who were first brought on from Camp Chase filled the officer's quarters and we who happened to come last find ourselves in miserable buildings (Guy 1862).

These accounts attest to the disparity caused by the Union's decision to build a facility for two classes of military personnel but then only house officers. Expectations early in the use of Johnson's Island certainly included subdivisions by rank. However, transforming Johnson's Island to an officer's-only facility forced most higher ranking soldiers to reside in what they considered substandard housing.

## The Changing Landscape

The early decision of the Union to convert Johnson's Island to an officer's-only prison signaled the first compromise the Union would make on appropriate treatment. Only 3 days into its operation, Johnson's Island reflected the Union's unsettled approach to PoW treatment through its designation as an officer's-only prisoner

depot. From the Union's perspective, keeping all the Confederate officers in one prison was effective in separating captured officers from enlisted, lessening the chance for organized insurrections. With the growing numbers of prisoners, incarcerating officers on Johnson's Island would insure their remaining in captivity until "officially" exchanged. The result was Confederate officers housed in accommodations originally constructed for non-officer personnel. The Official Records do not contain any references to the Union sensing a dilemma in this approach, but it may have been a subtle way of recognizing the ambiguity afforded these noncitizens. The fact some officers were housed in more appropriate quarters did not go unnoticed by those who were not (ORA 1880–1901).

As the Union and Confederacy struggled with creating a cartel, numbers increased within the prison compounds. After the cartel was agreed upon in July 1862, the prisoner exchange began to lessen the anxiety prisoners experienced. After September 1862, the numbers at the Johnson's Island prison were halved as prisoners were transferred to Vicksburg for exchange. With modest additions, another transfer in November 1862 resulted in fewer than 350 prisoners occupying Johnson's Island until July 1863 (NAGRP 1865).

Regrettably, in May of 1863 the exchange system for officers was formally suspended (Bush 2011:33). The North wished to retain captured officers to insure their captured officers in the South were treated fairly. There continued to be problems with the South's treatment of captured Negro troops and the officers that commanded them. The South, feeling the strain of taking care of more and more prisoners, made overtures to the North to allow necessary medical and food supplies into Southern prisons which the North did not actively pursue.

The atmosphere in 1863 was ripe for retaliatory actions. William Hoffman, Commissary General of Prisoners, writes of concern on April 17th about the treatment of Union prisoners in Richmond, "it has frequently happened that they have been stripped of all their outer garments and then crowded into prisons inconceivably filthy, so much so that it would be shocking to humanity to confine in such a place even the most abandoned criminals" (ORA, Series II, Vol. V, p.487). Accusations of Northern prisoners mistreated in Southern prisons forced the Union administration to act. As evidence in this struggle to define the appropriate actions for troops in the field, Lincoln signed a document entitled "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field, General Order No. 100," also known as the Lieber Code, on April 24, 1863. The code, mirroring the times, was contradictory in its treatment of PoWs. It states revenge cannot be imposed upon the prisoner through means of suffering, cruel imprisonment or lack of food, yet at the same time it allows for prisoners to be "liable to the infliction of retaliatory measures." Lincoln, on July 30, 1863, published an Order of Retaliation, clarifying what retaliatory means. It states in part:

It is therefore ordered that for every soldier of the United States killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one enslaved by the enemy or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and received the treatment due to a prisoner of war (ORA, Series III, Vol. III, pp148-164).

Retaliatory accusations abound in the Official Records throughout 1863 and early 1864. The reality was that all PoWs suffered in response to these claims. By early 1864 Colonel William Hoffman had lost sight of his earlier view of prisoner treatment. He states in a letter to E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War

I respectfully suggest as a means of compelling the rebels to adopt a less barbarous policy toward the prisoners in their hands that the rebel officers at Johnson's Island be allowed only half-rations; that their clothing be reduced to what is only sufficient to cover their nakedness, and that they be denied the privilege of purchasing the articles allowed to other prisoners (ORA, Series II, Vol. VII, pp80-81).

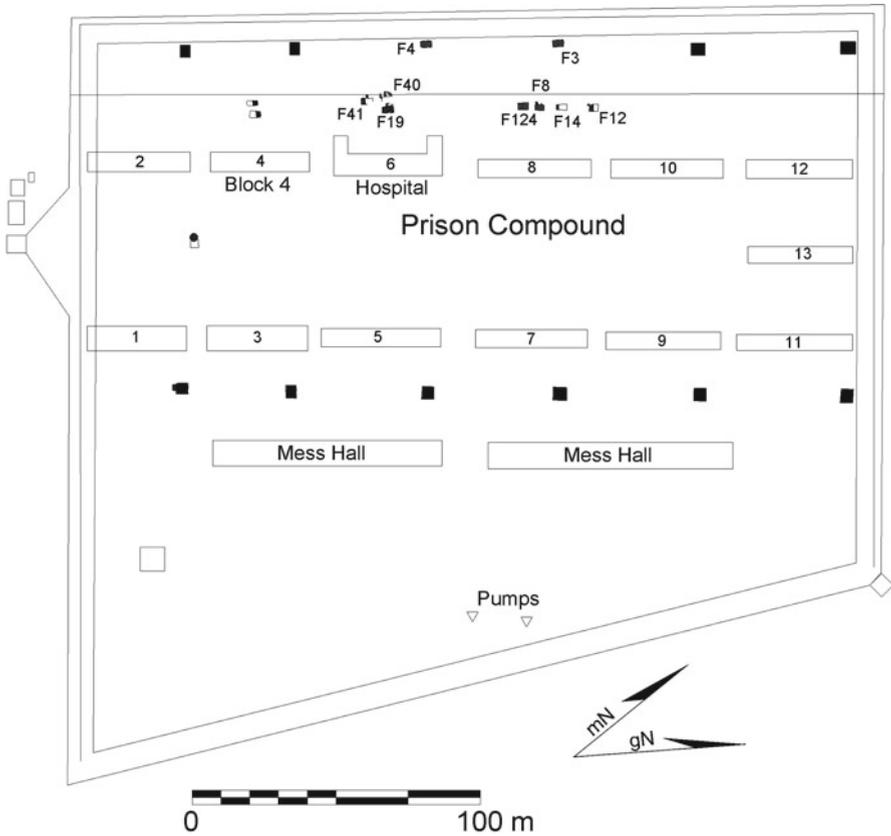
Even though General Order No. 100 stated specifically, "A prisoner of war is subject to no punishment for being a public enemy, nor is any revenge wreaked upon him by the intentional infliction of any suffering, or disgrace, by cruel imprisonment, want of food, by mutilation, death, or any other barbarity" the Union did exactly that. They made the decision to cut rations, provide substandard food, cut access to previously allowed personal items, restrict various forms of communication with the outside and, instead of building new facilities, just used the existing ones with overcrowding becoming the norm. Thus, the idea of humanely treating the increasing numbers of PoWs was now compromised. With changing directives coming out of the War Department and the Commissary General of Prisoners, each prison facility's commander assumed a certain amount of latitude in how to interpret the orders.

In reading thousands of pages of accounts of prisoner treatment, both from official reports and personal journals, one thing was perfectly clear: everyone seemed to suffer. Once the accusations started, there was little attempt to rectify any mistreatment and more effort made for counter-accusations. The bureaucrats may have been jockeying for their version of the truth, but there is no denying all prisoners suffered from the mistreatment on both sides.

## **The Archaeology of Prison Design**

The rationale for a long-term archaeological program comes through a contextual understanding of the construction, design, and use of Johnson's Island. Johnson's Island's changing response to the Union's directives is identified and explored archaeologically. This major effort has provided archaeological evidence for the initial prison design and the discovery and documentation of the material and behavioral implications of changes in PoW treatment policy.

The Johnson's Island Civil War Prison provides a setting to explore the ideal prison design from an anthropological/archaeological and historical perspective. The existence of the immense historical record for this prison, derived from both those incarcerated as well as the guard, is unique in quantity and quality among any American Civil War prison, North or South. The multivocal nature of this resource allows development of a less biased response to the changing conditions, avoiding or at least contextualizing fringe reactions (Bush 2011). The historical record frames what prisoners encountered as they walked through the 15-foot high gates to the



**Fig. 4.3** Map of the archaeological investigations

“bull pen.” The path that prisoners followed was laid down in the first months when the prison was opened in 1862. Those whose lives had already been changed by incarceration guided newly arriving prisoners (Bush 2011:34).

The archaeological investigation of the Johnson’s Island prison began in 1988 to determine its location and integrity (Bush 1990). In 1866 the Union had auctioned off all remaining structures and contents of the prison and returned control of the island to Mr. Johnson (Frohman 1965). A limestone quarry dug in the late nineteenth century then removed a portion of the center of the island, destroying the archaeological remains associated with the prison guard. The only remaining above ground wooden construction from the prison, a guard’s blockhouse, had completely disappeared by 1939. A 1950s housing development created single-family lots along the perimeter of the island, resulting in a variety of mostly summer residences. Connection of the island to the Marblehead Peninsula in 1972 resulted in easy access to the island, greatly increasing construction of single-family dwellings. Fortunately, the interior of the island remained undeveloped and secondary forests occupied all lands not built upon (Fig. 4.3).

With the basic prison design determined in a cursory historical overview, the objective in 1988 was to locate what remained of the prison complex on the island. The prison expansion in July 1864 to accommodate more Confederate officers included a ditch excavated along the interior of the prison wall to prevent tunneling by prisoners (Bush 2000:67). This prison feature served as the most efficient means to locate the prison. Subsequent to plotting out the ditch, investigations commenced on locating three latrines noted on a 1864 Union map prepared by George Morton, US Army Civil Engineers Office (ORA, 1880–1901, 7:488). Latrines (known as sinks) illustrated on the 1864 map behind each of the western six prisoner blocks were in use from July 12, 1864 until their replacement in November 1864. The archaeological discovery of these three latrines in the precise location noted on the Union's 1864 map allowed the long-term study of these short-lived latrines behind each of the prisoner blocks (Bush 2000).

The next challenge was to locate the latrines along the earlier 1862–1864 western wall. The prison expansion of 100 feet to the west in July 1864 allowed the Union to enforce a broader deadline of 30 feet; the deadline associated with the initial wall was only 10 feet wide. The search for the earlier latrines commenced with plotting out the original wall, based upon historical records of the prison expansion (Bush 2000:66–67). The challenge for these earlier latrines, once located, was to determine their chronological placement; once this was accomplished, further interpretation of prisoner conditions was possible (Bush 2000).

The initial design of the prison compound included housing both Confederate officers and enlisted men, resulting in two basic housing unit plans. Blocks 1–4 were for officers, and Blocks 5–13 for the enlisted men. The only exception was Block 6, the prison hospital, with a unique design. Additionally, the historical record provides information on special activities occurring within the residential blocks including a clandestine photographic studio in the attic of Block 4 and a theatrical stage in Block 8 (Smith 1864).

Over the period 2002–2005, excavations at Johnson's Island centered on the location of the Block 4 structure and two of the latrines along the early western wall. The emphasis was to collect data on a general housing block designed for officers. Block 4 was 117 feet long and 29 feet wide. The building, of wood construction and two-stories high, was divided into 22 rooms, allowing officers to have only three or four roommates. Excavations unearthed approximately 50 % of Block 4 along with the area between the blocks and the latrines. Potential destruction from the housing development pushed the excavation of the power magazine of Fort Hill into the 2003 field season, cutting short explorations of Block 4.

Excavations focused on Block 6 and two of the associated latrines behind the prison hospital during 2006–2009. This allowed a comparison between Blocks 4 and 6, a general housing block and the prison hospital (Bush 2007). The Block 6 excavations revealed an area comparable to that exposed in Block 4, allowing for effective comparison. For example, the personal items recovered from both blocks could be compared; Block 4 produced more personal and clothing items than were recovered in Block 6, though pipe smoking artifacts were prevalent in both blocks (Fig. 4.4).

Craft materials (hard rubber, cut shell, gold, silver, and copper) were generally absent from the hospital block. Prisoners sent to the hospital were typically quite

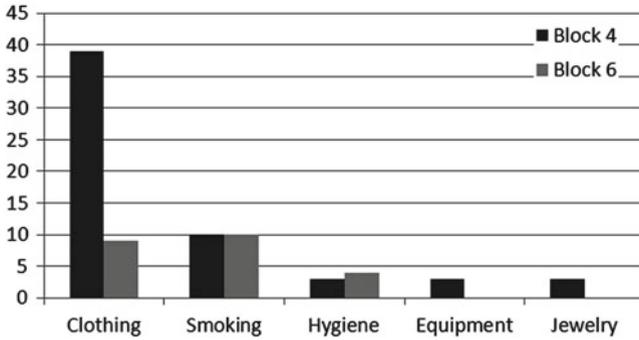


Fig. 4.4 Numbers of personal items recovered from Blocks 4 and 6, by category

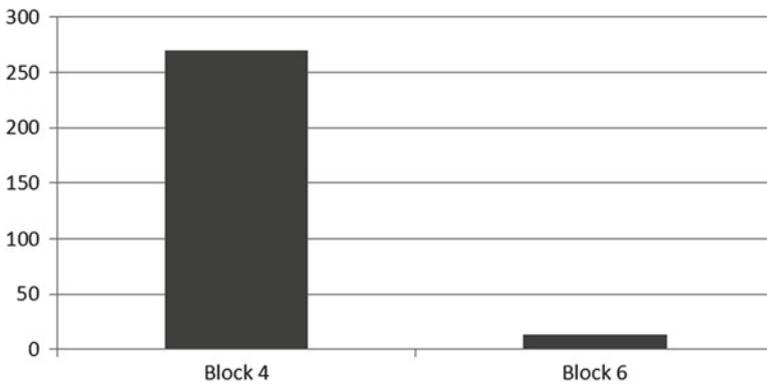


Fig. 4.5 Numbers of artefacts related to craft use recovered from Blocks 4 and 6

sick, for many prisoners complained of being ill but were not admitted. Prisoners staying in the hospital would have had restricted mobility and could not have been involved in either daily personal maintenance activities or working on jewelry and other craft items. Items lost through the floorboards and recovered through the archaeological investigations reflect the use of Block 6 as the hospital and not for activities like carving jewelry, as demonstrated for Block 4 (Fig. 4.5).

Johnson’s Island was known for the production of “gutta percha” jewelry as early as the summer of 1862. Captain John H Guy noted in his July 28, 1862 diary entry, “Ring making rules the hour. Among over a thousand prisoners, more than half have employed most of their time making rings out of gutton [sic] percha buttons.” (Guy 1862) The interest and demand for hard rubber items continued until the war ended. Colonel Virgil S. Murphy wrote in his diary on January 27, 1865:

I wrote my wife and sent her a beautiful cross and mother a ring manufactured in prison. They will be objects of curiosity and precious relics some day in the distant future, when our sufferings are appreciated and our sacrifices acknowledged. It was all the token I had to send my loved ones, in value worthless but in sentiment and remembrance much (Murphy 1865).

**Fig. 4.6** Hard rubber cross discovered at Block 4 (length 18.7 mm)



On March 2, 1865, Captain Wesley Makely states in a letter to his wife, “Kate I have not got the things made yet that I spoke of sending you some time ago. There is a great demand here for gutapercha [sic] jewelry, as most every body is trying to get some to carry south with them” (Bush 2011:201; Makely Family Papers 1863). Throughout the occupation of Johnson’s Island, the prisoners identified hard rubber as gutta-percha. Prisoners were mainly carving hard rubber buttons and writing rules into very fashionable pieces of jewelry. Finger rings were most popular, followed by breast pins, necklaces, trinkets (fish and acorns), crosses, stars, and many other forms (Bush 1992). Often these pieces of jewelry would have insets of silver, gold, copper, and freshwater or marine shell. They could acquire these materials from the sutler or through friends and family. The large amounts of hard rubber, varying from waste pieces through to finished items attest to the occupants of Block 4 being heavily involved in jewelry making. At Elmira in New York, the making of bone trinkets was a source of income for the prisoners (Gray 2001), as it had been for American and French soldiers and sailors in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (see Chapters 1 and 5). Although the finest jewelers at Johnson’s Island no doubt profited from their work, the majority wished to acquire pieces to send to family and friends as a reminder of their plight (Bush 2009:167) (Fig. 4.6).

The field seasons of 2010 and 2011 have concentrated on initial exploration of Block 8, a general housing block used for officers but designed for the enlisted men. Unlike Block 4, this building was only 24 feet wide and 130 feet long. Instead of each floor divided into 11 rooms, the floors in the “enlisted” blocks were divided into three large rooms, accommodating up to 60 prisoners. Added to the northern and southern ends of Block 8 was a single-story lean-to structure, used for the preparation of meals. After several more years of exploring Block 8, a comparison of Blocks 4 and 8 should reveal how these differently designed structures potentially altered the activities of the prisoners held in them. For instance, the more intimate setting of the “officer” blocks should reveal greater concentrations of contraband items, which would have been harder to conceal in the larger dormitory-style rooms.

## Conclusions

Prisoners at Johnson’s Island survived their disillusionment in the expectation of exchange and the imposition of retaliatory treatment through mechanisms to regain limited control of their lives. The multitude of primary accounts of the prisoner experience allows the biased nature of any single personal account to be minimized. Prisoners arrived at Johnson’s Island with an expectation of exchange but soon realized their real choices were either to attempt an escape or manage survival. With less than 0.2 % successful in escaping, survival was the only viable option. How a prisoner was able to handle survival would be dependent upon what they could bring to the prison and what the prison offered or took away.

The integrity of the archaeological resources allows both spatial and chronological segregation of the cultural materials (Bush 2000). The ability to examine the remains fallen through the floorboards of the various blocks allows for spatial-use studies. The excavations of Blocks 4 (a general housing block) and 6 (the hospital) have uncovered significantly different types of cultural materials, an example being the results of jewelry making. Further work on Block 8 will allow exploration of the ways in which block design altered the activities available to prisoners, contrasting behavior in smaller, intimate rooms with that of a larger, dormitory-style setting.

The design of Johnson’s Island’s prison compound facilitates exploration of the chronological treatment of the prisoners through the careful study of the latrines associated with each of the housing blocks. Behind each block was a latrine serving that block for a limited time. The excavation of the latrines behind Blocks 4, 6, and 8 continues to provide a chronologically sensitive perspective on PoW treatment (Bush 2000, 2009).

From the historical and archaeological records, we find the PoWs at Johnson’s Island realized they had the ability to endure their imprisonment without being totally oppressed by the guards. The writings left behind and the cultural materials contained in the ground demonstrate that prisoners had achieved some control over their imprisonment. The prewar social position of many prisoners enabled them to have access to funds used to purchase the goods and services needed to sustain a

tolerable existence. Many prisoners, utilizing their training or skills, provided a range of services. Operating as dentists, jewelers, photographers, or even librarians, they could obtain funds to better their existence. Prisoners had the opportunity to recapture some of their lost identity with minor impact to the guards' overall mandate of incarceration (Bush 2009).

The combination of the multivocal nature of the historic record coupled with the chronologically and spatially discrete archaeological resource provides the ingredients for this long-term, in-depth study of PoW treatment during the American Civil War. The initial design of the prison for all captured soldiers is the baseline upon which changing policy is reflected in a physically altered prison complex. The implications of these policy changes appear through the impacts they have on the use of Johnson's Island. As the Union deviates from its original mandate for humane prisoner treatment, housing assignments are changed, the deadline space in front of the stockade is widened, harsh rationing is imposed, sutler-provided dietary supplements are limited, access to clothing becomes restricted, and overcrowding is deliberately created. The archaeological and historical records document this physically changing prison landscape and the inhumanity it represents.

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## Chapter 5

# Norman Cross: Designing and Operating an Eighteenth-Century British Prisoner of War Camp

Harold Mytum and Naomi Hall

**Abstract** Norman Cross, near Peterborough, England, was the first PoW camp designed on principles that have since become standard across the globe. Understanding this late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century internment camp can be achieved using a wide range of sources. Surviving craft manufactures and documentary and cartographic evidence create a rich resource that can be augmented by archaeological survey and limited excavation. Both the principles and practices applied by the camp administrators and aspects of the prisoners' lives can be identified and contrasted from these varied sources.

## Introduction

The first ever prison built for prisoners of war was at Stapleton in Gloucestershire, close to Bristol, to house prisoners from the American War of Independence; little, however, is known of the layout of the early prison which was built in 1782 but reused in the Napoleonic war. The site was later converted into a workhouse and subsequently many of the original buildings were demolished to make way for a hospital. Norman Cross marks a turning point in the treatment of PoWs, despite being the second internment prison to be built, as its design was revolutionary and much more developed than what appears to have been constructed at Stapleton. It is remarkable how many of the features displayed at Norman Cross have recurred since

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at PoW camps across the world, largely through independent identification of the same key factors in managing and providing for potentially rebellious, militarily trained, inmates. It is fortunate that not only are there excellent (if at times conflicting and problematic) illustrations of the layout of the camp, but also almost the whole site has not suffered disturbance and much is still open fields. In contrast, a later prisoner of war establishment on Dartmoor has continued as one of Britain's most formidable prisons, still in use to this day (Evans 1982; Thomson 1907), and others have been adapted to various uses or demolished.

## Historical Background

During the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of prisoners were captured and retained by the warring parties for the first time as by-product of a new form of conflict between emerging nation states. In Britain and across Europe, civilian prisons were used to house these inmates, as were converted barracks and other buildings in military installations and other civilian structures such as church crypts, caves, and disused industrial buildings (Abell 1914:207). Generally, however, these were *ad hoc* arrangements that involved adaptations largely to ensure short-term security and were not planned for the purpose of interning prisoners of war either in large numbers or for prolonged periods of time. From 1756, Sissinghurst and Portchester Castles, for example, were adapted for this purpose (Abell 1914; Cunliffe and Garratt 1995). British successes in military and particularly naval conflicts of the Napoleonic wars, combined with French refusal to exchange prisoners as regularly as had previously been the case, created an unprecedented number of prisoners. Although officers could be let out on parole, a new strategy had to be developed to house the large number of soldiers and sailors that entered captivity.

From initial hostilities in 1793, prisoners were shipped back to Britain and held in military buildings that were rapidly adapted for this purpose. As these became full, ships were acquired to serve as hulks but these were also quickly becoming occupied (Branch-Johnson 1970; Campbell 1994), and more investment was clearly necessary. Despite complex bureaucratic procedures that impeded progress, funds voted by Parliament in 1793 were eventually deployed to build a whole new complex for the specific purpose of incarcerating PoWs (Walker 1913:5–10). As with most subsequent policies for internment, the authorities at all stages underestimated the scale of the operation and did not appreciate the length of time that such centers would be required. By 1810 there were over 40,000 prisoners held, mainly at five locations of which Norman Cross was one of the largest (Table 5.1).

This chapter considers aspects of the planning and use of Norman Cross. The archaeological investigations allow some insights into the prisoner experience at the camp and, whilst the finds from the site and other items now in museums and private hands that are known to come from the camp cannot be tied closely to the various phases of occupation and use, they can be combined with the documentary sources as a whole and provide an important counterpoint to the official view of camp life.

**Table 5.1** Number of PoWs at various locations in Britain, April 1810 (after Walker 1913, Appendix E)

Prison	Healthy	Sick	Total
Chatham	4,970	139	5,109
Dartmoor	5,269	85	5,354
Greenham	17	0	17
Norman Cross	6,236	36	6,272
Stapleton	4,705	92	4,797
Yarmouth	18	18	36
Forton prison and Portsmouth hulks	11,799	582	12,381
Plymouth prison and hulks	7,275	182	7,907
Total imprisoned	40,739	1,134	41,873
On Parole	2,538	172	2,710
Total POW	43,277	1,306	44,583

The Transport Commissioners began their planning for an internment camp in late 1796, and ignoring the obfuscation of the Barrack Master-General Oliver de Lancy, selected the Norman Cross site and made the necessary plans to commence construction that year. By the end of March 1797 the camp was staffed and ready to accept its first contingent of PoWs, with the first arriving on the April 7 (Walker 1913:11–16, 46). The combination of documentary sources, physical remains on the site, and the archaeological surveys and excavations combine to provide insights into the original design and modifications to this complex, and thus into the aspirations of the planners in the first place and of the users (both official and prisoner) on the other. A full appreciation of the problems encountered and solutions found by all parties would require larger scale excavation and analysis than has been carried out to date, though the trial work conducted in 2009 (Hall 2010a) indicates both significant indications of construction methods and life ways within the prison on the one hand, and the potential for more extensive investigation on the other.

At the end of the eighteenth century, British architects were well acquainted with the design and operation of prisons (Evans 1982), whether for felons or debtors, though in contrast there had been no demand to design and construct military barracks for standing forces at home. The character of PoWs was different, however, and so a particular response was required. The analysis of the earliest phase of the site, using the two earliest plans, termed by Walker (1913:18–19, Plate II) as the Hill (Fig. 5.1) and Washingley (Fig. 5.2) plans, reveals the layout of the complex in its early phase of use and can be combined with archaeological evidence to reveal detail on the methods of construction and site use.

Many features of the original design were retained throughout the history of the camp until most were demolished and the rest sold in 1816. There is not space here to consider all the changes made through this time, but sufficient to consider the original design and some relevant changes that allowed over 6,000 prisoners to survive within the physical and operational constraints that limited their choices but also created opportunities. It is possible to consider the authority's planning and implementation on the one hand, and the prisoner reaction on the other.

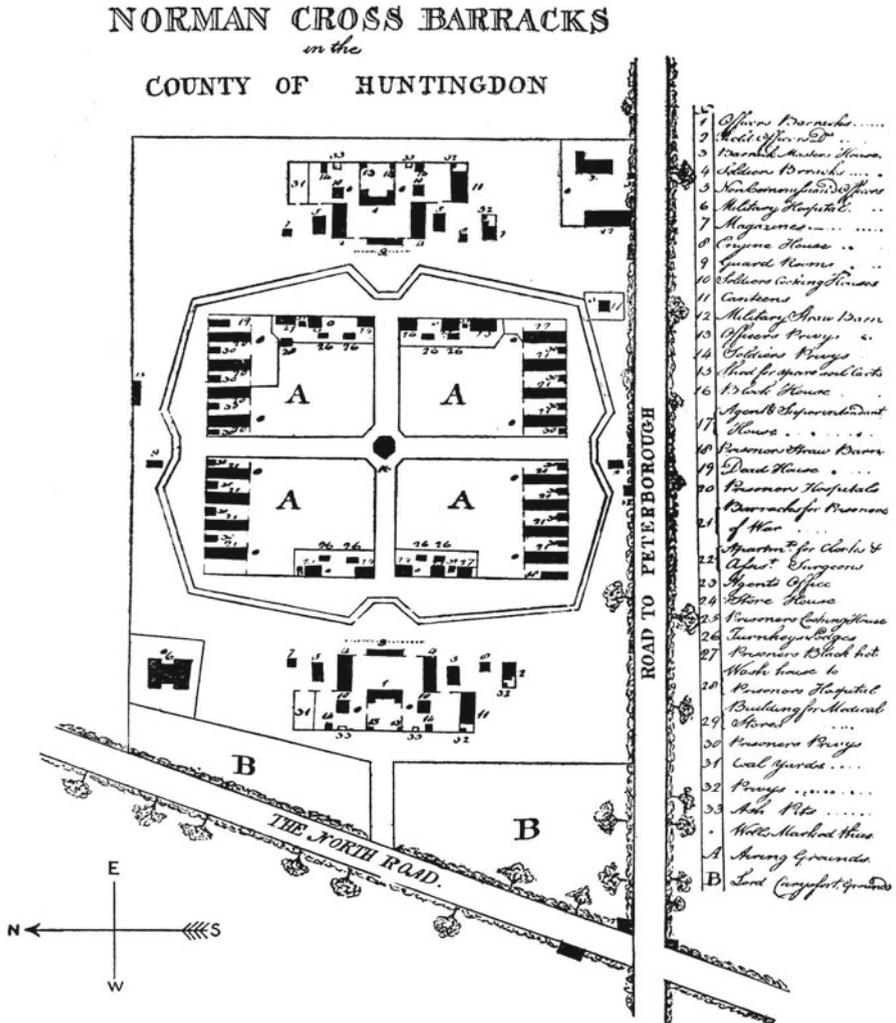


Fig. 5.1 Plan of Norman Cross 1797–1803 by Hill; note schematic North to the left (after Walker 1913)

### Planning and Operation at Norman Cross

The camp had several functions: to prevent prisoner escape, to keep order within the camp, to prevent or at least limit disease, and to house and feed the prisoners. As nothing had been previously attempted on this scale, and use by PoWs was its only role, the design of Norman Camp is most enlightening. Each of these functions can therefore be considered in turn, with the solutions evaluated both in the light of

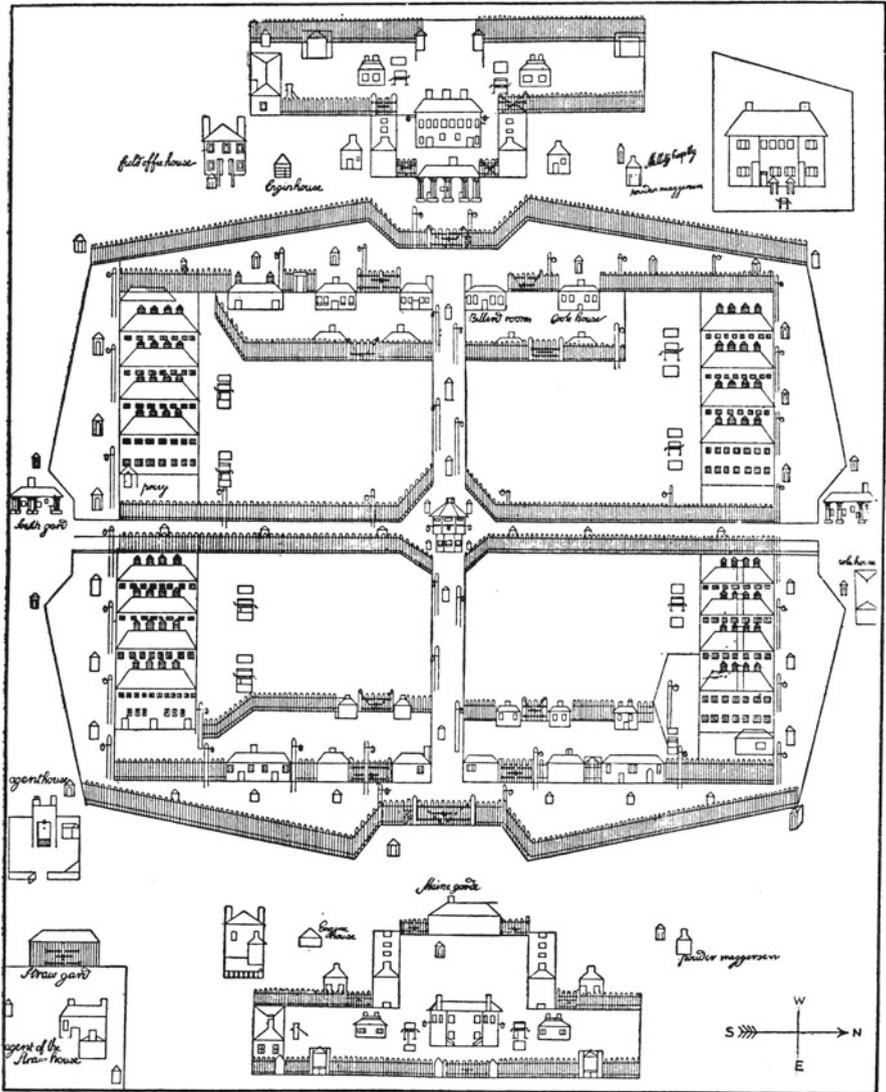


Fig. 5.2 Plan of Norman Cross 1797–1803 by Washingley; note schematic North to the right (after Walker 1913)

contemporary experience but also as a blueprint that may have affected subsequent prisoner of war treatment by the British in the generations to come. Evidence comes from the Hill and Washingley plans, contemporary accounts of camp administration, surviving products of the camp craftsmen, and the archaeological investigations. This creates a clear picture of the organizational intentions and methods of the authorities and some of the legal and illicit activities of the internees as they attempted to make the most of their enforced incarceration.

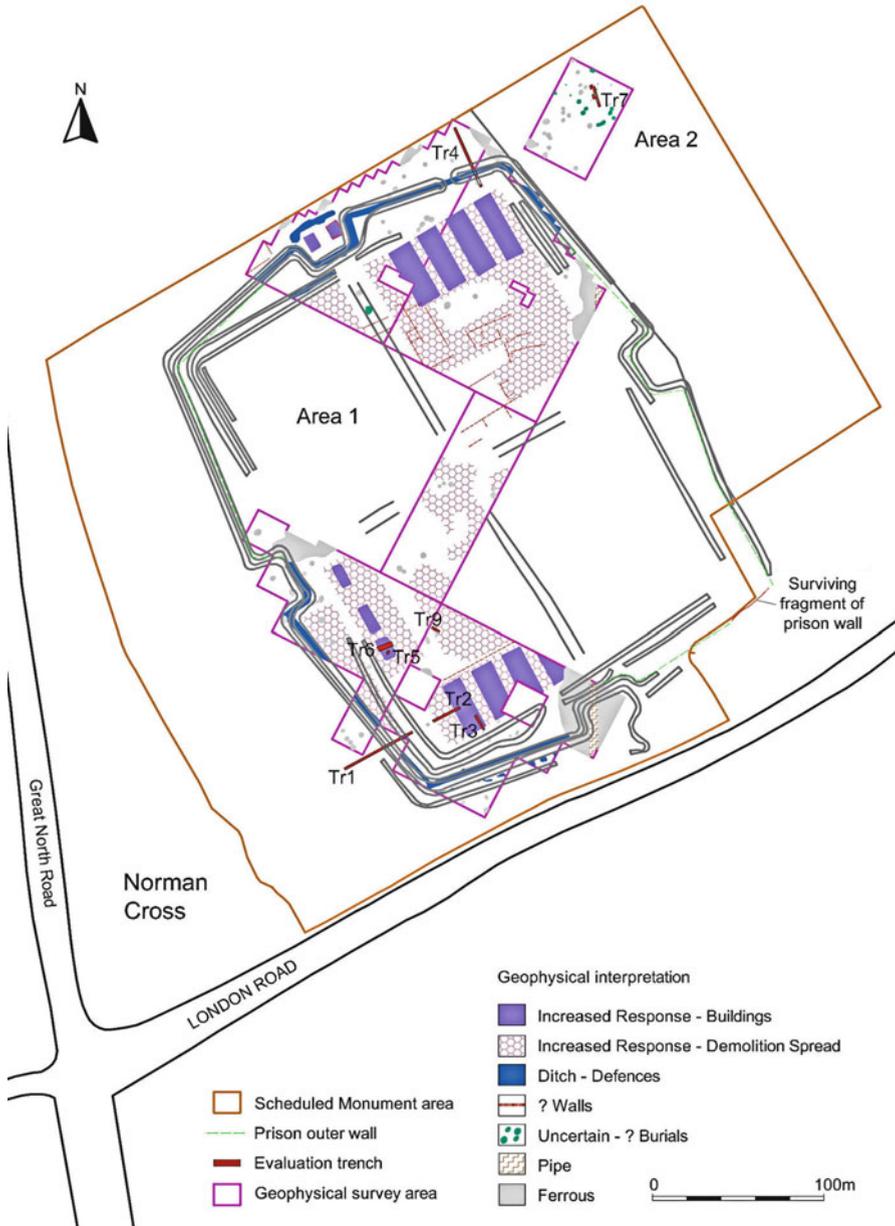
## *Preventing Prisoner Escape*

The prison location just outside the market town of Peterborough was selected as it was far from the sea, to make it difficult for any escapees to return to France, and away from any large population centers where it would be easier to merge into the crowded urban environment. However, the ease by which prisoners and supplies could be transported to the camp was also a factor in its location, meaning that security had to be a matter of high concern.

The design of the site was based around management of inmates within a secure environment. This was achieved through a series of boundary features, combined with internal divisions to control riots and a complex arrangement for observation. The basic shape of the camp was octagonal, though at the four cardinal points gates were set in recesses to increase control and improve visibility of the areas immediately outside the gates. Whilst this would have been partly linked to prevention of mass escape, it was also to control access to the camp and manage the external market that took place immediately outside the eastern gate.

The boundary of the internees' camp was originally marked by a timber palisade, though this was replaced by a brick wall, and a small length of this still survives. The wall was built after an attempted mass escape in September 1807 when the weakness of the perimeter fence was revealed after 500 prisoners managed to flatten a section and were only beaten back by soldiers using their bayonets, causing many injuries (Walker 191:154). The excavations across the line of the defenses were only narrow trenches (Fig. 5.3), so only one of the palisade postholes was located in Trench 1; it was substantial, and although truncated by later activity was still 1.2 m deep, indicating a significant line of defense. Contemporary maps and illustrations of the camp suggest that the internal and external palisades were all made to a height of about 4 m and could not be easily scaled. The surviving brick wall is to a similar height, and though for most of its length it was removed following the sale of the camp, the robber trench for this was found and suggests a foundation to match a wall of this height.

Walker described (1913:26) a 9 yard-wide wide ditch, dug to a depth of 5 feet around the camp perimeter, apparently only added in 1809 and paved to create what was termed the "silent walk" for sentries to patrol the exterior. Excavation has clarified this description (Hall 2010a). On the west side of the camp, Trench 1 was excavated to explore the boundary features. The inner ditch was 2.3 m wide and 0.7 m deep and with a slightly steeper outer face; beyond lay a more substantial steep-sided ditch, 2.7 m wide and not bottomed in the excavation because of safety reasons after reaching a depth of 1.1 m. The two ditches were separated by a shelf that probably marked the walkway described by Walker, but with the paving robbed out and only its base of compacted chalk and gravel remaining. Beyond these lay the bank which was not substantial at this point, this may explain why the later brick wall seems to run inside it here. Two parallel narrower ditches demarcating a roadway on this side of the camp that lay beyond the bank. The main camp ditches were also found on the northern perimeter in Trench 4 (Fig. 5.3), again with the walkway



**Fig. 5.3** Plan of geophysical survey results and excavation trenches (adapted by Kate Chapman from original courtesy Wessex Archaeology and GSB Propection)

in between; the bank beyond the ditches was more substantial on this side of the camp, and here the northern edge was cut by the robber trench for the brick wall, indicating that on this side the wall was constructed on the outer edge of the bank. The changes in the alignment of the bank and wall show slight alterations over time in the outer definition of the camp, but these are relatively minor.

Either side of the gates and at the other external corners of the fort were wooden sentry boxes, within which the guards could shelter and between which they patrolled. This ensured that there were no escapes but also that neither illicit goods were smuggled in, nor illegal products of the craft workers were sent out of the camp. In total about 60 guards were on duty at any one time as sentries inside and outside the camp. The remainder of the soldiers was housed in barracks just outside the camp to the east and west, and could be engaged quickly in the event of a riot. In addition, the local yeomanry could be called up to provide extra support and look for any escapees.

### *Keeping Order Within the Camp*

Some of the security measures within the camp acted to prevent escape, but they also represented a preventative level of security that controlled unrest and deterred escape attempts. The camp was split into four quarters, with roads bisecting the camp and defined on each side by palisades, making four large compounds (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2). Along the external northern or southern edges of each compound were arranged four two-storey barracks buildings, with the northeastern compound largely set aside for the hospital wing. The ends of the barracks faced into a large open zone which acted as a recreation area, but access to this was restricted to the daytime and the barracks area was fenced off and locked at night by the turnkeys who had lodges in service compounds on the internal long sides of the quadrants. The turnkeys were the controllers of all access into the quadrants but also to the camp as a whole, and they were some of the few civilian workers in the camps.

Where the main roads met at the center of the camp, there was an open area in which stood a substantial timber building. This octagonal four-storey structure with cannons facing out of every side at the uppermost level was able to provide visibility for guards in all directions, who were able to look over the palisade fences and into the interiors of the exercise areas, as well as along the roads. The third floor had slits for viewing and muskets, with larger wide windows on the second floor. At ground level, there were four sentry boxes for the militia to stand guard. This concept of a central observation along the main route ways and from above down into the exercise yards had not been applied at previous prisons and marks a significant development in the control of prisoners of war.

The area between the palisaded quadrants and the exterior boundary was open ground of varying width, with six sentry boxes along each side, creating a dense pattern of guards that was matched by further sentry posts along the internal roads. Observation at night was enhanced by lamps on tall posts arranged outside all sides of the quadrant palisades. Whilst there was no externally raised walkway around the

perimeter, there was such a density of guards within and outside the camp that all movements could be easily observed. That illicit goods moved in and out of the camp was only possible because of bribery and collusion; several cases were reported, leading to disciplinary action for both guards and inmates. Smuggling was largely organized through the carriage of items on the body and within sacks of provisions, rather than over the palisades at night since this would have been observed by many men.

Miscreants in the camp could be punished by a range of penalties at the camp, from the least severe with a reduction of rations, to being sent to the camp's Black Hole which was located in the service enclosure in the hospital quadrant. This was a place where prisoners could be placed in unlit isolation; there are no detailed contemporary descriptions, and the excavations in the vicinity were inconclusive (Hall 2010a:13–14). Those for whom this was insufficient were sent to one of the hulks, clearly considered to be worse than being held in one of the land prisons. Other potential punishments included putting prisoners at the bottom of the list of potential exchange prisoners, or the closure of the market at the east gate of the prison, preventing access to luxuries and sale of prisoners' manufactures (Walker 1913, 64–65). British criminal law also applied within the camp, so prisoners could be taken to the local assizes and sentenced, with one being hanged for a stabbing.

### *Preventing and Limiting Disease*

Despite the crowded housing, the requirement to be outside for a considerable portion of the day and the provision of latrines and good water supplies from wells in each exercise area created an infrastructure that was relatively resilient. Moreover, there were frequent medical inspections by both British doctors and French staff who ensured that there was effective communication. Any inmates considered at risk were moved to the medical wing.

At a very early stage, as the camp was being constructed, it was realized that some illness was inevitable within such a large population, and so some form of medical facilities should be incorporated into the design. The northeastern quadrant was planned with two barrack blocks reserved for the hospital, fenced off within this quadrant and with an additional building in the corner labeled as the dead house on Hall's plan. Here the deceased were laid until burial outside the camp. Whether this was so that bodies could be removed rapidly from the sick to allow the medical staff to identify cause of death and so consider any preventative measures, or whether it was to store bodies for a sufficient time that they were no longer attractive to body-snatchers is unknown. However, this was the period when illicit acquisition of bodies to supply the London and Scottish medical schools was a major concern (Mytum and Webb 2013), and internees' remains, with their graves unattended, would have been a ready source of supply. The hospital blocks had their own privies and also had a separate washhouse to limit the spread of disease, even though the epidemiology of many of the conditions was poorly understood.

Mortality at Norman Cross was not abnormally high, but large numbers of people living in close proximity with limited concepts and practices of hygiene inevitably led to sickness and death. Well over 1,700 prisoners are recorded as having died in the camp from the incomplete documentary record that survives, and this would have required a considerable amount of space for burial. A major typhoid epidemic in 1800–1801 caused the vast majority of deaths, and although a separate cemetery to house the 1,020 who died at this time was supposed to lie well to the west (Walker 1913:173), this was not located in the albeit limited trial excavations. For the rest of the time the mortality rate was relatively low, with only 18 dying in the whole of 1814 (Walker 1913:164). Many who died in the epidemic were those who gambled away their possessions and food rations, as discussed in the following section, and it would seem that in time they were allocated their own barrack block in the hospital quadrant, presumably to keep them away from the other prisoners both for their own safety and to isolate those most likely to succumb to infection from the more healthy inmates.

Walker (1913:173) notes that workmen digging for gravel had in his lifetime found human remains northeast of the camp, though he considered that this was not the main burial area. This burial area was confirmed by the archaeological investigations (Hall 2010a). Single and multi-occupant graves were found immediately to the north of the camp, east of the route in through the north gate, in Trench 4; more graves were located in Trench 7 further to the east (Fig. 5.3). The presence of nails suggests that simple wooden coffins were used, as was becoming common for even relatively poor civilians at this time. The graves were widely spaced in what might have been rows 4–5 m apart as this spacing can be seen in both trenches which, being 80 m apart, suggests that an extensive area was used for burial. The southeasterly edge of the cemetery cannot have been far from the soldiers' barracks and service buildings on the east side of the camp; its northern extent was not beyond those recovered in Trench 4, as evaluation excavation in the field to the north failed to locate any further interments (Hall 2010b).

The camp did not possess a consecrated burial ground, and it is of note that the burials were placed in a north–south orientation. Most of the prisoners were Roman Catholics, though some were Protestants; it would seem that no religious provision was made at the time of the funerals. In contrast, those soldiers who died whilst billeted at the camp's barracks were interred in the local churchyard at Yaxley and with a full burial service by the local priest or curate. However, the frequency of these deaths caused strain on the available churchyard space as the war dragged on. Land was therefore purchased next to the barracks southeast of the camp, and consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1813, though this area was subsequently incorporated into the garden of what had been the barrack-master's house (Walker 1913:175).

### *Housing and Feeding the Prisoners*

The creation of living space for large numbers of prisoners was a challenge in itself, but this would have been unsuccessful if an infrastructure to support this population

**Table 5.2** Food supplies for Norman Cross PoWs (from Walker 1913, 70–71)

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<i>Daily allowance after November 1797</i>	
Beer	1 quart
Beef	8 ounces (replaced by fish on Wednesdays and Fridays)
Bread	26 ounces
Cheese	2 ounces (or 1/3 ounce salt butter)
Dried peas	1/2 pint
Fresh vegetables	1.5 pounds
Also 1/2 pound of soap and 3/4 pounds of tobacco leaf per month	
<i>Daily allowance for hospital patients</i>	
Tea	2 pints (1 pint morning, 1 pint afternoon)
White bread	1 pound
Beef or mutton	1 pound
Broth	1 pint
Green vegetables	1 pound (or 1 pound of potatoes)
Malt beer	2 quarts
Where required, fish, poultry, veal, lamb or eggs could be substituted	

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was not also provided. Excavations demonstrated that the timber buildings were set on brick foundations (Hall 2010a, b), and the maps with elevation drawings such as that by Washingley (Fig. 5.2) demonstrates that the housing comprised two-storey barrack-like buildings, with glazed windows and brick chimneys. Walker (1913:91) calculates that the accommodation was very cramped. Hammocks were hung in threes, one above another on the ground floor, and in two layers on the higher floor. There was a width of only 0.6 m allocated within the building to accommodate each hammock, which suggests a very high density, though conditions for sailors at sea could be even worse, and may have been similar at least at times for soldiers in military barracks.

Supply of provisions for the prisoners was assisted by the location of Norman Cross. It was situated within a rich agricultural landscape, and was also at the intersection of two roads, that from the markets of Peterborough and the major north-south route way of the Great North Road, which allowed those who provided rations specified in contracts to deliver these easily by cart. Moreover, water transport allowed more distant supplies to be brought cheaply within a few miles of the site. The documentary sources indicate a diet similar in quantity to that provided for British soldiers, but this was adapted after November 1797 to better suit French culinary tastes (Walker 1913:69–72). The diet was particularly generous, and in theory flexible according to need, for those who were sufficiently ill to be housed in the hospital wing (Table 5.2). There were frequent complaints about the quality of the foodstuffs, and so it was agreed that prisoner representatives could be selected by the inmates to inspect the provisions as they were delivered. Sometimes extensive official investigations took place where quality was poor, and whilst some cases of corruption were uncovered it would seem that the prisoners had at least as good a diet as they would have received in the forces. The meals were prepared at a cook

house in each quadrant by some of the inmates with the necessary skills and selected by the prisoners themselves. As French cooks operated the kitchens, and were paid by the camp authorities for this responsibility, the meals could be prepared to menus that were culturally acceptable, and even if not very varied were sufficient to more than stave off starvation. A representative from each group of 12 inmates would be allowed access in turn to the cook house to receive the rations and return with them to his comrades; there were no designated dining areas.

Inmates were able to purchase additional food, of a variety of kinds, at the external market, according to a number of civilian accounts. Local people could bring their surplus produce for sale to the east gate market controlled by the military, where they could negotiate with internee representatives who would spend the prisoners' money and bring the items back into the camp. The archaeological evidence supports this with faunal remains of sheep, pig, rabbit, and poultry represented in the assemblages, indicating a varied diet for at least some (Grimm 2010). The cattle were generally adults, as were the sheep, perhaps reflecting the use of mutton, but the pigs were subadult, as would be expected to maximize meat levels. It is assumed that herbs and perhaps spices were used by the French cooks, but these are not attested archaeologically.

## **Prisoner Life Ways at Norman Cross**

Whilst many aspects of life were heavily constrained both deliberately and incidentally by the design and operation of the camp, prisoners still had considerable flexibility in the ways that they could use their time and how they interacted with each other, with the prison personnel and, to a certain extent, even with the population beyond the gates. Unlike some of the hulks and other prisons (Cohen 1995; Denn 2004; Garneray 2003), no former inmates wrote accounts of their experiences that have survived, making the archaeology even more important as a source that can balance the official documentation. Nevertheless, there is sufficient material from a variety of sources to indicate a range of activities that took place within the camp and also the nature of commercial interactions with the outside world.

### ***Daily Life in the Camp***

Life within the camp was cramped, repetitive, and with limited choices. It was structured around blocks of time delimited by daily set times to rise and go to sleep and by meal times; by weekly events such as the markets; and by other rotas such as the 1 in 12 days when it was the turn of each internee to carry out the various camp chores required to keep the institution running. These would have included cleaning, minor maintenance, and emptying the latrines. Whilst the creation of material goods is the most lasting evidence of prisoners making use of their time (see below), other activities were also undertaken. Those with skills or knowledge would teach

others, for a fee, and some formed theater troupes and performed in the exercise areas. These activities are again often visible in later internment contexts, indicating a reaction to the unusually large amounts of time available, and to the potential improvement of prisoners' skills so that on release they could obtain more lucrative employment than they had been able to find previously.

### *Crafts and Manufactures*

It is clear that there was already a tradition of military prisoners making craft items for sale in order to generate income that could be expended to supplement their diet and clothing, or even create savings that could taken out of the camp when prisoners were released. Manufacturing within Norman Cross comprised both officially sanctioned products that could be exchanged internally and sold at the east gate market, and illicit products that had to be smuggled out of the camp for sale, involving the complicity of camp guards or regular visitors to the camp such as suppliers of food-stuffs. A large number of items sold to local people or given to camp staff have survived; a substantial collection of over 250 bone and over 150 of straw marquetry items is housed at Peterborough Museum (Walker 1913:128–30), though many other examples are held in private collectors' hands (Lloyd 2007). What survives is often of high quality, and it is likely that many less impressive items that were made and sold have not been retained, creating a biased sample of the products of the time. Nevertheless, these reveal a wide range of skills and levels of ingenuity that were applied to the creation of items that were either to be worn or displayed as curios. Many items were specifically commissioned, and some clients purchased items over more than a decade (Lloyd 2007:99).

The official products consist mainly of objects made from bone, derived from the carcasses that arrived as part of the rations. The French cooks dismembered the animals into the joints for cooking, but could save the bones for use in the production of many different items. The animal bone must have been distributed through internal market systems within the camp about which nothing is known. Relatively simple bone dice, dominoes, pipe tampers, and apple corers are recorded, but other items were far more complex. Some of the bone products were elaborate models which have been retained and survive in various collections. They are formed from assembling large numbers of small bone elements to create miniature furniture, watch stands, and mirror surrounds (Lloyd 2007:104–27). Perhaps the most popular range of products were games, including chess pieces, boxes for cards, or boxed sets of dominoes (Lloyd 2007:192–219). The most elaborate products had working parts, ranging from small models of wagons with turning wheels to far more sophisticated items such as spinning jennies or guillotines (Lloyd 2007:163–91). Most of these items were quite small, despite their mechanical ingenuity, with the spinning jennies being up to 0.2 m high, though the guillotines could be as tall as 0.6 m. (Lloyd 2007:173). A small number of large models, such as a chateau 0.6 m high and 0.75 m long with moving water wheel and figures show what could be achieved,

but both limitations on available material, and probably the size of models desired by customers, limited the number of such items. Extremely accurate models of ships, some with small cast bronze cannon, were also produced (Lloyd 2007:128–59). Clearly the skills of the craftsmen and the prices charged for the items must have varied greatly. It is likely that some models were the creation of a number of workers, though little is known of the organization of production within the camps.

Straw was another product that could be used for decoration, often on frameworks of wood and incorporating limited amounts of bone and metalwork fittings such as handles and hinges. These gave the appearance of marquetry and were decorated with elaborate mainly geometric decoration, though sometimes more complex scenes could be produced (Lloyd 2007:47–103). Products included boxes and chests in many different designs, and some, including tea caddies, were decorated instead with rolled paper (Lloyd 2007:160–62); this material was also used to make artificial flowers set in frames (Walker 1913:182).

Another straw product that began as a legal item was that of plait, used in the decoration of hats. A few prisoners must have already been trained in this craft as it was a major industry in some regions of France, and the skills spread through the various PoW camps. Indeed, Inward (1922:17) notes that a machine for splitting the straw, made in bone and used by the prisoners, was then copied in iron by a Dunstable blacksmith for local plait producers, thus greatly increasing the British output. Straw could be turned into hats, bonnets, and baskets, or the decorative plait used as hat decoration. However, some parts of England has vibrant indigenous straw-working industry, such as that around Luton and Dunstable (Sharpe 1994), and after pressure from these areas the making of millenary in the camps, where labor was inevitably much cheaper, was banned in 1799, though the straw plait production was not prohibited until 1806 (Lloyd 2007:65). This then led to illicit movement in of straw, and removal of finished plait, a product relatively easily hidden compared with hats or baskets, and also for its size the most valuable.

Another illicit product was that of lewd or pornographic models and pictures, of which a few survive. Despite a generally earthy level of humor within military circles, these were greeted by strangely puritanical polemics by the authorities, an attitude repeated by Walker (1913:148). Certainly the surviving products do not suggest that the level of documented outrage was justified (Lloyd 2007:173), unlike the other major concern which was over the forgery of paper money, a new form of currency at this time and so relatively easy to copy. Forgery took place at a range of prisons, including Norman Cross (Walker 191:146–47), and was presumably either smuggled out or used to purchase goods at the east gate market.

The archaeological evidence for craft working is mainly in the form of worked bone waste (Mephram 2010). Even in the limited excavations, nearly 800 pieces were recovered. Most were small fragments indicating use of knives and saws for cutting, with lathes also used for turning. Walker (1913:131) had not thought that this technology was available within Norman Cross and that lathe-turned items must have come in from outside; this was clearly not the case, but given the value of more complex items it is likely that capital could have been accrued by prisoners to purchase such an item. A wide range of products were demonstrated in the unfinished or broken artifacts, including dominoes, dice, flea combs, buttons, handles and a



**Fig. 5.4** Worked bone excavated at Norman Cross (Courtesy Wessex Archaeology)

crochet needle (Fig. 5.4). Various bone strips and other shaped items were also recovered. These may have been made as components of the more complex artifacts. Two fragments of ceramic tile in a fabric identical to those used for roofing the buildings were found in the plow zone. They are of particular interest because they had been deliberately shaped into small rectangles, perhaps as blanks for bead manufacture (Mephram 2010:15).

No certain craft tools were recovered, presumably because care was taken not to lose them within the camp as replacement would have been difficult and costly, and they would have been some of the few possessions taken away by those leaving the camp on release. The possible exceptions are three fragments of broken window glass with finely chipped edges, perhaps adapted to perform cutting or scraping functions (Mephram 2010:18). They were discarded as they would not have had any intrinsic value outside the camp where more effective metal tools would have been widely available. A small amount of slag related to iron smithing, but whether this was by the prisoners is unclear.

### ***Gambling and Fighting***

Official controls to prevent antisocial behavior were commonplace, and the turnkeys were in charge of discipline and could call upon troops if required. Disputes inevitably emerged in such overcrowded conditions with limited opportunities to escape clashing personalities or political or religious differences. Illicit weapons were manufactured and some were used, resulting in prosecutions.

One of the greatest sources of discord was the widespread gambling culture in which wages, food, and even clothing could be wagered on cards and dice. Domino sets as well as dice were manufactured for external sale (Fig. 5.4), but were clearly also widely available to inmates. Some of the gamblers were both unsuccessful and addicted, leading to destitution through wagering both the clothes they were wearing and their future rations. These desperate individuals were then highly vulnerable to the cold and infection and were ostracized by the majority of the inmates. These were named *Les Misérables* at Norman Camp, but a similar and better documented subculture is recorded at Dartmoor where they were known as the “Romans” (Daly 2004; Thomson 1907:45–58) where they were housed together and created their own brutal internal social structure. It seems that many at Norman Cross became housed in one barrack block in the quadrant with the hospital.

It is noteworthy that the reaction to internment creating the gambling passion is recorded at a variety of locations around Britain at this time, suggesting a common response to the stresses of incarceration. Such extreme reactions do not occur in later PoW contexts, though less dramatic versions may have been indulged in by those abandoning normal cultural norms in such circumstances. Moreover, Thomson (1907:52–53) gives examples of Dartmoor “Romans” who returned to successful conventional lifestyles after the war, which further suggests that this was a peculiar reaction to internment conditions, rather than the activities of inevitable gambling addicts for whom destitution in a different form would have been their fate in normal life.

## Conclusions

The innovations at Norman Cross are both substantial and impressive. The arrangement of the secure perimeter and segregated compounds, an emphasis on order, observation, discipline, and a measure of self-governance amongst the inmates is often found elsewhere at later dates. The provision of a reasonable diet, accommodation, and exercise space, and the concern that the equivalent rights and facilities were available to those held by the enemy, created a dynamic that promoted a disciplined yet enlightened regime. Likewise, the allowing of craftwork and educational and cultural activities, accepted in earlier situations, was here shaped into a more structured form, as was the provision for medical care.

Designed and built rapidly, the deliberately transient construction at Norman Cross means that little remains above ground. Unlike Stapleton and the later camps at Dartmoor (built 1805) and Perth (built 1812), this was largely of wood and, given its limited maintenance and heavy occupation levels, it was not considered worth offering for reuse and was instead sold off at the end of the war. Although the PoWs were only present at Norman Cross from 1797 until 1802, and then again from 1803 until 1814, they too have left a legacy on the site and in their artwork that stands testament to their resilience and ingenuity, a phenomenon repeated in subsequent PoW experiences. Now the site has the archaeological advantage of being a

“greenfield” site, and its heritage value should not be underestimated. The initial research that has already been undertaken indicates its potential, and preservation and if possible further investigation is highly desirable.

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**Part III**  
**Twentieth-Century Britain and Europe:**  
**Military Prisoners of War**

# Chapter 6

## Excavating the World War II Prisoner of War camp at La Glacerie, Cherbourg, Normandy

Robert Early

**Abstract** The prisoner of war camp at La Glacerie in Cherbourg, Normandy was established by the American authorities in August 1944 and was the first of many camps to be erected in the region. In August 1945, the camp was handed over to the French authorities and finally it was closed in October 1946. An archaeology-led research project carried out by Oxford Archaeology was conducted during the winter of 2009 and is significant as the first prescription in *archéologie préventive* (Code du Patrimoine 2010) in France for a World War II archaeological site. Evidence for the project has been collected not only from excavation but also from a range of sources including international, national, and local documentary sources, oral history, and photography. However, emphasis has been placed on the value of archaeological evidence and its contribution to a multidisciplinary study.

### Introduction

There is no national or regional record for World War II heritage in France. This is of particular concern for Normandy where, in terms of history, the impact and significance of World War II arguably equals that of its Norman heritage. The camp at La Glacerie was rediscovered by accident during an archaeological evaluation in advance of a housing development (Tournier 2006). The site was originally investigated for likely *Gallo-Romain* remains, but significant archaeological features that contained artifacts dating to World War II were found. Discussions with local land owners revealed that the site was indeed a PoW camp, which prompted the *Service Régional de Archéologie* to commission an additional historic study that confirmed

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broadly its identification. As part of this study an aerial photograph was identified in the French national archive (*Institut Geographique National (IGN)*, 15 aout 1947, Mission F1110-1310, cliché no.298) that showed features belonging to a significant site that had been dismantled and returned to pasture. An archaeological excavation covering an area of 1.6 hectares was placed where the most significant archaeological remains were identified during evaluation. Oxford Archaeology was the only organization in France that expressed an interest in the research, demonstrating that World War II archaeology and specifically the archaeology of PoW camps is not yet recognized widely in the French archaeological community as a research objective.

The research objectives were to characterize the archaeological remains over the 1.6 hectare site and to comment on their value compared to other available sources of evidence. This research was being conducted within the restricted environment of contract archaeology (see also Chap. 3), and given the limited experience of such research in a European context it is timely to assess the contribution that such studies can make to our understanding of PoW archaeology.

## **Aerial Photography**

Four relevant aerial photographs have been identified dating from January 1944 to August 1947; three were located at Keele University, England and one in the IGN archives in France. Two photographs dated January 5 and May 7, 1944 confirm that the location of the camp was not in use and the area was then a green-field site made up of enclosed land parcels delineated by hedgerows and roads. When compared to the later photographs, it is apparent that these earlier land divisions dictated the layout of the camp, where internal divisions respect earlier field boundaries. The most significant aerial photographs are dated August 3, 1945 (106G/L1B.218.3/4157 and 4158) and August 15, 1947 (as cited above).

The former shows an extensive and occupied PoW camp and is, to date, the only historic record of the original layout at La Glacerie (Fig. 6.1). The latter is a view of the dismantled site (Fig. 6.2).

### ***An Analysis of the August 1945 Photograph***

This vertical photograph shows that the “main” camp was developed to the south of a road aligned east–west that is still in use today and which descends to the west into Cherbourg. The camp had a formal and ordered layout of administrative buildings, barrack blocks, recreational features, and tents (Fig. 6.1). Other associated areas, can be found to the north (Area E), northeast (Area D), and west of the main camp (Area B). The areas of excavation, that were defined prior to the identification of this photograph, lie within a further rectangular area (Area A) subdivided into 16 compounds, 12 of which contain rows of smaller structures (Figs. 6.2 and 6.3).

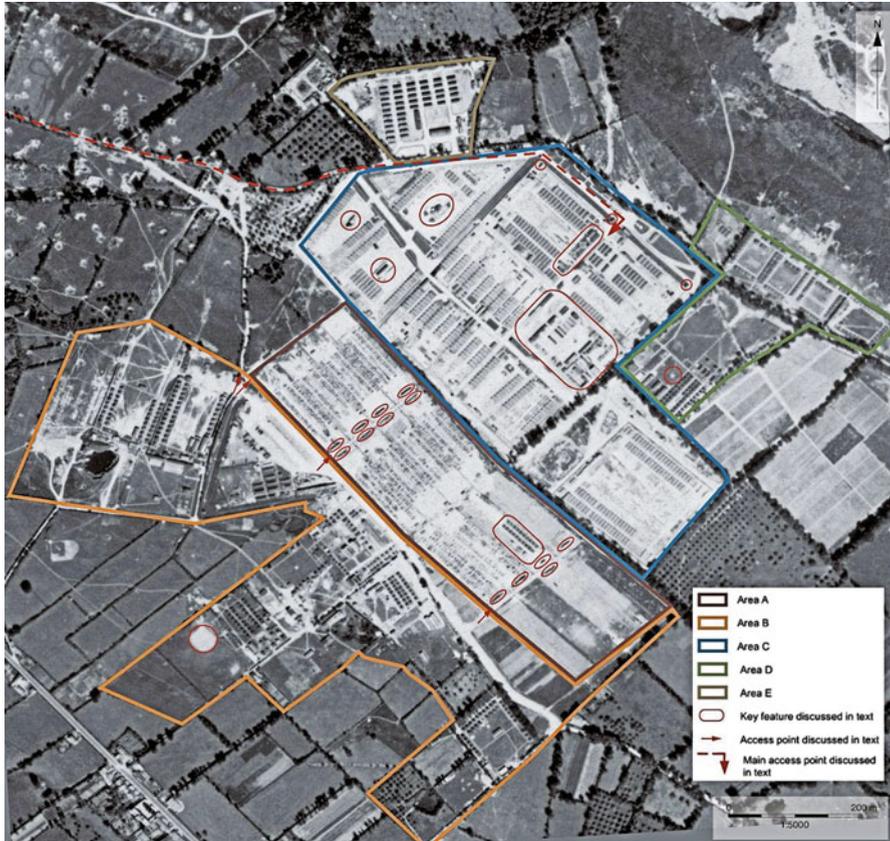
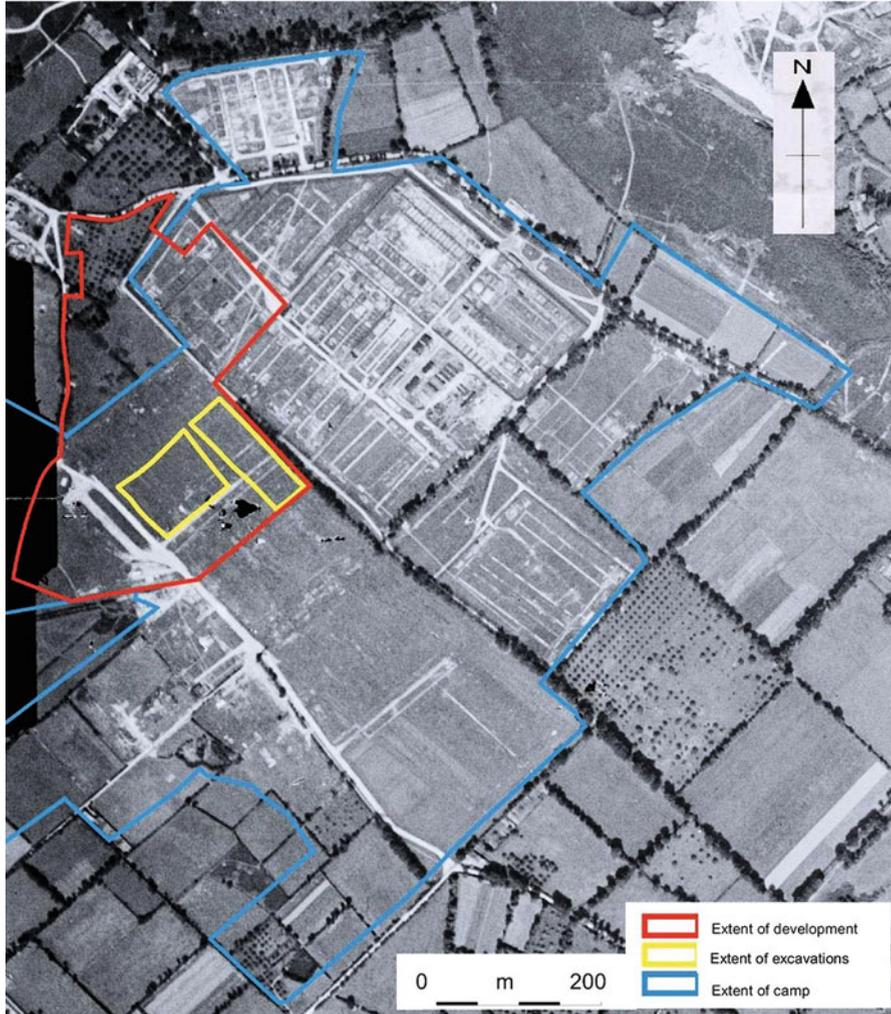


Fig. 6.1 Aerial photograph of La Glacerie camp in use August 3 1945

Further developments extend in an *ad hoc* fashion to the southwest, where there is no noticeable site boundary.

A series of structures, possibly watchtowers or control points, can be observed along the boundary of the main camp adjacent to the main road. The main entrance to the site is also clearly visible and gives onto a formal garden. The camp is subdivided into rectangular blocks separated by defined paths or walls. Each block contains identical buildings with rectangular footprints, and on close inspection these have pitched roofs. To the southwest of the main area, narrow rectangular compounds that contain parallel rows of rectangular buildings can be observed, elsewhere uniform rows of buildings run along the sides of square blocks enclosing open areas that in some instances have large structures in their center. Towards the southeast of the main camp, situated centrally and close to the formal garden, there is a block that exhibits different characteristics. The structures visible here tend to be larger and their arrangement less ordered. This is possibly an administrative control, in contrast to the other blocks that may have been used for accommodation, where central buildings served communal functions such as sanitary or dining blocks.



**Fig. 6.2** Aerial photograph of demolished La Glacerie camp, August 15 1947, with excavation areas indicated

A compound with six rows of Nissan huts and a number of rectangular structures of varying size is positioned north of the main road, adjacent to the camp (Area E). The well-structured nature of this compound compared to the southwestern development of the site might suggest that it is contemporary with the primary phase of the camp's development. Adjacent and to the east of the main camp there is an area of less well-structured development. The most prominent features appear to be the square tents observed elsewhere, organized in rows and sometimes positioned around central open areas. Also visible are probable Nissan huts and larger rectangular



Fig. 6.3 La Glacerie excavation site plan

structures, some with pitched roofs, and open recreational areas comprising small gardens, yards, football pitch-sized areas, and a baseball pitch for sporting activities.

A distinct southeast to northwest orientated rectangular area is adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the main camp (Area A). It consists of four approximately square blocks, each divided into four linear zones, making up 16 compounds. In the ten most northerly compounds, four parallel rows of tightly organized structures are divided in two by a central path. The structures here are insubstantial when compared to those observed in the main camp and are most numerous in the north-west half. Approximate counts of 328, 361, 361, and 140 structures can be made for the most northwestern compounds. Each occupied compound has what looks like a substantial rectangular structure, possibly a communal building, at either its north-western or southeastern end. This is separated from the rows of structures by an open area, possibly recreational space.

The four compounds located at the southeast end are empty. There is no evidence of paths or former structures, but there is what looks like a singular building similar to the “communal structures” located to the northwest. This suggests that this area had not reached its full capacity by August 3, 1945 and that logistically compounds were occupied from the northwest to the southeast as shown by the decreased number of structures. Towards the southwest end, one compound houses two rows of identically square pyramidal structures. These are identical in form with other examples in the photograph, outside the site to the west and east, and are possibly standard issue tents.

To the southwest, a less well-organized area can be observed with no noticeable boundary (Area B). As seen elsewhere, square tents and Nissan huts often situated around central open areas occupy the area. There are a number of paths and roads visible that connect to major national roads. Most significantly, three access points to the adjacent compounds to the northeast can be identified. These are the only clearly recognizable entry points into the compounds, perhaps suggesting that they were organized and managed from the southwestern area rather than the main camp.

### ***15 August 1947 Photograph***

The later vertical aerial photograph depicts a now redundant site (Fig. 6.2). The organization of structures and roads within the main camp is still evident as features, however to the southwest much of the area has returned to grassland, suggesting that it had been abandoned some time previously, and was originally largely accommodated by tents or makeshift structures. The basic plan of the camp does not seem to have extended since August 3, 1945. It is noteworthy that very few features can be observed within the area that has been subsequently subject to excavation. Although the archaeological evaluation only included the southwest corner of the main camp, its results indicate that more archaeological features and artifacts extent to the south.

### **Archaeological Excavation**

Two rectangular areas (105 × 90 and 158 × 45 m) were stripped by machine to reveal the underlying archaeological footprint (Fig. 6.3). The ground dropped steeply from south to north, and in general preservation was best at the top of the slope, although this might simply relate to post-camp development. In the northwestern half of both zones, 15 rows of southwest to northeast oriented rectangular features (typical dimensions of 5 × 3 m) were partially or completely revealed. In total 180 of these were found. Along the southern side of Zone 1 and through the center of Zone 2 were two lines of postholes defining a double fence line; an iron gate was identified close to this alignment in Zone 1. An area of open space was observed in between the fence line and the rows of rectangular features. This was dissected by two parallel ditches 4 m apart that ran northeast–southwest through both zones and possibly represent the remains of a track way with parallel drainage ditches. The remains of three stone-lined ovens and two possibly related soil marks were found close to the double fence line in Zone 1.

The archaeological “footprint” was significant, particularly for such a short period of occupation, and matched quite closely the evidence presented on the aerial photographs. However, only those features that were totally or partially negative left any evidence. The rectangular features can be confirmed as evidence for structures located in five separate compounds. The fence lines and the position of the track way

that are also visible on the 1947 aerial photograph (Fig. 6.2) seem to reinforce the spatial organization visible on the aerial photographs. Interestingly, no evidence was found for the feature interpreted as one of the “large communal structures” seen in the compounds on the 1945 aerial photograph (Fig. 6.1). This may suggest that that they represent either a prefabricated pier-supported structure or perhaps were placed on a hard standing that was removed following the decommissioning of the camp.

## *Structures*

In total, 98 of the 180 structures were excavated. The 180 structures on the photographs were typically between 2 to 2.3 m wide and 5 m long, but varied significantly, particularly in length. Subsequent excavation revealed sunken-featured structures (similar to medieval sunken-featured buildings) of variable depth, set in regimented rows. The strategy adopted during excavation attempted to characterize the structures in each compound to identify whether or not these had different functions and possibly accommodated different groups of occupants. The majority of structures could be confirmed as dwellings, but excavation demonstrated that there was no uniformity either within particular compounds or across the whole excavated area. While most sunken features had a consistent depth, there were some examples where only part of the floor area had been lowered, leaving a step within the structure. The archaeological footprint often represented only the negative feature within the buildings; elsewhere often little archaeological evidence survived. Most, but not all, sunken areas showed signs of badly burnt timber floors with overlying deposits of burnt soil. This indicates that they were burnt before the camp was decommissioned and returned to pasture. The general lack of structural and artifactual evidence suggests that material of value had been either purposefully removed or salvaged from the structures before their destruction.

Flooring material was regularly identified within the sunken areas and consisted of whatever material was available—metal sheets, roofing felt, wooden planks, or a combination of these. Regularly sized suspended wooden floors with floorboards nailed across joists were also identified (Fig. 6.4). The artifactual record from these structures provides no conclusive evidence of whether or not they had specific functions; however, the quality of the materials used, compared to the majority of structures, might be an indicator of status or rank. Only two structures had postholes outside of their sunken features that could have supported a roof structure. Internally, small postholes and stakeholes were found, which possibly provide evidence of internal partitions or fittings. Where sunken features were significantly deep, wood plank shuttering was used. This was most common at the entrance to structures where erosion of the pit would be more likely. Other structural remains found include fragments of window glass, part of a window frame, and a set of wooden steps. A number of stoves were found within structures, and a majority has been identified as the US Army issue—Stove, Tent, M-1941—made of press steel that came as a kit for assembly (Fig. 6.5). Their distribution was almost exclusively



**Fig. 6.4** La Glacerie structure 2108, cage 8, with preserved floor joists

limited to the uppermost compound (Fig. 6.3 cages 1 and 2). In contrast, cast iron flue pipes that would have attached to the stoves were more widely found, perhaps suggesting that stoves might have been more widely distributed.

The average area of each structure has been estimated at about 10 m<sup>2</sup>. The arrangement of interior space was evident in a number of structures, but this is not consistent. Evidence for partition walls was generally rare, but when identified it was represented by small postholes or sill beams. More commonly, divisions of space are represented by a change in floor level (Fig. 6.5). One structure had three floor levels, where the highest level (the shallowest part of the structure) was interpreted as an entrance lobby/vestibule. This was the only area of floor with a roof felt covering and its entrance would presumably have given onto the main track way through the compound to the east. A small storage pit and the setting for a stove were identified in the middle, at a slightly lower level, and this is possibly shared living space; concentrations of coffee and lemonade sachets were found in this area. The lower level, at the west end, constitutes the “deepest space” in the structure in all senses. Here, the remains of a drawer were found in between the possible location for bunks.

### *Other Features*

The double fence line comprised over 50 postholes regularly spaced and averaging 0.25 m in diameter. Apart from the iron gate mentioned above, little additional evidence associated with the camp’s boundary was found. Scraps of barbed wire were recovered from the overburden and backfill, but presumably reusable elements of the fence were salvaged. Test excavations were carried out along the northeastern and southwestern perimeter of the camp but no ditches or further structural evidence were recovered. It is likely that the southeastern entrances to the compounds, as



**Fig. 6.5** La Glacierie structure 1037, cage 1, with US Army issue stove in situ

identified on the 1945 aerial photograph (Fig. 6.1), were outside the area of the excavations.

The remains of ovens were identified adjacent to the fence line and would have served the top two compounds (Fig. 6.3, cage 1 and 2) in Zone 1. These were in differing states of repair, with the best preserved having extant traces of limestone flue walls with a brick and tile floor. Heavily burnt natural at its northeast end suggests the setting for the fire, whereas a rectangular pit at the opposite end is the likely location for an oven chamber and chimney. Another oven was quite different in character, and the lack of surviving building material might indicate that its main body was made from metal that was salvaged when the camp was cleared. Lengths of metal pipe 70 mm in diameter, found with a crude trench-built structure with associated burning, might indicate water heating in close proximity to the ovens. There was possibly a network of pipes in this area, either very shallowly buried, or that ran on the surface; most of these would have been removed during site clearance.

The central track way running through Zones 1 and 2 (Fig. 6.3) was defined by its flanking U-shaped ditches that were 0.4 m deep and 4 m apart. Although no definitive dating evidence has been identified, it is likely that these were contemporary with the camp. Numerous bent and buckled “Marston Mats” were identified

within the fills of features and it is likely that these had been used as surfaces for main communication routes within the camp.

## **Artifacts**

Almost 4,000 finds have been recovered from the excavations at La Glacerie. These include almost 1,700 metal objects, mainly of iron but including those of copper, aluminum, and lead. Over 1,200 pieces of glass, including 587 pieces of window glass and over 400 bottles or sherds from bottles were also recovered. The excavations yielded 444 pieces of plastic, mainly fragments of sheeting. Other materials include ceramics, leather, and fabrics, including pieces of uniform and other garments, as well as those of rubber, paper, and wood. The majority of the assemblage is characterized by material that had no saleable value when the camp closed and had been purposely discarded. Nevertheless, some items recovered show the ingenuity of the prisoners in reusing materials and in some instances hoarding potentially useful items for the future. The provenance of artifacts is, as expected, attributed to either the American or German Army and Navy or from the local community where relationships between prisoners and local inhabitants established during occupation were perhaps still continued from the camp.

## ***Clothing and Buttons***

A majority of the clothing items identified were pieces of fabric, buttons, and footwear. A hoard of leather pieces and rubber heels and soles salvaged from disassembled elements from American Army boots was located, where boots, presumably worn out, seem to have been carefully taken apart to recover the leather. These were perhaps collected by a cobbler or a prisoner designated this function in the camp. Little evidence of German military boots was found, suggesting prisoners were issued with American boots. Fragments of wool, which could have come from a civilian jacket or a Kriegsmarine uniform, were found as well as fragments of herringbone twill from a pullover possibly of American origin. A majority of the clothing fragments found were khaki waterproofs used for either raincoats or ponchos. The abundance of this material possibly relates to its reuse in dwellings either as flooring or to patch up the roofs. One hundred and forty five buttons were found, most of which were either of the United States or German origin; these included six US General Service and eight Kriegsmarine buttons. The distribution of clothing over the excavation does not show any marked pattern beyond the fact that items of clothing fabric are found in a limited number of locations. By contrast buttons are widely, if thinly, spread across many structures.

### ***Bottles and Ceramics***

A significant collection of bottles, jars, ampoules, and other glass vessels have been confidently identified as specifically for medical or pharmaceutical uses, although a small distinct group had contained grooming products. In addition, a wide range of drinking bottles of American, English, and French origin were found. These include champagne, gin, whisky, mineral, and soda water bottles that did not necessarily reach the site with their contents intact, although it is impossible to be certain on this matter. More certainly interpreted are the 28 inkbottles of the United States origin that were found widely distributed (no structure has produced more than three bottles) and demonstrate that prisoners were writing correspondence on camp. In marked contrast to the glass assemblage, only 168 sherds of ceramic and two complete vessels were found. The two complete vessels included a cup printed with the badge of the US Army Medical Department and a small handleless cup of beaker with white glaze and no decoration. In contrast, and of no practical use, the base of a pair of blue and white Delft figurines was found in one of the structures. The quantity of ceramic is small and has no significant distribution; only four structures produced more than 10 sherds. It can be concluded that very little china and earthenware was available to the prisoners and that personal mess kits and army issue cooking equipment were widely in use.

### ***Metal and Plastic Items***

A variety of metal objects, mainly of sheet metal, have been recovered in varying states of repair. The interpretation is skewed by the larger objects that are better preserved and the noncorroding items. The assemblage comprises buckets, jerry cans, tools (picks, shovels, pliers) circular trays, a sink with central drainage hole, numerous tin cans, a number of small aluminum dishes, and the United States and German Army issue cutlery. A significant proportion of objects have been salvaged and reused. A most interesting example is an oil drum, which has been converted into a wood-fired stove for heating a hut; rectangular openings for the stokehole and ashtray have been cut in the front of the drum and at the back a circular hole was pierced for the flue. Other examples include two small hand-made metal boxes, reused aluminum army field dressing tins and water bottles (containing a white substance either soap or wax), and a jug or mug made from a tall tin found inside a large can and presumably used to extract water. Materials collected and saved by the prisoners were found, including quantities of wire and cable, off-cuts of metal sheet, piles of used nails, and a large pile of tin cans. With the exception of plastic sheeting that was widespread, and used in the dwellings perhaps as wall linings or floor coverings, and in the case of clear plastic possibly to cover window openings, only two other plastic or Bakelite items were found.

## ***Personal Hygiene and Medical Items***

Items relating to personal hygiene and grooming are widely distributed across the excavated compounds and comprise 23 toothbrushes and 14 combs, and smaller numbers of jars or bottles containing hair care products, a part of a safety razor, a tube of shaving foam, and Colgate toothpaste. The ownership and use of these items would have been highly valued and, as an example, excavation revealed that a bottle of hair care tonic had been deliberately concealed beneath the wooden floor in one structure. Medical items are generally more numerous and show a distinct concentration in one structure in Compound 1 (Fig. 6.3). Here, a number of fragments of single dose ampoules or phials (possibly 22 phials) made from narrow glass and containing unidentified white powder were found, together with brown and amber glass medicine bottles. Elsewhere, a head of a small hospital bed, parts of four stretchers and numerous medicine bottles of the United States, French, and English origin were found across the camp. Of specific note is a tube that was part of a prophylactic kit issued by the US Army for treatment of venereal disease.

## ***Identification Tags***

Five rectangular prisoner identification tags were found made from an aluminum alloy and of American manufacture. Text was punched into the tags on two or three lines and provided the following information: camp name and its identification number/status/name/matriculation number. Two of the prisoners had the same matriculation numbers, which was presumably an error on registration. One other had an additional tag that gave his family address. Three of the tags were found together in the same structure and are numbered in sequence. Since the identification numbers would have been attributed in order of arrival, it seems likely that these prisoners had been registered at the same time and placed together in the same structure or tent. Communication with *Deutsche Dienststelle Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle für Kriegerverluste und Kriegsgefangene* revealed that two of the named prisoners were still alive, though neither chose to communicate their experience when invited.

## **Documentary History**

There is an abundance of historic documentation for PoW camps situated in Normandy, and those relevant to this study are not under represented. But discussion here concentrates principally on the historic documentation that is relevant to the excavation. In this context, it is important to recognize that events happened quickly within the relatively short lifetime of the camps. Some of the documentation captures very specific information that does not necessarily provide a representative

background for camps that were dynamically evolving in response to an ever changing military situation.

Events happened during the history of the camps that would have stimulated change in their organization and function, as well as affecting the mood and moral within. Locally, there are recorded changes in Commandant that produced more relaxed conditions, but conversely documentation suggests that the takeover of the camp by French authorities in the autumn of 1945 created resentment. In the testimony of one prisoner (see below), they believed that they had been sold to the French. In the later life of the camp under French authority, when fewer prisoners were interned, it is not clear whether more space would have been available or whether, as is more likely to be the case, prisoners were regrouped into fewer compounds.

Internationally, the end of the war created a “feel good factor” and arguably boosted the moral of all at the camp; however, the allied discovery of concentration camps is widely acknowledged to have affected the treatment of PoWs, as is attested in the region by Red Cross images. Despite the relatively short period of time that the camp was occupied, it is important to calibrate the timeline of events and not to overgeneralize from any single source information. What is apparent is that the camp occupants changed, and the camp evolved quickly. Archaeological evidence within a multidisciplinary approach should aim to identify and address changes that happened that directly relate to the experiences of those that occupied the camps. However, new approaches and techniques may be needed to identify the subtle traces of evidence of these events in the archaeology record.

Camps for PoWs in the region of La Glacerie are referred to by several names in documentation, and this has confused attempts to cross-reference evidence from excavation, aerial photography, and documentary research. The five identification tags found during excavation have been key in confirming that the discussed archaeological record relates to POWLE 112 (Prisoner of War Labour Camp Enclosure 112). It is now clear that there were two adjacent camps at La Glacerie—a “transit camp” and a “labor camp.”

The “transit camp” was established by the American authorities on August 1, 1944 and was officially referred to as CCPWE (Central Continental Prisoners of War Enclosure) n° 10 Cherbourg-Haute-Gringor. Its initial function was to register new prisoners that were to be relocated to the UK and America. However, with the expulsion of the German forces from Normandy and the allies’ continued success pushing east, it was decided shortly after the summer of 1944 that prisoners would no longer be evacuated abroad, and were best used in mainland Europe, where they could be put to work. The official name for the “transit camp” changed in December 1944 to CCPWE n° 20 Cherbourg-Haute-Gringor, presumably as a new official numbering system was applied to cater for additional camps constructed in the region. On August 11, 1945 the camp was transferred to the French Army and was renamed Dépôt de PGA (prisonniers de guerre allemands, ou prisonniers de guerre de l’axe) n° 301. The PoW camp referred to here was the formal and ordered camp identified south of an east to west aligned road on the 1945 aerial photograph (Fig. 6.1).

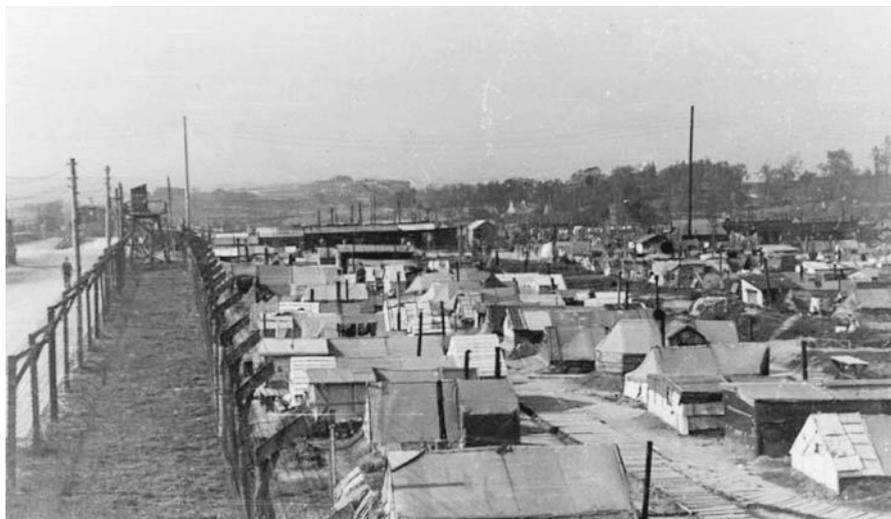
The excavation was carried out on the site of the “labor camp” referred to as Labor Service Center 137 112A and Camp de travail 137, L.S.C. APO 562 (ex

112A) in Red Cross reports. It was the distinct southeast- to northwest-orientated rectangular area made up of 16 compounds that was adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the “transit camp” (Figs. 6.1 and 6.2). References made to this camp indicate that it was managed and administered separately and, at least initially, performed a different function to the adjacent camp. This information corresponds well with evidence from the 1945 aerial photograph that suggests that the camp was managed from the southwestern area (Fig. 6.1).

### *The Transit Camp*

*Le Comité International de la Croix Rouge* (CICR) visited this camp on May 5, 1945, February 19, 1946, and September 9, 1946 (Amsler 1945a, b, c; Courvoisier 1946a, b). The information that follows has been extracted from Red Cross visitor reports. During the May 5 visit, it was recorded that 17,567 prisoners were interned, 16,236 of whom were in transit. At this time, the maximum capacity of the camp was 25,000 prisoners. The camp comprised 18 compounds, though this number had reduced to 14 by February 19, 1946. Each compound contained on average 30 standard issue American tents that were shared by 35–40 prisoners. During the May 1945 visit, the camp was undergoing expansion to cater for what was by then a regular flow of prisoners. Materials were being conserved for construction and prisoners were either sleeping on blankets on the floor or thick cardboard at the time of the visit. In total, 3,000 beds had been reserved for the hospital. Tents are reported to be heated in the winter by stoves but only the kitchen, workshops, and hospital had electricity. Kitchens were constructed in each compound and were referred to as in *très bon état* in the February 1946 report. There was a good supply of food and a *boulangerie* 20 km from camp that employed 500 prisoners. All the prisoners had their own uniforms that were replaced by American issue if worn out.

The Camp was under French control during the visits on the February 1946 and the September 1946. At this time only 7,097 prisoners were interned and were accommodated in tents and barracks. Of these, 5,158 prisoners were divided up into units that worked on reconstruction and mine clearing 8 h a day (mine clearing is recorded to have claimed 3–4 deaths every 2 weeks). It is evident that the camp was no longer functioning solely as a transit camp at this time. During the September 1946 visit, 7,200 prisoners are recorded, although prisoners are now being repatriated regularly. Those in the camp were still being used for mine clearing, rebuilding, and agricultural work at this time.



**Fig. 6.6** Red Cross photograph taken at the La Glacerie camp, August 1945

### *The Labor Camp*

Red Cross visits were made on May 7 and September 8, 1945; the camp had a capacity of between 7,500 and 8,000, but only 4,017 and 4,480 prisoners were recorded during the May and September visits, respectively. The camp's perimeter was enclosed by a barbed wire fence and its access points were controlled by watchtowers. It was divided into 15 compounds that each interned 500 prisoners; each compound was further bounded by barbed wire fences. Structures were arranged in rows separated into two by a central walkway; the September visitor notes that walkways were covered with *Landinstrip d'aerodrome* (Marston Mats). Each compound had an area reserved for exercise, and a football was regularly passed around the camp. Toilets and two kitchens were reported in each compound. The excavations identified remains of the kitchens that were described as comprising a tank for boiling water, a wood cooking range with two hotplates and two ovens. However, no evidence of toilets, reported to be at the end of each compound, was found, and it is likely that these were outside the area of excavation. No communal structure is mentioned and prisoners are reported to have eaten outside or in their accommodation.

Possibly, the most significant finding in the Red Cross Reports is a comprehensive description of the structures within each compound, supported by photographs taken in 1944 and August 1945 (Figs. 6.6 and 6.7). This important evidence was only directly linked to our site by the discovery of the camp identification number on five identification tags.

Les habitations pour 4 à 6 personnes ont été construites par les habitants avec du matériel de fortune et du bois mis à leur disposition. Toutes ces maisonnettes sont creusées dans le



**Fig. 6.7** Red Cross photograph taken at the La Glacerie camp, August 1945

sol à une profondeur de 1m50 environ avec une toiture dont la partie basse fait corps avec la terre remblayée. La fantaisie la plus grande a présidé à la construction de ce village. Chacun semble avoir mis une pointe d'orgueil à posséder une <<villa>> plus belle que celle de son voisin et il en résulte une grande diversité très pittoresque (Amsler 1945a, 1).

This account helps to explain the atypical form of the structures excavated. At the creation of the camp in October 1944 the prisoners had to sleep in small tents supplied by the American Army, referred to as “pup tents.” With the severe winter of 1944/1945 and their prolonged detention, prisoners did their utmost to improve their living conditions. In time, and with a sense of pride and possibly competing with one another, prisoners endeavored to create their perfect “villa.” Photographic evidence demonstrates that the individual characters of the prisoners have contributed to the reinvention of their confined space. Unlike the neighboring camp, a sense of place was created that reinforced group identity and in cases made strong references to the prisoner’s homeland.

No photographic evidence was identified that depicted the interior of the dwellings, but this account below highlights the ingenuity of the individuals that created them.

L'intérieur de ces habitations de laisse pas d'être à la mesure de l'extérieur. Il est marqué au coin du bon goût et de l'ingéniosité des occupants. Le sol est recouvert de bois et des châlits simples ont été construits avec les moyens qui s'offraient, tout comme les divers meubles (tables, chairs, <<cosy corners>>, armoires) qui garnissent la pièce. Partout des fourneaux. L'aération par les petits fenêtres est excellent (Amsler 1945a, 1).

It is the archaeological record that provides detail for the organization of interior space. It is particularly interesting that structures rapidly evolved from tent to “villa.” The “causal factors” (Barrett 1994: 88) of their development rapidly shift from

environmental and technical necessity towards a social and possibly symbolic use of space. These interiors may, also, have made reference to the prisoners' homeland where the tradition of semi-sunken buildings, either as dwellings or workshops has persisted in northwestern, central, and eastern Europe well into the twentieth century (Hamerow 2002: 34–35).

### *Evidence from a Prisoner*

In 1957, the German government began to interview former PoWs and the results were published almost a decade later (Maschke 1986). A publication based on these findings has been identified that is a testimony of a PoW in Labor Service Center 137 112 (Schröder 1997). Extracts have been chosen here to cross-reference against findings made from the other areas of research. This is clearly a significant source of evidence and other accounts may also exist.

The general layout of the camp was described in brief, confirming that it was split into compounds and that each had between 25 and 30 tents and held between 150 and 180 prisoners. Compounds were enclosed by 2 m high barbed wire fences with barbed wire rolls on top. As is known from the system of administration in other PoW camps (Waters 2004: 22), one PoW per compound was in charge and reported to a US guard. When prisoners were sent to the camp, six randomly picked men were selected to live together. They were given a tent canvas and poles that they had to erect themselves; there was no ground sheet. They were also given a US military coat with PW written on the back. This was used as a blanket at night. The account recalls that the tents were not waterproof and that there was a sleeping rotation system in practice, as those that slept by the sides of the tent often became wet at night when the tent touched them. Within a short time prisoners made floors from flattened corned beef tins covered in cardboard. Tins were initially one of the only building materials available to them. Using tin cans as shovels under the cover of darkness, prisoners began to dig inside their tents. Excavated soil was used to create walkways. Only sometime later were prisoners allowed to build larger structures, but in the account it is mentioned that only cardboard was allowed as a building material.

Most of the prisoners worked in the harbor. The day started at 5 o'clock, breakfast was at 5 30 and at 6 o'clock between 4,000 and 5,000 PoWs were driven down to the harbor. It is mentioned that during the unloading of ships, the US troop rations were stolen. Stolen tools were used to construct their dwellings, stolen cigarettes were exchanged for chickens and prostitutes, smuggled into camp wearing the US army issue PW overcoats, were also paid with stolen goods. There was a special compound for those caught trying to flee the camp, where the account recalls that prisoners were nearly starved to death and were only given thin clothes even during winter months.

It is clear from this testimony that the prisoner was one of the first arrivals at the camp and possibly left before the camp closed. It is particularly interesting to have an account of how structures rapidly evolved from tent to a more solid construction,

although this is not as positive and vivid as the descriptions in the Red Cross visitor report. These two archives cross-referenced against the archaeological record represent different subjective narratives that can be used to recount life and experience inside and outside the camp at different times of its development.

## Oral History

An oral history project ran parallel with the fieldwork program. Of 20 volunteers identified to share their memories, only 5 were found to have a true knowledge of either camp. The interviewees were young when the camp was built, the oldest was 16 years old, and consequently have retained childhood memories that are often vague and lack detail. None had visited the labor camp or passed the main entrance to the transit camp. The narratives produced, therefore, focus on personal relationships that were formed with their families and represent an “outsiders” view into the camps.

According to several accounts, the local inhabitants had a good rapport with the German prisoners and the American guards. Some of the interviewees had worked alongside prisoners in either local factories or farms and recount positive experiences. One recalls how he had met a prisoner in the local factory where four prisoners worked. He recounts how he would have liked to have seen him again after his presumed return to Germany suggesting a good relationship had developed. Another remembered a 17-year-old prisoner who was escorted back and forth to work from the camp to his farm by his brother, as part of an agricultural *displacement* scheme that operated at the camp. His family eventually invited the prisoner to stay at the farm, as did many others, according to records. One interviewee’s family knew one of the Commandants of the camp, a French Canadian, whom they meet when he was looking for a farm to take kitchen waste from the camp. They developed a strong relationship with him and he often visited them in the evenings. The Commandant’s family was successfully contacted during the 60th anniversary of the D-day landings.

As would be expected, very little detail regarding the plan and layout of the camps was found in this source of information. There was mention of barbed wire fences, tents, barracks, watchtowers, workshops, kitchens, toilets, and hospitals, but not sufficient detail to securely place these elements, in either of the camps, within a meaningful and reliable context. Accounts were often non-corroboratory and more reliable information is found in the Red Cross reports, personal testimony, and archaeological record. Of interest, however, is an account of fields being transformed into a PoW camp equipped with barrack blocks and occupied by prisoners in a matter of 15 days. A reference was also made to a general sale that occurred once the camp had been dismantled. This perhaps explains the general lack of diagnostic material (such as fencing, barbed wire, etc.) identified during excavation. Another account mentions that hardcore was transported from recently surfaced roads that led to a V1 and V2 German launch site to surface tracks within the camp during periods of wet weather. It was also stated that the Americans did not mix

with the prisoners and had their own adjacent camp. This is presumably a reference to the distinct areas located on the 1945 aerial photograph to the southwest of the labor camp and/or northeast of the transit camp.

These living memories remind us that the influx of both prisoners and Americans after the creation of the PoW camp at La Glacière had a significant impact on the personal histories of members of the local community. There was an active dialogue between prisoners, Americans, and locals that was also implied by the diverse artifactual assemblage recovered during excavation. Together with the testimony of a prisoner (see above), the oral history accounts undoubtedly remind us of the importance of the wider significance of PoW camps, providing an outsider's perspective as well as the inside view. Economically, these camps would have had significance in the local landscape and made lasting contributions, at some considerable sacrifice, to the rebuilding of postwar France.

## Conclusion

Considering the accidental discovery of the PoW camps at La Glacière, the subsequent pluridisciplinary approach to this project has been surprisingly informative in identifying a series of quite distinct narratives and perspectives to a unique period in the history of Normandy. It is revealing, however, that within living memory a well-documented site with a substantial archaeological footprint that in history had a significant impact on its local community can be lost in the memories of a generation. While our own points of reference to this difficult period in history change and the historic record is interrogated to provide new interpretation, it is important to remember the significance of the archaeological record. During this study, we have found that military documentation as a single source is imprecise, and arguably misleading when researching a specific site, and that oral history, soon no longer available for this period, often provides subjective and vague information. It has been the archaeological evidence for this site that has provided us with an objective record that in turn binds together our other sources of evidence.

It is significant that La Glacière is the first PoW camp to be excavated in Normandy of many documented (Schneider in prep.; see also Chap. 7). The PoW camps in this region were created at a defining period of international history and as a group is distinct from other PoW camps located around the world. It is arguable, therefore, that they should be recognized together as heritage of regional significance and as important components of France's war and postwar history. The excavation and research at La Glacière will raise awareness of these sites' importance in this region. It is hoped that *archéologie préventive* will continue to recognize the need to undertake PoW camp research.

In terms of the archaeological methods employed, it has been interesting to note that the machine stripping of such a large area, as is commonly adopted in modern *archéologie préventive*, has been particularly valuable in assessing spatial organization, particularly if we consider that aerial photographs may not always be available

for other sites. However, it should be noted that archaeological practice often provides evidence for occupation that has occurred over large time periods, particularly in prehistory. It is, therefore, necessary to rescale methodologies for PoW camp archaeology where events significant to our research happened quickly within the relatively short lifetime of the camps. Consequently, more detailed excavation of the structures could have resulted in more useful information regarding their evolution from tent to structure, as well as providing valuable information regarding individual's use of space and personal experience at the camp. From the outside and as viewed from the aerial photograph, the military design intent of the transit, and arguably the labor camp, is clear and as one would expect at a PoW camp. However, at the labor camp more detailed analysis demonstrates human interaction with the planned design, where individually shaped structures outwardly express a distinct character that connects us to their architects and occupiers. It is noteworthy that there is such a contrast in neighboring camps, which is presumably a result of transient occupation in one and more permanent occupation in the other. It would be interesting to explore this evidence for more relaxed governance, with other similar sites in the region and elsewhere. The dense archaeological footprint identified was unexpected particularly when considering the evidence from the 1947 aerial photograph (Fig. 6.2). It will be interesting to see how excavations of contemporary archaeological sites that are associated with good documentary sources could be used to appraise archaeological interpretation for prehistoric sites and others that do not have a documentary source. The sunken features at La Glacerie are reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings, *grübenhauser* (Hamerow 2011). The known short period of occupation here could raise questions regarding interpretations of temporary and permanent settlement elsewhere in earlier periods.

Making sense of the abundant documentary sources in the contemporary period creates new challenges, particularly for archaeologists unused to such a wealth of material (Shanks et al. 2004). There are clearly more historic resources, including additional prisoner testimonies, which could be collected and researched relating to the camps at La Glacerie. Well-defined research objectives in PoW camp studies will be required to ensure that the collation of this wealth of information contributes significantly to research. Full analysis of the archaeological record will provide its own objective narrative and is arguably best used in PoW camp studies to cross-reference and contextualize the historic archive.

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## Chapter 7

# American, British, and French PoW Camps in Normandy, France (1944–1948). Which Role for Archaeology in the Memorial Process?

Valentin Schneider

**Abstract** Most research on Normandy in World War II has concentrated on the construction of Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" and then the military offensives associated with the Allied landings. Little consideration has been given to the logistics involved in the management of the vast numbers of German prisoners of war captured during the Allied offensive, despite the scale of this operation. Moreover, local memory of the role of German PoWs in the latter stages of the war and in the immediate post-war recovery period have been erased during a process of creating a national memory in which the Germans were perceived simply as military occupiers. Research on the documentary sources, combined with archaeological survey and excavation, reveals this hidden phase of Normandy's wartime experiences and has revived local positive memories of PoW contributions to reconstruction.

### Introduction

In contemporary history, Normandy evokes images of the Allied landings of June 1944, and sometimes also the harsh German occupation regime between 1940 and 1944. The archaeological evidence dating from the time of the World War II, Normandy would suggest to the common public a study of the landing beaches and the battlefields, and maybe also the German fortifications as remains of the occupation period. This also reflects the state of popular memory of World War II in this area. However, while operation Overlord caused severe destruction to its major towns and to wide parts of its countryside, Normandy—as the first liberated region

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of France—also endured a very high concentration of German PoWs during the presence of Allied troops on its soil. That Normandy had been a region with one of the highest densities of PoWs during and after World War II has been forgotten. With the last PoWs being repatriated in December 1948, Normandy experienced a particularly intense German military presence uninterruptedly over more than 8 years, from 1940 to 1948.

Beyond the collection of artifacts and military items, a systematic archaeological excavation of PoW camps in Normandy could help to measure the rapid evolution of relations between the Germans and French with the changing of status of the German soldiers from occupiers to PoWs. The context of such research is outlined here, indicating the role of sites and portable material culture in local French attitudes to and relationships with the German PoWs.

## Historical Context

Normandy endured over 4 years particularly intense German occupation due to its geographical situation along the Channel, facing England, and thus as a crucial part of the “Atlantic Wall,” Hitler’s defensive line established from France to Norway (see also Chap. 9). The civil population suffered from regular requisitions, billeting of troops, and frequent reprisal measures meant to dissuade any form of resistance against the occupier. The wish for a quick liberation from the hated Germans grew stronger as the occupation went on. When, in June 1944, Allied troops finally landed on Norman beaches to liberate the country, the relief among the population was great. However, 3 months of fierce fighting and heavy destruction, causing the death of thousands of civilians, somewhat attenuated the joy of freedom. Moreover, the liberation of France meant that at first the country would become the continental base for the ongoing war against Germany. Immediately after the Allied liberation of Normandy, and then of other parts of France during summer 1944, the northern half of France became the rear area of the American and British armies. Within this rear zone, Normandy held the most important role as it was the first liberated region of Northwestern Europe and moreover contained several high capacity ports: Cherbourg, Caen, Le Havre, and Dieppe. The Allied plan was to use these ports to supply the troops fighting on the front with materials and men coming from overseas.

When the military situation turned definitely in favor of the Allies during the second fortnight of August 1944, the military priorities changed. In order to give no rest to the German army on retreat, and to prevent them from regrouping their troops behind a stable defensive line, it became essential to pursue the enemy towards the east as quickly as possible. The ultimate goal was to win the war in Europe before the end of the year. Thus, the quick reconstruction of the infrastructure and the transportation network in the liberated areas became a vital priority, as the sudden retreat of the German army had extended Allied lines of communication. Without the immediate reorganization of logistics, the Allied armies might well find themselves quickly short of supplies.

As the operational theater was moving eastwards toward the German Reich, the Allies decided to keep the numerous German PoWs on the continent in order to employ them as manpower on logistical and maintenance tasks, and to no longer evacuate them overseas as they had done up until this point. They were now able to take this option as the German army would no longer have the opportunity to organize an effective counterattack onto the Allied beachhead and liberate the German PoWs.

Over just a few months, eight central PoW camps were built by the American and British armies in Normandy, with capacities between 20,000 and 50,000 men in each. Several hundreds of labor companies were also set up, each employing between 150 and 300 PoWs and often specialized in particular tasks. The military engineers employed construction companies, storage, and forestry companies, while equipment services worked with transportation, maintenance, and warehouse companies. Supply services employed companies for laundry, bakery, equipment recovery, and refueling. Finally, there were medical companies and those formed to service the port facilities.

At the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, Normandy contained 250,000 German PoWs out of a total population of 2.3 million inhabitants, which was one person in nine. The density rate was even higher than 11 % close to the ports of Cherbourg, Caen, and Le Havre, where most camps and labor companies were installed. Most PoWs working within these companies did not work inside their camps, but on the outside, in French towns and cities, always in cooperation with Allied soldiers, but sometimes also with French civilians.

The impact on everyday life in Normandy was enormous. The building of PoW camps with capacities of up to 50,000 men called for the requisition of large areas of land from local farmers, who were already exhausted by the German occupation and the destruction caused by the battle of Normandy. Together with other areas used by the Allied armies, for example for storage and supply purposes, and those fields unusable because of land mines, the agriculture in Normandy was deprived of another huge part of its arable land due to the presence of German PoWs. Quickly, the French felt occupied again, now by the Allies.

The impression that Normandy was starting to endure a second occupation after the German occupation had finished was sometimes reinforced by food. The Allies needed to feed their German PoWs correctly in order to meet the terms of the 1929 Geneva Convention and to avoid reprisals on their own prisoners held by the German army. Whereas the French civilian population still lived under a rationed food regime, the Allied behavior towards the Germans was soon seen as unfair. The French thought that the Allies helped the Germans, their former occupiers, far too much, giving them fruit, chocolate, and cigarettes, whereas they, the locals, had difficulties in finding anything to eat.

Seeing the Allies feed and employ German PoWs for their military tasks led to a growing French public opinion that they, too, could employ the Germans on work of civilian interest. The French government responded to these public demands by addressing to the American and British governments a formal request on the transfer of 1.75 million German PoWs to the custody of the French armed forces. After

long negotiations, mainly concerning France's ability to correctly feed and clothe such a huge number of prisoners, general Charles de Gaulle, chairman of the provisional government of the French republic, finally received a total of 765,000 PoWs from the Allies over the period between February 1945 and May 1946.

The organization of the camps (*dépôts*) under the French authorities was very similar to that found in those established by the Allies, especially since some of them, such as Cherbourg, Le Mans, Rennes, or Fleury-sur-Orne had been inherited from the Americans and the British on their departure. These large enclosures, divided into several compounds equipped with tents, remained unchanged at first and were then gradually equipped with wooden shacks or Nissen huts of corrugated iron. The camps directly created by the French army were whenever possible housed in barracks or abandoned industrial sites where prisoners could live in tents pitched inside the buildings, or in camps that had been built in the late 1930s for the internment of civilians or refugees from the Spanish civil war, like Rivesaltes in the département of Pyrénées-Orientales. These camps could supply working parties, some as large as several hundred men, that could be employed on huge reconstruction sites, in industry or in the mines. The camps also served as recruitment centers for many small French entrepreneurs and farmers in need of factory workers and farm hands. The impact of the Germans' presence finally began to be felt as a positive one by the French people.

## Leaks in Memory

There were almost as many German PoWs in Normandy from 1944 to 1948 as German soldiers during the occupation period between 1940 and 1944, and this period of presence was equally long. However, despite the important impact of the German PoWs on the life in Normandy on many different levels, their presence and role seems to have sunk into oblivion. The weak local and national memory of PoWs might be due to the strong memories of the occupation period and of the ensuing liberation by the Allies. Whereas the occupation period and the liberation of France are well, and continuously, remembered through publications, TV documentaries, and movies, as well as during memorial ceremonies, the German PoWs are merely remembered by a few contemporary witnesses and a limited academic literature. That German PoWs worked for the Allies to win the war against Germany and then helped France to reconstruct the country was at first ignored, and then forgotten.

Over the whole period known as the era of total wars, PoW labor holds a preeminent role. The sum of all PoWs held during and after the two world wars exceeds 25 million men. While all available political, economic, and human resources were mobilized during these wars, the millions of PoWs held behind the fronts constituted an almost unlimited manpower pool that could make the difference to the war effort on the home front. However, massive enemy PoW employment behind the front has often been disregarded and indeed one of the most important aspects has

been ignored—that of contact, sometimes even fraternization, between the PoWs and the local people. The captivity of millions of individuals over several years in several foreign countries, not only during but also after World War II, led to every single prisoner, and every single civilian in contact with these prisoners, being given the unique opportunity to find out about the enemy's nature, thus going beyond the information learned on both sides until then only through propaganda materials.

International forced encounters are therefore one of the marking points of World War II: PoWs of French, Russian, Polish, and several other citizenships worked and lived in Germany during the war, whereas German prisoners were held and employed in the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union until the after-war period. German PoWs were present in Normandy by the hundreds of thousands at the end of World War II. While France had been liberated from the German occupation in 1944–1945, German soldiers remained in the country as PoWs until 1948. Analyzing the impact of German PoWs on rapprochement between the French and the Germans after the World War II requests to work within two distinct areas of research: PoWs in the first half of the twentieth century on one hand, and the process of Franco-German reconciliation after World War II on the other.

Recent publications have increased our understanding of the reconciliation process between the two “ennemis héréditaires” after World War II. The collective work directed by Delacroix and Hudemann (2005) insists on the role of politics and economy in the 1950s as the principal motor for the rapprochement. As far as the civil societies in both countries were concerned, this analysis reveals the pivotal role of intellectuals and labor unions in the reconciliation process as they both had similar ideas for a changing world on both sides of the Rhine. Exchange programs were developed between both peoples in the 1950s, for example in schools, labor unions, cultural associations, and other community groups such as the Catholic or Protestant churches. While each involved at most a few hundred individuals, they created the foundations for further political rapprochement. The presence of nearly one million of PoWs in France between 1944 and the end of the decade is mentioned in none of the numerous articles.

One strand of historical research has largely focused on memories and perceptions of Franco-German postwar history. Even though Theofilakis (2007) considers the German PoWs in France after World War II, the role of this group within the process of reconciliation is not considered. While the testimonies and memories of German PoWs of their captivity are seen as carrying a certain political weight capable of influencing the rapprochement between the two countries, the consequences of the former enemy amid the French civilian population in massive numbers on the perceptions that individuals might have held one for another remain disregarded.

Recent publications have repeatedly focused on the role of PoWs during the twentieth century as a source of manpower, and with war captivity as an experience which is common to individuals of all belligerent nations, especially when in German hands (Hinz 2006; Oltmer 2006). However, by connecting the experiences of the Great War to those of World War II, and thereby assuming that European preconceptions of prisoner detention and employment remained static throughout this period, the question of fraternization between enemy nations and, more particularly, that

several meetings between former German and French PoWs took place during the interwar period, is ignored.

Research on war captivity during World War II has specialized in policies of prisoner employment. Forced labor of prisoners in National-Socialist Germany has been broadly discussed (Bories-Sawala 1995), as have the problems of PoWs in Allied hands and their employment within the war effort on the home front (Reiss 2001; Held 2008). The question of German PoWs in Soviet hands and their utilization as manpower until the mid-1950s is one of the most intensively studied postwar Western German research topics, stigmatizing the ill treatment of the prisoners “in Communists’ hands” (Ratza 1973; Böhme 1971). The question of German PoW treatment in French hands and in the custody of the Allies in France were also reviewed in the 1970s (Böhme 1971, 1972; Wolff 1974), but fail to connect the experiences of war captivity with the broader historical context. While considering the memory of German war captivity in France as a possible hurdle to the fledgling reconciliation process, these studies at least recognize that the rapprochement process had already begun during this period when others concentrated on *policies and repatriation agreements as experienced by PoWs* (Moore and Hatley-Broad 2005). Little connection has been made between the continuous presence of foreign PoWs and the evolution of the relationship between peoples beyond the historiographical turning point of the 1944/1945 “liberation” anywhere in Europe with the exception of one Finnish study where the impact of German PoWs on the local public opinion is recognized (Westerlund 2008). A regional study of the postwar situation in France would reveal the intimate connection between prisoners’ presence and reconciliation, but only now is such work being conducted, and several political and ideological reasons can explain this previous reticence.

The first factor in the PoW aspect of the war is that almost all publications on the history of Allied operations in France emphasize the military actions themselves. For example, analysis of the war in Western Europe has concentrated on the battle of Normandy and, after the breakout from the Norman bridgehead in late August 1944, on the movement of forces eastwards towards Germany, disregarding what was happening in the rear. German PoWs in Allied hands and their role as military labor within operational theaters during World War II has, apart from the work of Lewis and Mewha (1955), remained largely ignored. The relative neglect of this part of Allied military history is partly because the picture of tens of thousands of German PoWs working for the American and the British armies to ensure supplies for the fighting units at the moving front did not really fit within the national narratives relating to the last months of World War II. Only recently has Lamache (2010a, b) described the American presence in Normandy after the liberation and analyzed the impact of this new “occupation” on public opinion.

The second factor is the postwar situation in France in which the establishment of national unity by De Gaulle was problematic. This required a common enemy which, of course, could only be the Germans. Even though nearly 800,000 German PoWs stayed in France between 1945 and 1948, most of them being employed by farmers, they appear almost nowhere in publications. German PoWs are absent from standard scholarly works (Duby 1997; Martel 1994; Sirinelli 2004), although

more than 250,000 worked in French agriculture in the aftermath of German occupation. In fact, French public opinion as created by the national postwar narrative simply associated the Germans in France with the hostile occupants of 1940–1944, making their continued peaceful presence in the country until 1948 simply inconceivable. As the German people had been clearly identified as the main enemy of France, Frenchmen could hardly remember German PoWs working in numbers within the French postwar economy in order to reconstruct the country. Quickly after their departure in 1948, the presence of German PoWs began to be forgotten by public opinion, whereas the history of German occupation was taking a preeminent place in French twentieth-century history. That PoW camps had no contact with the outside world, and that the prisoners lived in isolation, is often stated to explain how their presence was forgotten. Similar arguments have been advanced by those populations living close to Nazi concentration camps, but in the case of German PoW camps in Normandy at least, this argument cannot withstand systematic archaeological analysis, augmented by a new approach to certain categories of documents previously given scant attention.

A great variety of documentary sources are available to assist analysis of the history of Normandy's German PoW camps, including official government and military documents, reports of nongovernmental institutions, newspaper articles, and private written or oral testimonies. Governmental sources are deposited within the various military and ministerial archives of the countries involved during this period, that is to say Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Military archives issued by different levels of the hierarchy reveal varied information relating to many different aspects of German PoW captivity. Allied and German high command or ministerial documents inform on organizational questions and policies, as well as on general statistics without precise geographical references, whereas military documents issued on a company level report on losses at a precise place on the German side, and to prisoners made or employed on the Allied side; here also the data most often comes with a precise geographical location.

Government documents reveal not only the numbers of prisoners held but also the location of the camps and labor units. These numbers can then be compared with general statistics on the French civil population in order to show the proportion of German prisoners living among the civilian population. Low-level government documents, from military or civil offices, also contain important information on "public opinion." Various official bodies sounded out public comments and thoughts, for example in bars or other public locations; these "opinion reports" reflected what people thought about German PoWs living close to them, or working with them. These documents reveal the evolution of public opinion towards a perception of the Germans as individuals and not as a state or an army. As these reports worked their way up through the hierarchy to higher administrative or military levels, these low-level reports appear to have wielded significant influence on decision makers who wished their political decision to be supported by the population. The most important archives for these sources are the National Archives and Records Administration College Park, Maryland, The National Archives Kew, Service Historique de la Défense Vincennes, Centre des Archives Contemporaines Fontainebleau, and

Deutsche Dienststelle Berlin. The French reports issued by the local administration are particularly relevant for the analysis of the evolving relationships between Germans and French, housed in the French Archives Départementales in Saint-Lô, Caen, Alençon, Evreux, and Rouen.

Nongovernmental sources include the archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (Archives du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge Geneva), the World Council of Churches (Geneva), and the Young Men's Christian Association (Archives Départementales du Val de Marne Créteil). All these indicate the living and working conditions of the PoWs and can thus detail the evolution of these throughout the period and beyond the transfers from one custody power to another. Moreover, they contain information on camp locations and on the numbers of prisoners locally held, thus revealing potential relationships between prisoners and the civilians living close to the camps. Published and unpublished private collections and oral or written testimonies also throw light on individual experiences of French civilians and German prisoners. Several Germans, formerly PoWs in France, have indeed published their memories of captivity as books, giving an in-depth insight into thoughts, feelings, and experiences of PoWs in contact with French civilians just after the occupation period.

Other testimonies are short letters or small memoirs mostly written for friends and family. The most notable collection of individual memories is a series of several thousands of testimonies written by former German PoWs during the late 1950s and the early 1960s for the account of the Maschke-Commission, charged by the German Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsversehrte to compile the series of publications *Zur Geschichte der Deutschen Kriegsgefangenen des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, preserved at the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv in Freiburg-im-Breisgau. These provide many individual examples of relationship building between local French families and the German prisoners working for them. The final major source of information lies in local and regional Normandy journals which have published articles on events that incidentally mention the presence of German PoWs, for example accounts of village fairs or sporting events, thus reflecting either the society's acceptance of this foreign presence, or, on the contrary, its rejection.

## **Archaeological Approaches to Normandy PoW Camps**

Amateur archaeologists and militaria enthusiasts have long known Normandy as a materially rich research area, especially on the landing beaches, around the German fortifications of the "Atlantic Wall," and on the historic battle fields such as the Falaise Pocket. Moreover, they have recognized the potential of former PoW camps, but the potential contribution that systematic archaeological survey of such sites could bring has yet to be considered.

It is widely acknowledged that archaeology applied to contemporary history, especially to mass internment camps such as German concentration camps, is an important source of complementary information on living conditions within these

sites (Kola 2000). Archaeological evidence enables the historian to complement and criticize the written sources at his disposal, which otherwise could only be compared with other written documents and oral testimony. Moreover, the history of Nazi concentration camps is far more richly documented, through numerous written and oral testimonies, than the past of PoW camps for German soldiers, so archaeological survey of the latter could fill important gaps in research data.

Not all aspects of life within the camps are covered by the written sources at our disposal. Government documents, for example, treat mainly administrative questions and cover technical or strictly military problems concerning the organization of food supply, housing, and the surveillance of the prisoners. Nongovernmental documents, such as visit reports from the Red Cross, cover a similar range of subjects. Private testimonies mainly concentrate on individual's experiences and practices within the camp, and the larger context is often widely ignored and remains unclear. For example, a prisoner who specialized in repairing the shoes of other PoWs may have written down no memories at all, and may appear in none of the other written or oral memories of the camp, whereas a prisoner employed as a translator may remember only the contacts with the American administration personnel of the camp and not many of his everyday interactions. Important parts of daily life, such as exchanges among the prisoners themselves, with soldiers of the custody power, or with outside the camp, remain unknown, though some can be revealed through archaeology.

Among the different places where PoWs were held and worked in Normandy, and which could possibly be surveyed through archaeological research, there are the central camps, the smaller labor camps, as well as a large variety of sites where PoWs worked and stayed in small groups for short periods only, such as farms, factories, harbor docks, and Allied logistical facilities. Whereas these small sites are difficult to identify and do not promise a high potential of archaeological finds that can be securely linked to the PoW experience, mainly because of the small number of prisoners working and living there, the central enclosures and labor camps can be examined with a great chance for success in research.

The largest camps held up to 50,000 men, concentrated there for transit and identification purposes. The PoWs were brought to these camps in order to determine their nationality, their possible employment, state of health, and whether they should be submitted to more intensive interrogation. Usually, PoWs stayed only for a couple of months in these transit enclosures, before being processed to other locations—a labor camp, an interrogation facility, or a military hospital for PoWs. By their nature, the PoWs in the transit camps had little contact with the exterior, as their function was to be fulfilled within the facility itself. The prisoners had also little time to personalize their living space as they left the camp within a few months and generally had no access to outside materials.

Living conditions were rough in the central camps because of the high occupation density. They had not been designed for prolonged detention and their organization suffered from improvisation. The housing was in the form of tents, and prisoners slept directly on the ground or sometimes on straw. Inside the camps, entirely surrounded by barbed wire, the tents were pitched in compounds, also

defined by rows of barbed wire. Each compound was placed under the authority of a prisoner designed as the "compound leader," and the compound police and the kitchen personnel were all drawn from the prisoners. This caused ideological conflicts between those detainees who had not renounced their belief in the final victory of National Socialism, and those who were disillusioned by the sight of endless columns of American and British supplies going to the front when they were transferred from their place of capture to the central camps.

The American or British commanding officers of the camps had a prisoner by their side, responsible for the execution of their orders. This *Lagerführer* (camp leader) as called by the other German prisoners was assisted in his task not only by the compound leaders but also other influential camp figures such as the German physicians, the chaplains, and the prisoners' representatives. The last were required under the 1929 Geneva convention and the prisoners selected who should to represent their interests with the camp administration and external humanitarian organizations. These various important figures in the camps represented important fixed points for the prisoners in their monotonous camp and could take advantage of certain privileges granted by the command. For example, the chaplains had relative freedom of movement to bring their moral and spiritual support to often desperate prisoners. To avoid overloading the American military physicians, the health of the prisoners became the responsibility of German doctors who were themselves prisoners. They dealt with minor cases and practiced in ambulances or small military hospitals within the camps where they had access to instruments and basic supplies such as bandages. Some larger hospitals, with up to 1,500 beds, were set up outside the camps to treat the most serious cases. Generally, the prisoners held in the central camps thus had only few contacts to the exterior world.

The labor camps, in contrast, were explicitly established to organize charged contact with the outside world. The prisoners were sent to their workplaces outside the camp and came back only to eat and sleep. The workplaces could be as far as 10 or 20 km from the living quarters. The prisoners were therefore able to enter into contact with civilians, either on their way to and from work, or at the workplace itself. They also had easier access to materials of all kinds which could improve their living conditions, including wood and metal for construction, tools, and even food or hygiene products such as tooth brushes. As the military administration of a labor camp had to fulfill requirements in work hours per man, the guards were more tolerant towards prisoners collecting materials because happy and well-nourished prisoners were also prisoners that worked harder and more efficiently.

Like their comrades held in the central camps, prisoners in labor camps were granted structures and facilities devoted to leisure and spiritual life. In general, the church service was provided by Protestant and Catholic German chaplains who were also prisoners themselves and able to conduct services in a tent or a hut which had been converted into a chapel. The prisoners could usually engage in various activities like reading books from the camp library or attending language courses and general education programs in their spare time. In most camps artistic activities organized around theater or music groups were also possible, and in some cases prisoners could even attend movie screenings.

Several issues can be addressed by archaeological research. For example, what liberties were locally given to the prisoners in order to organize and embellish their tents and their barracks? How did the prisoners organize their communities with regard to a more effective distribution of tasks? Can places of craft activity be identified, showing for example that some PoWs were specialized in repairing shoes or making tools, such as sewing needles? At first sight, a PoW camp containing thousands of individuals of an alien nationality and language could be considered an isolated identity, having no contact with those outside, which would explain the lack of memory of foreign PoWs in a region. The archaeologist can address two additional questions through the excavation of PoW camps: how does a seemingly isolated community organize itself within a foreign and, a priori, hostile environment, and though the community of PoWs was remembered as an isolated one, was this actually the case? The archaeological study of PoW camps in Normandy can therefore contribute to an issue which is crucial for research into European postwar history: What were the actual relations between the German prisoners and the French civil society, immediately after the liberation of France, and at a moment when the negative image of the German enemy is supposed to be at its maximum?

The discovery of materials and artifacts derived from outside the confines of a camp would immediately indicate a certain degree of communication between the interior and the exterior of the camp. This could have been the case for example with some beverage bottles found at the American labor camp excavated at La Glacerie, and which apparently do not come from military supplies (see Chap. 6). It can be supposed that the Germans obtained these drinks through French civilians who had already moved beyond the enemy image drawn by De Gaulle. An exhaustive analysis of the artifacts discovered at La Glacerie should enable us to develop and expand this interpretation.

Through the media coverage stimulated by the archaeological excavation of a PoW camp in Normandy, local memories are also being resurrected and reworked once again. By discovering the material evidence of a relationship between the PoWs and the local population outside the camp, archaeology can provide the information needed to assert the gap between history and memory, and trigger memories suppressed by the dominant national narrative. Finally, the acknowledgment of the archaeological relevance of twentieth-century PoW camps in Normandy, but also elsewhere in Europe and the world, should encourage public authorities to enforce existing laws prohibiting any illegal archaeological excavations or use of metal detectors by private individuals on such sites.

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# Chapter 8

## Stalag Luft III: The Archaeology of an Escaper's Camp

Peter Doyle, Jamie Pringle, and Lawrence E. Babits

**Abstract** Stalag Luft III was a German prisoner of war camp for Allied aviators during World War II. Situated at Zagan, Poland, in what was once eastern Germany, the site is famous for repeated escape attempts, particularly the mass escape of 79 PoWs in March 1944. Though made famous by the 1964 John Sturges film, “The Great Escape,” little attention has focused on the site itself, which has experienced a complex wartime and postwar history. This study represents the first formal attempt at an archaeological assessment of the site, focusing on the events relating to the mass breakout attempt in March 1944.

### Introduction

In 2004, the opportunity arose to excavate the site of “the Great Escape,” the 1944 mass breakout from the former Stalag Luft III (SL III) airforce PoW camp, located at Zagan in western Poland (formerly Sagan, in Silesia, Germany). The aim of the project was to examine—for the first time archaeologically—the site of a camp famous for a number of escape attempts. These escapes have been described in contemporary and modern accounts (Nelson [n.d.](#); Crawley [1956](#); Durand [1988](#);

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Gill 2002; James 1983; Vance 2000; Williams 1945, 1949), and particularly that of Paul Brickhill's *The Great Escape* (1950), the basis for the 1965 Hollywood film of the same name. Our investigation intended to examine the camp, and in particular, to trace the remains of an undiscovered tunnel, "Dick" which formed part of the planning for the mass escape that commenced on April 4, 1943.

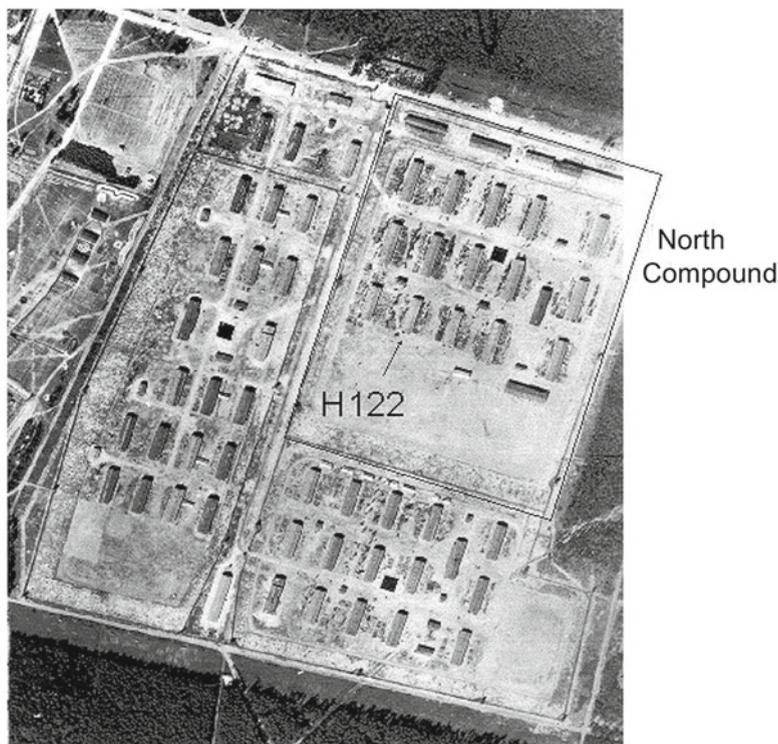
Fieldwork consisted of a site survey, geophysical and geological investigations, surface artifact collection, inspection of hut washroom sumps, excavation to reach "Dick," and an inspection of the vertical entrance shaft. Despite widespread damage due to postwar looting and recent relic hunting, the site retains significant integrity. Considerable variation was found throughout the site, which has not been surveyed before the current research, and distinct hut types that have not been documented previously were encountered. The background to the project and its results have been discussed in other accounts (Doyle 2008, 2011; Doyle et al. 2007, 2010), while a detailed study of the geophysical investigations was published by Pringle et al. (2007). The purpose of this report is to further consider the archaeology and material culture of the site and the objects found.

## The Site

Stalag Luft III was one of the most important camps for Allied air force prisoners of war (PoW, or *Kriegsgefangener*). The camp was one of six main camps run by the German Luftwaffe during World War II. Today the site of the former Stalag Luft III and the nearby Stalag VIII C, a camp for nonofficer army personnel lies within managed forests in the vicinity of the Polish town of Zagan, which was formerly called Sagan, in German Silesia.

The site has undergone multiple occupations for its use as a PoW camp location dates back to at least World War I (and possibly the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871) when prisoners from the eastern Front were incarcerated here. However, no evidence of occupation during these periods was encountered during the study. Despite the existence former camps, Stalag Luft III was a new build to house Allied air force PoW, and was seemingly constructed on fresh ground, with associated forest clearance. It was designed specifically to deter potential prisoners from escaping and was constructed over time as a series of separate compounds (Durand 1988; Flockhart n.d.; Vance 2000). The camp was situated within typical East European dense coniferous forest, close to the main Berlin–Breslau (now Wrocław) rail route, providing access to the camp—as well as a temptation for would-be escapers. As new compounds were required, additional forest clearance took place. Significant phases of camp expansion occurred as increasing numbers of PoWs arrived following the expansion of the Allied strategic bombing campaign of Germany.

The site is a well-drained primarily pine forested area and was built to follow the standard format of a hutted camp, comprising wooden barracks, evenly spaced, surrounded by a substantial double barbed wire fence with armed lookout towers at set points. German administrative buildings (medical facilities, guard houses, and



**Fig. 8.1** Allied aerial photograph of the site of Stalag Luft III, showing the location of the North Compound. The American compound was to the south; the west compound was built later, and was not present at the time of the escape

punishment cells—the “cooler”) were kept apart from the PoW facilities, and in the case of the North compound this Vorlager was separated from the main PoW compound by wire fence. This is the layout pictured in Brickhill’s account of the Great Escape (Brickhill 1950: Fig. 8.5; and indeed, to a certain extent, as reconstructed in John Sturges’ 1965 Hollywood film), and is seen in both German photographs of the camp during its occupation, as well as in Allied aerial reconnaissance images from 1943 to 1944 (Fig. 8.1).

## The PoW Accommodation

Our investigations showed that hut locations on existing 1:10,000 site maps (Soviet and Polish) are inaccurate; Allied 1944 aerial reconnaissance photographs were used in the study to correlate present ground features with the camp structure. No other accurate plan of the camp is known to exist, with most accounts relying on

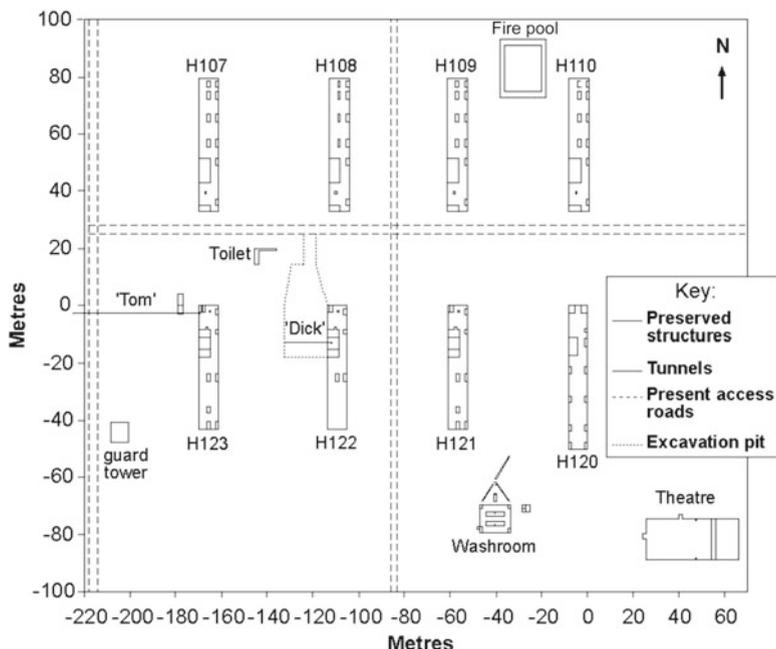


Fig. 8.2 Surveyed plan of the hut remains in Stalag Luft III

contemporary sketches for layout and accommodation type. During our investigations, and due to the dense woodland, it was not possible to undertake conventional surveying; measuring tapes and bearing information were used instead to build up an accurate plan of the site. The most important guide was the successful location of an isolated, brick-lined fire-pool (water filled during the period of occupation), which could be correlated with the photographs. This provided an accurate survey point from which the position of the huts could be surveyed and identified. Huts, aborts (washrooms), the theater, preserved roads, and observation post remains were also surveyed, arguably the first time the site had been surveyed since the site was constructed (Fig. 8.2).

Within the North Compound the huts were arranged in three regular rows of five huts, which were solidly built comprising wooden structures set on brick foundations or piers. The huts were arranged so that their long axes were aligned north-south—Huts 101–106 (104 was the site of “Harry,” the Great Escape tunnel) were the most northerly row and were closest to the separate compound containing the German quarters. Evidence of the huts’ positions was the foundations, piers, and red tile hearths for the stoves. Between this row and Huts 107–112 was the fire-pool, a square brick-lined feature intended to provide water for firefighting. This was in good condition; similar fire-pools were found elsewhere on site, each reliably indicating the position of a separate compound or phase of construction of the camp as a whole. Huts 107–112 were less well preserved, but exhibited similar structures to

the first row. The final row, that of Huts 119–123 was significant as two of the huts, 122 and 123, were the location of the other two tunnels, “Dick” and “Tom,” respectively. The foundations for Hut 123 were the best preserved, and this hut was surveyed in detail. Its layout did not differ from 121 to 123, but Hut 119 was proven to be longer, showing some variation in design. None of these huts had the red tiles indicative of cast-iron stove heating (see later). Hut 123 was partially destroyed after Tom had been discovered in 1943 (Brickhill 1950), but the survey showed that it had been rebuilt. Hut 122 was in poor condition, with no evidence of brick piers or foundations at its southern end.

The brick “pier” structures not only supported the huts, but also brick chimneys and, at their bases, stoves for heat and limited cooking by the PoWs themselves. Some collapsed but otherwise complete chimneys were seen associated with some huts (Fig. 8.3, top left), particularly Hut 120, providing a good impression of the nature of these brick-built features. Stoves may well have been of two types, cast iron standalone (Brickhill 1950: Fig. 8.5), and more substantial ceramic brick stoves. Scattered across the site were the glazed bricks from these stoves, and one or two cast-iron artifacts that may have had an origin as part of a stove. Given that there is evidence of the site being looted for usable materials in the postwar period, it is likely that only damaged and unserviceable materials were left. Certainly, the site exhibited many examples of brown and green glazed tiles, often with curved edges, likely to be the exteriors of ceramic stoves, and unglazed firebricks (ironically marked “Colditz,” the Saxon town famous for both its PoW camp—Oflag IVC and its ceramic industry). From our investigations, it would appear that the cast-iron stoves were in huts 101–106 (and probably 107–112), and that the ceramic stoves were found in 119–123. This is confirmed by the presence of red ceramic tiles that were used as a foundation for the standalone stoves; these tiles were missing from the huts containing the more substantial ceramic brick stoves. The red tiles beneath the stove in Hut 104 were to be the cover for the entrance to tunnel Harry, as is described in Brickhill (1950), and demonstrated to good effect in John Sturges’ film.

The internal organization of each hut was that there was a central corridor, and a washroom at one end, varying according to the type of hut (Dudley Moore, personal communication, 2011). This indicates that at least two construction styles, one for rows 101–106 and 107–112, which had internal washrooms at their southern end and iron stoves set on tile bases; and one for row 119–123, which had internal washrooms at their northern end, with ceramic stoves on concrete bases. This might indicate separate construction phases within the North Compound, although this has so far not been documented. Unexplained is the absence of an intervening row 113–118. Huts 107 and 123 were surveyed in detail to obtain a hut base template as they seemed the best preserved. However, significant hut layout variation that has not been previously documented was discovered—a cause of concern as Brickhill (1950) documented the “Dick” entrance shaft sited beneath the washroom floor sump.

Each washroom had a flat, concrete floor with water-return rim and a square brick-constructed, cement-rendered water-collection sump at its center, with two terracotta pipes draining into the sump, and one draining out to a water collection point outside the hut perimeter. The fourth wall of the sump was blank. The form of



**Fig. 8.3** *Top left:* The remains of the hut piers and chimneys at Hut 120, North Compound. *Top right:* The tunnel entrance for Dick, comprising a concrete slab in brick runners, and metal lifting hooks. These items were discovered in situ in Hut 122. *Bottom:* RAF footwear at Stalag Luft III. *Left,* plimsols; a large size, these have evidently been used by someone with a much smaller shoe size, indicated by the wear pattern. *Right,* RAF black toe-capped shoe

the sump was identified and surveyed in the adjacent Hut 123, which was well preserved. This was later investigated archaeologically (see later). The presumed sump area in Hut 122 was poorly preserved, presumably due to postwar looters removing the drainage system. A possible “crown-hole” was sited in the center of the washroom floor and its eastern half. The sump location was identified and surveyed in Hut 123, then compared to Hut 122, which correlated well with the crown-hole location. However, further investigation of this site was needed before intrusive investigations could be undertaken.

Surrounding each compound was a double-barbed wire fence, with a warning wire set in a meter or so from the base. The wire was examined in situ at the western margin of the camp, where it was exposed at the boundary of the Northern and Western Compounds. The wire was approximately 5 cm from the surface and indicates that it was heavily bedded in, presumably to prevent casual escapes by lifting the wire at its base. The wire itself was substantial, with a twisted square section core, and long barbs. Large observation (or “goon”) towers, equipped with MG42 machine guns and searchlights, were located at strategic points around the camp. According to the Brickhill's plan (1950: Fig. 8.5), there were three towers along the western and eastern margins of the camp and a single tower north of the German Vorlager compound. Presumably, there was a similar arrangement on the southern margin, but with the construction of the Southern (American) Compound in 1944, this tower would have been moved. No existing evidence of these towers was discovered during the survey.

## Escaping

By December 1939, the Germans differentiated between air force prisoners and other elements of the Allied armed forces. The Luftwaffe ran their own PoW camps for captured airmen, and between May 1942 and March 1943 at least 60 tunnels had been started in the various camps (Crawley 1956:126). Eventually, a great many escapers ended up at Sagan, where they were placed in the East Compound—itsself a hotbed of escaping activity (Flockhart n.d.; Williams 1945, 1949).

The first prisoners were moved into a new compound of Stalag Luft III—North Compound—on March 23, 1943 (Crawley 1956:156). By then, over 200 tunnels had been attempted from Air Force PoW camps all over Germany, and this new compound was meant to be secure (Crawley 1956:148). In order to expedite North Compound construction, PoWs were allowed to clear some of the area of tree stumps, but the time was also spent measuring distances, inspecting plans, and preparing escape equipment for the move. A similar expansion occurred during the late fall of 1944 when the South Compound and later West Compound was erected, the first to hold largely American PoWs. Stalag Luft III was largely evacuated in January 1945 with the advance of the Red Army, but some PoWs were too weak or sick to move.

**Table 8.1** The “Great Escape” tunnels (after Flockhart *n.d.* and James 1983: Appendix C)

Tunnel	Depth/length (approx.)	Bed boards for shoring (approx. no)	“Klim” tins for air line (approx. no)	Tons of sand removed (approx.)	Fate
“Tom”	25 ft/220 ft	1,500	500	70	Discovered Sept 8, 1944
“Dick”	25 ft/60 ft, 42 ft unfilled	500	150	30	Undiscovered/storage and sand dispersal tunnel
“Harry”	25 ft/365 ft	2,000	750	130	Operated March 24/25, 1944

Escape attempts began as soon as the first PoWs arrived. Once the North Compound was occupied, all attempts came under the control of the “X” organization—a finely tuned escape group run by the resourceful Roger Bushell (Brickhill 1950:29–33). Efforts were made to coordinate escapes, provide false documents, civilian clothing, and survival gear (Flockhart *n.d.*:13–20). During 1944, while small-scale attempts did occur, the major effort was devoted to simultaneously digging three tunnels—code named “Tom,” “Dick,” and “Harry” (Table 8.1)—for a major breakout.

One tunnel, “Tom,” was dug westwards but was discovered by the Germans and blown up. “Dick,” which was also dug westwards, was terminated when West Compound construction began. Continuing the tunnel would have added much too long a distance. “Harry,” the third tunnel, was used for “The Great Escape” on March 24–25, 1944. Although 200 PoWs were prepared to go out, only 79 actually escaped. Fifty were captured and executed. Another 26 were put back into various camps, including Stalag Luft III and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp (James 1983). Three men made it “home” to Allied territory (Brickhill 1950).

## Archaeological Investigations

Archaeological investigations were undertaken during 1 week in September 2003, the primary aim being the location of the entrance and gallery of tunnel “Dick,” emanating from Hut 122. Dick was chosen as it had never been located by the Germans during the operation of the camp itself, both “Tom” and “Harry” having been destroyed after their discovery (in 1943 and 1944, respectively). The location of “Dick” was identified through the basic site survey already discussed, as well as through a range of nonintrusive geophysical techniques that have been described in detail elsewhere (Pringle et al. 2007). Following the positive results from this survey, a large-scale excavation was carried out to both discover and examine the tunnel itself (Doyle et al. 2007; Pringle et al. 2007). In addition to this excavation, additional ancillary investigations were carried out in the vicinity, in order to get a fuller picture of life in and adjacent to the huts.

## *General Context*

The North Compound site had been subject to a considerable amount of postwar disturbance, and looting has severely impacted the archaeological context of cultural material in the North Compound. There are so many holes that in many cases they form virtually continuous excavations inside the line of hut piers. While this activity disturbs the in situ contexts for finds, many artifacts are removed but then left exposed to rust and decay on the surface. Assessment of this remaining material suggests that only militaria (buttons, badges, identification tags, and military-marked china) are being kept by artifact hunters, and this is corroborated up by interviews with at least two collectors who identified buttons, insignia, and PoW identification tags as the primary target. However, these collectors suggested that a large amount of military uniforms and other material was gathered together and burnt in pits on site, so it is likely that a contemporary PoW context for this material would be unlikely. In most cases, the disturbed material is left behind, some items periodically finding their way into the nearby museum. Typical materials include: firebricks and tiles, bricks from piers and other constructions, fragments of asphalt roofing, and broken sanitary wares. Lignite fuel bricks were also encountered. Military-marked ceramic fragments are also common, though these are likely to have been removed from the German quarters, and may indicate the postwar chaos of the site. Personal items include footwear (contemporary RAF black toe cap shoes and plimsoles were found on site; Fig. 8.3, bottom).

## *Hut 122*

Mid-way along the Hut 122 long axis, an area of heavy, but shallow surface, disturbance by modern “relic hunters” was investigated. Despite the disturbance, it was possible to identify levels and recover materials more or less in situ from within the disturbed area. Common in the disturbed upper levels were firebricks from the Saxon town of Colditz, Luftwaffe-marked china, and miscellaneous domestic items, and these were most probably associated with the postevacuation scavenging of the site. Fragments of gramophone records were also found, items important to the escapers as they were used in the construction of compasses, forming the compass case (Brickhill 1950; Flockhart n.d.).

Among the most intriguing items recovered were the remains of a wire-bound attaché case. This contained a number of items: a tooth brush (marked “US Army”), a skein of thread, a single blue glass marble, and a blue civilian-style coat with cloth covered blue civilian buttons, a draughts (checkers) piece, a tooth brush and case, one half of a shallow military mess tin pan, a broken tureen, and fragments of a German language book. A badly corroded metal-cased artist's watercolor paint set (with solid paints and mixing dishes) and brush was also recovered from this case. It is probable that this was lodged beneath the hut for later retrieval. Potential explanations for this

are an “escape kit”; material intended to be taken when the camp was evacuated by the Germans at the last phase of the war, but left behind; or personal effects associated with the postwar history of the site. The association of objects certainly seems to lean more heavily towards the first two options, though this is difficult to determine given the relatively poor context of the material.

### *Tunnel “Dick”*

Following the site survey, the location of Hut 122 was confirmed. As the tunnel entrance was known to be in the sump within the washroom floor, and as the location of this sump had been confirmed, archaeological investigations then took place over the presumed tunnel entrance shaft that was accessed via one side of the washroom sump of Hut 122. Hand excavation of soil, brick, concrete, and pipe debris was undertaken. A 47.5 by 65.5 by 4 cm thick concrete slab was found within the sump fill with two notches on one face, the concrete edge being slightly abraded above these notches. A corroded iron hook 26 cm long was also found, the hook end perfectly fitting the notches and edge; this was probably used to pull up the slab door to allow shaft access (Fig. 8.3, top right). This slab was designed by Minskewitz, a Polish officer in the RAF, as described by Brickhill (1950:39):

For ‘Dick’, Minskewitz devised one of the most cunning trapdoors ... In the middle of the concrete floor of 122 block’s washroom was an iron grating about 18 in. square, through which overflow water ran into a concrete well about 3 feet deep ... [Minskewitz] chipped away one wall of the concrete well, laying bare the soft earth behind...He cast a new slab to fit where the broken wall had been ...

Between the sump floor and a north–south orientated concrete “sill” was a groove 4 cm wide together with “sill” slits on two narrow red bricks that was confirmed by tunnel veteran General “Tokyo” Jones (one of the original tunnelers working on Dick) while on site to be a sill that tunnel workers slipped over when entering the shaft beside the sump. Gray clay (possibly admixed with issue soap) was also found within the sill that was probably used to seal off the slab to prevent sump leakage into the shaft. This is also described in detail by Brickhill (1950), though the metal lifting hooks have not been mentioned before. The discovery of the entrance trap, hook, and runners demonstrated that the tunnel had not been disturbed before. Trowel excavations below the sump layer found mottled soil that was probably backfilled between wooden vertical shaft shoring and undisturbed sand that was 56 by 64 cm in plan, too narrow for the complete shaft. Due to safety concerns over the 10 m deep, vertical shaft, further excavations here were discontinued.

The excavation of the shaft and backfill revealed several important in situ artifacts. Significant was the discovery of what was interpreted as a mutton fat lamp (Fig. 8.4, top), known to be used in the tunnel (Brickhill 1950; Flockhart n.d.). Constructed from what was most likely a Red Cross parcel cheese tin (confirmed by veterans Squadron Leader James and Lieutenant Colonel Huppert on site), with a twisted wire handle, this would have originally held a pyjama cord wick set in

mutton fat skimmed from the top of the ration soup (Doyle 2008, 2012). The long handle was convenient for being held, but also anchoring the lamp into the soil, or being pressed between the bed board timber shoring (see the tunnel drawing in Brickhill 1950: Fig. 8.3). In this case, the lamp was found in situ with a short length of candle, indicating that it was maintained as a backup even though all the tunnels were eventually to be lit by electricity tapped from the camp mains by the prisoners (Brickhill 1950; Flockhart n.d.). As electricity was switched off during Allied air raids, such lamps provided valuable backup which was used for lighting when the camp electricity was cut during air raids. Discovered close to the mutton-fat lamp were some electrical flex and a porcelain electrical light fitting of German origin, the shade of opal glass being found in fragments. These fragments were part painted black, suggesting that some attempt was made to prevent the light shining too heavily from the tunnel shaft. According to Lieutenant Colonel Charles Huppert, the wire flex and light fittings were routinely “liberated” from the Germans as opportunity availed itself. The association of the two lighting artifacts illustrates the intricacy of the prisoners’ preparations in constructing the tunnel, and also helps confirm the undisturbed nature of the shaft. Perhaps of even greater significance was the discovery of a rough-cut rubber disk from a boot heel, bearing a *Wehrmacht* eagle incised on one side, its head pointing to the right, consistent with its use as a stamp, as its usual direction is to the left (Fig. 8.4, bottom). The creation of these stamps was described by Brickhill (1950:116):

All phoney documents were endorsed by official Nazi stamps, bearing the eagle and swastika ... Tim used to paint the designs on rubber boot heels, and Al Hake, the compass maker, carved them out with bits of razor-blade.

This description is consistent with the style of manufacture of the stamp, and its discovery in “Dick” is also in keeping with the fact that, after the discovery of “Tom,” and the concentration of effort on “Harry,” “Dick” was used for storage of escape materials (Brickhill 1950:120). Its position close to the top of the shaft suggests that this particular stamp was placed in an easily accessible position, and not requiring the forger to descend too far into the tunnel shaft, after having lifted the entrance slab.

No further excavations were made into the shaft itself due to safety considerations. Attention was turned to the tunnel gallery, which was known to be at least 10 m depth, from both literature sources (Brickhill 1950; Crawley 1956; Flockhart n.d.) and from the geophysical work carried out prior to excavation (Pringle et al. 2007). The dense tree growth was removed before mechanical excavation west of Hut 122 above the presumed tunnel location. This was designed to avoid disturbing in situ materials as this area was known to only contain PoW “gardens,” close to the huts, and beyond, simply the hut perimeter. Materials excavated totaled approximately 2,000 m<sup>3</sup> and were subsequently backfilled by machine. Tunnel remains were discovered at 10 m depth below the surface. Parallel wood stains were encountered 60 cm apart and 2.5 cm thick, corresponding to bed board shoring sizes, the remnants of tunnel framing, consistent with contemporary accounts of the tunnel construction (Flockhart n.d.). A number of frames were also uncovered that extended



**Fig. 8.4** *Top:* Mutton fat lamp found in the shaft to Tunnel Dick, Hut 120. *Bottom:* Forger's stamp discovered in the shaft to Tunnel Dick, Hut 120

higher than the wall shoring at 60 cm spaced intervals, interpreted to be wooden square frame remnants against which the bed boards were braced. A few 1.2 m long wood boards were found to be horizontal and running parallel to the tunnel axis.



**Fig. 8.5** Base level of the gallery to Tunnel Dick, showing the conjoined tin airlines beneath the level of the tunnel floor

Brickhill (1950) comments that “Dick” was filled up to the base of the entrance shaft from sand taken from Tim, with most of the shoring removed.

Study of the stratigraphy revealed the gray, humic surface soils commented on by the PoWs, below which yellow alluvial sands display remarkable uniformity to tens of meters depth. The shaft and gallery of tunnel “Dick” were examined during excavation, although the work chamber at the base of the shaft was not entered. Examination of the tunnel showed that it was not backfilled, although most shoring was removed. It has since been refilled naturally. The vertical shaft was filled with rubble but evidence of construction, collapse, shoring, and looting is still present. These finds associated with prisoner activity give valuable insights into PoW efforts to continue the war, even after being captured.

At 30 m west of the entrance shaft, 10 cm diameter tin cans were found joined together beneath the bed boards forming the base of the tunnel. There appeared to be two lines (Fig. 8.5). We have previously reported these tins as typical of “Klim” Canadian Red Cross dried milk cans (Doyle et al., 2007; Pringle et al. 2007) which were favored by prisoners who constructed a large number of useful objects (Doyle 2012) from what was a valuable resource. However, these tins are significantly larger and more squat than the “Klim” tins described by Doyle (2012), and it is more likely that the excavated examples were “Maple Leaf Creamery Butter” tins, again from Canadian Red Cross parcels, which were used widely in construction projects. In any case, these tins were conjoined to form a tunnel ventilation system that ran the length of the tunnel from the diggers working at the sand face to a full-time worker pumping hand-made bellows at the entrance shaft base to keep air circulating

(Brickhill 1950: Fig. 8.3). The tin lines ran beneath the bed board base of the tunnel with new tins being added as the tunnel advanced. In addition to this find, a small piece of cellophane was also recovered in the tunnel floor that Charles Huppert suggested was from a cigarette packet; Crawley (1956) reporting men smoked in “half-way” houses during tunneling. Two poorly preserved uniform rags, one olive drab and the other dark blue, were also found but it is possible that these may represent contamination from higher levels.

Following the excavation, the top surface was screened for artifacts before being used to backfill the large excavation trench. A number of objects were recorded, though the majority were *ex situ*, and appear to record the postwar history of the site. The objects included: a “trench art” copy bracelet; an identity card for the Fockewulf factory; numerous china and porcelain items marked with Luftwaffe eagles, a bugle, and a range of other similar artifacts.

### *Hut 123*

The foundations of Hut 123 are in good condition and presented an excellent opportunity to examine the best preserved washroom floor with its central sump. Although there was no sign of the covering grill (presumably looted in the postwar destruction of the site) its drainage pipes were intact and it retained some contents—artifacts consistent with its use during the war. The objects examined included a quantity of underwear/shirt buttons, a hairbrush, and an “Addis” nail brush. These are consistent with the primary use of the washroom, and presumably date from the occupancy of the site during the war. More surprising were the quantity of broken animal bones, which were suggestive of waste food disposal. Given that the standard issue food of PoW camps of the period was soups, it is possible that these were derived from this, though necessarily this is conjectural. However, this exercise provided a good indication of the nature and use of the washrooms at Stalag Luft III.

### **Postwar History**

After May 1945, looting occurred once the last German prisoners were removed to the east. It appears from the current status of the site that recycling/removal of building materials was extensive. None of the huts, except their piers and washroom floors, survive. Stoves were apparently broken down into constituent elements and removed, although many tiles and some occasional iron fittings are still present within hut parameters. Electrical materials are now totally absent. The wooden fabric of the huts appears to have been removed as well since very few fasteners were noted. It is probable that all doors, shutters, and any other useable and/or saleable materials were taken.

Looting subsequent to the camp was abandonment phase has also left its mark. Shallow, linear depressions running across the site are the traces of wastewater

drainage pipes from the huts to a central collecting point, the abort, from which wastes were collected by the Germans—in trucks the prisoners called “honey wagons.” From the linear traces, it is clear that postwar looters followed the terra cotta drainpipes and removed them, presumably putting them to use elsewhere. The sump area in Hut 122 was damaged in this way and was poorly preserved. As described above, a possible “crown-hole” was located in the washroom’s center and eastern half, suggesting void collapse.

## Conclusions

At Stalag Luft III, the surveyed surface stove tile distributions and Hut pier variances (in plan view) discovered between Huts suggest different hut building styles that have not been previously documented, particularly between rows 101–106, 107–112, and 119–123, which may indicate separate construction periods during the building of the North Compound. The entrance shaft location to tunnel “Dick” was pinpointed within the Hut 122 washroom sump area and excavated, with the PoW-made concrete slab, hook pin that was used to lift the slab into position, prisoner-cut bricks and door “sills” all found in a more or less still intact state. Important escape artifacts were also recovered within the tunnel entrance shaft, presumably a safe storage area. Discovered artifact concentrations were probably either manufacturing areas or again for safe storage, although this is hard to confirm due to subsequent site disturbance.

Following interpretation of geophysical survey results, intrusive investigations were designed to avoid disturbing in situ materials, with the infilled “Dick” tunnel successfully discovered at 10 m depth as previously documented. Wooden bed frame remains and part of the tunnel ventilation system (formed by joined-up metal tins) were found that were still intact. Contemporary PoWs provided expert advice and knowledge on recovered artifacts. Recovered artifacts were given to the nearby Museum of Allied Prisoners of War and Martyrdom in Zagan.

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# Chapter 9

## Reinforced Concrete, Steel and Slaves: Archaeological Studies of Prisoners of World War II in Norway—The Case of Romsdal Peninsula

Marek E. Jasinski

**Abstract** During World War II, Norway experienced the biggest number of German troops and foreign PoWs relative to its own population of any country. The establishing of Festung Norwegen—giant fortifications along the Norwegian coast as part of the Atlantic Wall, as well as other substantial German investments including the Arctic Railway in Northern Norway; the main Norwegian motorway from the South to the high North (Rv 50, today's E-6) and increasing the electrical power and aluminium production needed by the Luftwaffe, all demanded a huge and constant supply of manpower and labour. The results of archaeological surveys of Atlantic Wall fortifications and prisoner camps in the region of Romsdal Peninsula in Central Norway highlight issues of preservation, interpretation and the role of such remains in collective memory.

### Introduction

World War II is a special phenomenon in Norwegian history in three particular ways: as a traumatic historical experience, as a contemporary political issue in the still ongoing process of forging a Norwegian national identity, and as an interdisciplinary research topic where archaeology has increasingly gained a role. Norway is often perceived as a peripheral arena of World War II theatre, without major battle fields and with a relatively low number of military and civilian casualties. The only two internationally known aspects of World War II in Norway are the Battle of Narvik in 1940 where Norwegian and allied forces managed to stop, at least for a while, German progress in Northern Norway, and the name of Vidkun Quisling that

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became a European synonym of national betrayal and collaboration with the German Nazi regime. However, the little-known history of foreign PoWs and slave workers in Norway during 1940–1945 reveals another side of Norway’s importance during the war and the war’s consequences for Norwegian national identity.

During World War II, Norway was accorded a special status within Hitler’s strategy. Norway, invaded in April 1940, could become the “destiny area” of World War II and the place of allied invasion. As a consequence, a relatively large number of Nazi troops, weaponry, naval vessels, and other military resources were stationed there. A large and constant supply of manpower was essential to construct many major engineering projects, including not only the giant fortifications of the *Festung Norwegen*, as the northernmost section of the Atlantic Wall, but also transport infrastructure like the Arctic Railway in Northern Norway and the main Norwegian motorway from the south to the high North (then the Rv 50, now the E-6), as well as production of aluminium required by the Luftwaffe which also required increasing the electricity generation (Soleim 2004; Jasinski and Stenvik 2010; Jasinski et al., forthcoming).

One of the consequences of these developments was that Norway experienced the biggest number of German troops and foreign PoWs in relation to its own population. Up to 400,000 German troops were stationed there and around 140,000 foreign PoWs and slave labourers from at least 16 European nations were transported to Norway during that period. The largest national groups were from republics of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Poland. At least 500 permanent or temporary camps for PoWs, slave labourers, political and criminal prisoners, and Norwegian Jews were established in Norway during the war. These camps were administrated by the Wehrmacht (in cooperation with Organization Todt, led until 1942 by Fritz Todt and later by Albert Speer) and by the SS in the period 1940–1944, and since 1944 exclusively by the SS (Soleim 2004). Approximately 20,000 prisoners and slave workers were either executed, tortured to death, or died for other reasons on Norwegian soil prior to the liberation in May 1945 (Soleim 2004; Jasinski and Stenvik 2010:205–209; Jasinski et al., forthcoming).

Collaborators from the *National Samling* and from the State Norwegian Police often actively cooperated with the occupiers and arrested Norwegian resistance fighters and other civilians (about 44,000 people) and deported Norwegian Jews to extermination camps in occupied Poland. Members of the *National Samling*’s paramilitary organisation *Hird* were in several cases used as guards in camps for Yugoslav PoWs in Norway, and in many cases showed extreme brutality and cruelty in relation to prisoners. Collaboration with the German occupying forces also had other forms. A number of Norwegian state-owned and private companies obtained contracts for construction projects of all sizes, and PoWs and slave labourers were exploited for these.

Archaeological research of modern and contemporary warfare and conflict is a relatively new but vibrant trend within material culture studies. During the last decade, the number of new research projects and publications has grown rapidly (e.g. Kola 2000; Schofield et al. 2002; Kola 2005; Logan and Reeves 2009; Skriebeleit 2009; Carr 2010; Theune 2011). There are several reasons for this, but

the most important is the acknowledgement that material culture is an independent source of research data regardless of chronology (e.g. Buchli and Lucas 2001; Burström 2007; Jasinski 1997). As the warring parties have often attempted to cover traces of their war crimes by destroying crime scenes and burning archives, in many cases only archaeological investigations can reveal these hidden practices.

## Concepts of Cultural Landscape and Collective Memory

Archaeology acknowledges that new generations both erase some of older elements and bring their own contributions to cultural landscapes (Jasinski and Stenvik 2010: 205–209; Jasinski et al. 2011). Elements disappear due to forces of nature, modern agriculture, industrial development, or other human activities, and also due to lack of recognition or acknowledgement of certain heritage categories within national, regional, and local cultural management systems. A related factor can be that particular elements can be considered painful or unwanted and become intentionally or unintentionally neglected or removed from the collective memory both by heritage management systems and society at large (Jasinski et al. *forthcoming*). Forgetting is often an active choice, with practical and symbolic consequences (Wertsch 2002). When places receive historic significance in a narrative tradition, collective memories are sorted, selected, and idealised, being tailored to contemporary purposes such as identity reinforcement or legitimisation of political power and authority (Shore 1996:11; Lowenthal 1997; Jasinski and Stenvik 2010:205–209; Jasinski et al., *forthcoming*).

As Logan and Reeves (2009:1) have stated:

Most societies have their scars of history resulting from involvement in war and civil unrest or adherence to belief system based on intolerance, racial discrimination or ethnic hostilities. A range of places, sites and institutions represent the legacy of these painful periods: massacre and genocide sites, places related to PoWs, civil and political prisons, and places of 'benevolent' internment such as leper colonies and lunatic asylums. These sites bring shame upon us now for the cruelty and ultimate futility of the events that occurred within them and the ideologies they represented. Increasingly, however, they are now being regarded as 'heritage sites', a far cry from the view of heritage that prevailed a generation ago when we were almost entirely concerned with protecting the great and beautiful creations of the past, reflections of the creative genius of humanity rather than the reverse—the destructive and cruel side of history.

There has been a radical and relatively rapid shift in understanding what heritage is and what sites should be considered relevant. This shift was inevitable, at least in Europe, after the experiences of both World Wars, with their tremendous loss of lives. However, since the pain of one group or nation can be the shame of another, the inclusion or exclusion of particular aspects or sequences of the past can often be complex and controversial for both national and international heritage management. In Europe each nation shows an almost instinctive need to create its own modern identity, collective memory, national ethos, myths, and collective understanding of its own heritage and legacy connected to wars and conflicts of the last

century. This process is still continuing despite the integration processes created by the institutions of the European Union.

Traumatic, painful, and shameful issues of the past are often the most complex and disturbing elements within national identities as constructed today. Major changes in national and international politics, including the fall of ideological systems and changes in political alliances, often lead to national opinions of past conflicts being adjusted to new situations. These processes happen gradually but can be observed over decades; alter the priorities of national and international research funding, with some themes gaining positive responses while others are neglected, at least for a time. The painful or shameful aspects of the past, and their related national legacies, are the most difficult to handle; not all skeletons want to stay in the closet while the closet is being rebuilt to suit a new situation. The gaps between the collected (individual) and the constructed collective memories (Young 1993) can in many cases become too large for an easy change of paradigm in the national consciousness.

Current research on foreign PoWs being carried out in Norway illustrates the processes of national adjustment at both research and political levels. Up to the early 2000s, Norwegian historiography was dominated on one hand by studies of Norwegian national resistance to the Nazi regime, and on the other studies of Norwegian collaboration by the *Nasjonal Samling* Party and its leader Vidkun Quisling. The general picture “painted” by this research gave the perception of a glorious resistance by the Norwegian nation against the Nazi occupants and relatively limited collaboration by a narrow circle of Norwegian nationalists who had no real support within the rest of the nation. The issue of approximately 140,000 foreign PoWs and slave workers was seldom considered in the professional literature.

## **Pan-European Slavery 1939–1945**

During the relatively short period between September 1939 and May 1945 (with epilogues lasting in the Soviet Union and East Germany up to 1960s), Europe experienced modern slavery which in numbers of slaves can only be compared with transatlantic African slavery (Segal 1995). In both cases the number of enslaved (in one way or another) was approximately 12 million. During World War II, this number included people who, because of lack of other means to survive, voluntarily joined the German Organisation Todt’s labour forces and were subsequently sent as slave labour to Germany or other occupied areas of Europe (Herbert 1985:163–187). In August 1944, there were 7,615,970 foreign workers officially registered in the territory of the “Greater German Reich”; 1.9 million of them were PoWs, and 5.7 million civilian workers including 2.8 million Soviet citizens, 1.7 million Poles, 1.3 million French, 590,000 Italians, and 250,000 Belgians (Herbert 1985:1).

## The Painful Heritage Project

In 2008 the Research Council of Norway granted the Norwegian University of Science and Technology funding for a research project entitled *Painful Heritage—Cultural landscapes of the Second World War in Norway. Phenomenology, Lessons and Management System*, directed by the author and conducted in cooperation with the Falstad Centre and with close contact with research institutions in Russia, Poland, Austria, Finland, Great Britain, and Germany. Research consists of three sub-projects considering the Landscape of Evil: Nazi construction plants and PoW/ slave labour camps in Norway; the Memory, management and use of East European war graves and monuments in Northern Europe; and Battlefields: Conflicts of memory and landscape (Jasinski et al., [forthcoming](#)). Here the first of these is considered through the case study of the Romsdal Peninsula in Central Norway.

## The Atlantic Wall

The Atlantic Wall, a giant system of Nazi Germany coastal defence structures at the northern coasts of occupied Europe, stretched from Bay of Biscay in France through Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and along the entire coastline of Norway. It was probably the greatest single construction project undertaken in the world during the twentieth century and consisted of several thousand monumental structures built mainly in reinforced concrete and steel that were armed with artillery, machine gun positions, mine fields, and protected by barbed wire (Forty 2002; Kaufman and Kaufman 2003; Zaloga 2009). The establishment of the Atlantic Wall in occupied Europe is usually linked to Hitler's famous *Küstenverteidigung* (Coastal Defence) Directive Number 40 issued by Führer's Headquarters in March 1942 (Forty 2002:12). According to Forty (2002) the main reasons why Hitler issued this Directive were to secure the North European coasts from Allied invasion while the main German military forces were engaged on the Eastern Front in the Soviet Union (Forty 2002:11).

Norway was among the very first countries to experience the construction of the Nazi coastal fortifications. Work started in 1940, 2 years before Hitler's Directive Number 40, and 1 year earlier than the OKW Directive on Neue Westwall in December 1941. According to Steven Zaloga (2009) the early start in Norway was due to several factors, including the strategic importance of iron ore mines in Northern Norway and Sweden, as well as the need to disrupt the British Arctic Convoys supplying the Red Army through Murmansk (Zaloga 2009: 35), and to prevent any Allied counterattack on Norway.

In total over 280 major fortifications were constructed along the Norwegian coast, as well as thousands of smaller defence lines and positions built in reinforced concrete and steel on or into the solid rock (Forty 2002: 91). Because of its strategic position at the intersection between the open Atlantic coast and a complex system of straits and fjords leading to interior of the country, noted during the invasion in spring 1940, the region of Møre and Romsdal County in Central Norway, including the Romsdal Peninsula, were among the areas where construction of the fortifications started early in the occupation (Fig. 9.1).



**Fig. 9.1** Main map: The Romsdal Peninsula and Gossen Island study area. Inset: Location of the study area in Norway

## The Atlantic Wall and the Luftwaffe in Møre and Romsdal County

Romsdal Peninsula (nor. *Romsdalshalvøya*) is a 1,560 km<sup>2</sup> (600 mile<sup>2</sup>) peninsula located in the Romsdal district of Møre and Romsdal county in Norway. The peninsula encompasses the western Norwegian municipalities of Molde, Gjemnes, Fraena, Eide, and the northern part of Nesset. About 42,000 people now live there, with another 5,000 on adjacent islands. The survey examined the western and northern part of the peninsula, from Molde (the capital of Møre and Romsdal County) in the south to the Municipalities of Fraena and Eide in the North and included Gossen Island in Aukra Municipality. This part of Norwegian coast was recognised as very important by both the *Werhmacht* and by the *Kriegsmarine* even in the early stages of German occupation. The strategic position almost in the middle of the Norwegian coast, allowing a possible Allied rapid landing here to divide occupied Norway in two and cut German supply lines to the Arctic region, was the main reasons for establishing four coastal artillery groups in the County: *Art. Gr. Aalesund*, *Art. Gr.*

*Kristiansund, Art. Gr. Romsdal, and Art. Gr. Möre* (Fjørtoft 1982). Each consisted of coastal batteries, mostly in form of fort-like fortifications and in some cases with groups of smaller bunkers and guns placed between the main fortifications.

## Archaeological Surveys on the Romsdal Peninsula

The historiography of foreign PoW and slave workers in Norway during World War II (e.g. Lundemo 2010; Soleim 2004; Stokke 2008) provides much important information, but contains little on the sites' detailed geographical locations and their present state of preservation, apart from *SS- Strafgefängenenlager Falstad* in the North-Trøndelag County (Jasinski and Stenvik 2010; Reitan 1999; Sem 2009). Research on the Nazi constructions that these PoWs and slave workers built in Norway is also limited, so the main aims of archaeological surveys were: to investigate the state of preservation of Nazi construction plants and prisoners' camps as cultural heritage in Norwegian landscapes, and to analyse the present status of the Nazi prisoner camps and construction plants within the Norwegian cultural heritage management system. This research will thus allow greater understanding of these sites as material structures within Norwegian landscapes, their typology and state of preservation, and will raise awareness of their potential as a research source and their place within Norwegian and international public understanding. From this, efficient models for their future management can be developed, and future research can be formulated based on the survey results.

An important aspect of the archaeological survey of the Romsdal Peninsula was to detect relevant sites within the present cultural landscapes and carry out the precise GPS-based mapping as well as photographic documentation. This is a relatively easy task for most Atlantic Wall sites, though not for the PoW and slave workers camps. The starting point for the archaeological surveys was existing historical written sources and historiography, particularly Soleim's (2004) and Stokke's (2009) lists of PoW camps in Norway. The first surveys on The Romsdal Peninsula were carried out in Fraena Municipality as the villages of Bud and Farstad were among the first places in the region where the Germans started construction of coastal fortifications in Central Norway (see Fig. 9.1). Moreover, a great deal of information, including direct witness observations regarding both the German coastal fortifications and PoWs in Fraena, had already been collected by local historians and published in the Yearbook "Old from Fraena" published by Fraena Municipality, particularly in the 1995 issue (Hestad 1995).

## Reinforced Concrete and Steel

The Atlantic Wall in the Romsdal region consists of forts in Vevang, Bud, Gossen-Süd, Gossen—Mitte and Gossen Nord, Jul, Artillery *Stützpunkt* in Farstad, and torpedo battery in Julholmen. In addition, a system of control posts and bunkers was

established in Malme Valley along the mountain passage and main road from Fraena to city of Molde on the opposite side of the peninsula. The city of Molde, with important German military headquarters and bases, was fortified by bunkers and defence positions, and one of the largest German military airports in occupied Norway was established on Gossen Island (see Fig. 9.1). The archaeological survey demonstrated that with very few minor exceptions, such as one of the small bunkers in Malme Valley, all the structures listed above still exist. Their state of preservation varies, with some monumental concrete and steel structures resisting natural and human degradation while other sites are much more vulnerable. Sites' preservation and their role in local landscapes can be divided into four main categories:

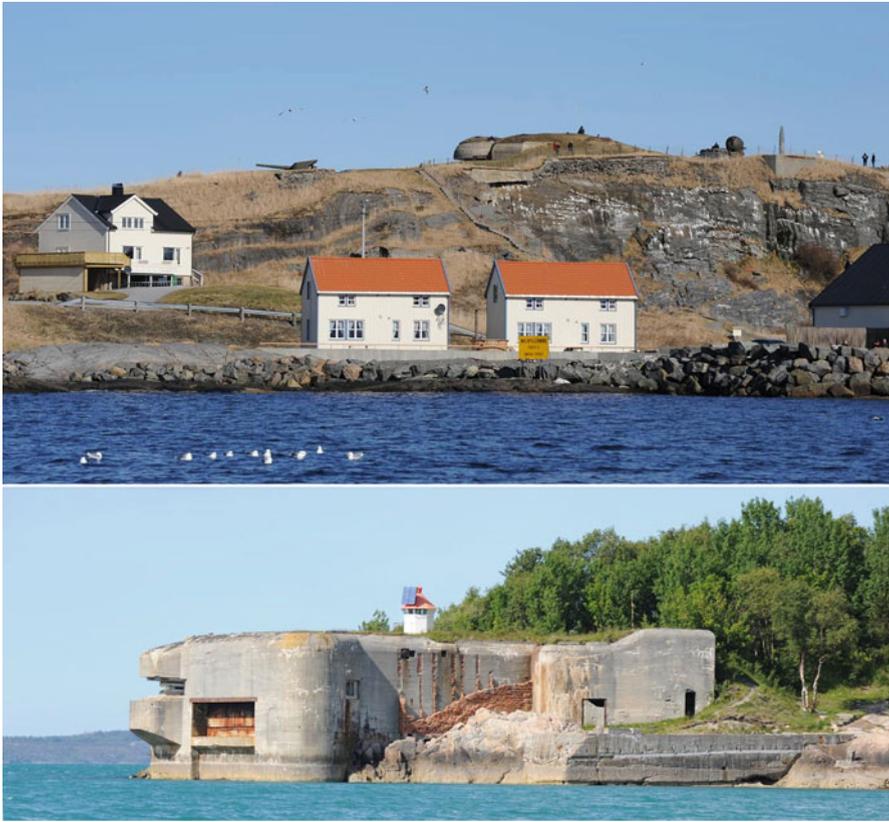
### ***Category 1: Restored Sites Arranged for the Public and Managed by Professional Institutions***

The Ergan Fort in Bud, Fraena Municipality is managed by local institutions and is in a very good state of preservation (Fig. 9.2). In the early 1990s, the fort was restored and partly rebuilt, and adapted to be a local war museum (Harnes and Sundsbø 2007:51–63). It is now managed by the Museum of Romsdal and receives 5,000–10,000 visitors a year from Norway and abroad during the summer season. This cooperation between the Romsdal Museum and Fraena Municipality on the restoration and management of the fort as local war museum, and the experiences and reactions of Norwegian and foreign visitors, became an important case study regarding the role such sites play in the management and dissemination of the cultural heritage of World War II (Fig. 9.2, top).

Another example of managed Atlantic Wall heritage is the huge Jul Fort at Julneset in the vicinity of Molde City. As the Julneset area is a popular place to visit and relax for the inhabitants of Molde, the local community authorities have placed information signs describing the area and the fort structures. The site is, however, in a worse state of preservation than Ergan Fort due to erosion, vegetation cover, and some damage by visitors. The cultural heritage authorities of the Møre og Romsdal County are currently planning preservation actions for the site.

### ***Category 2: Unmanaged Sites Overgrown with Vegetation***

Close to Jul Fort lies the Julholmen Torpedo Battery, a massive and monumental sight, especially when viewed from the sea-side (Fig. 9.2, bottom). Together with the sister torpedo battery on Otter Island (Otterøy) on the opposite side of the strait, the batteries defended the entrance into the Romsdalfjord and Molde city. As the Julholmen Torpedo Battery is not easily accessible from the shore it is still in a relatively good state of preservation and still dominates the Julholmen landscape. A fortification in Farstad, Fraena Municipality, located in between the Ergan and the Vevang forts can also be included to this category. The site lies at a distance from



**Fig. 9.2** *Top:* Ergan Fort in Bud. *Bottom:* Torpedo Battery at Julholmen

local roads, is not little known by the public, except local historians, and is heavily overgrown by vegetation (Fig. 9.3, top).

### ***Category 3: Sites Used Today for Other Purposes***

Vevang Fort in Eide Municipality is not well known to the general public and is not maintained by the local authorities (Fig. 9.3, bottom). The only user of the area is a local Paint Ball Club and in this way war-like activities still continue at the site. The club added some extra features to the fort, including wooden walls, camouflage nets, and ladders to make the game even more exciting. Nevertheless, preservation is still good, though the area has become overgrown by vegetation and has suffered some natural and human degradation.

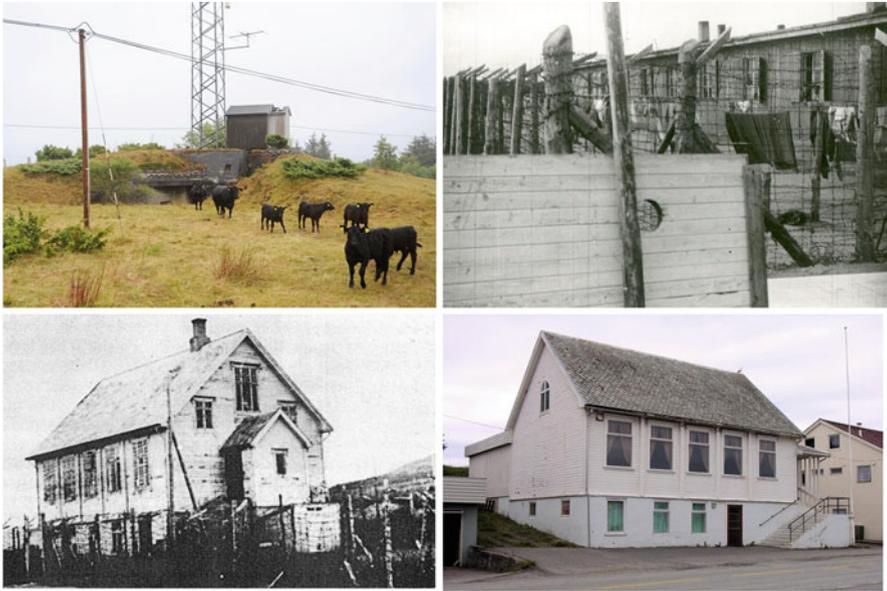
A fortification at Tangen on Gossen Island (*Gossen Sjød*) has the roof of its main bunker used by a telecommunication company as base for a large mast and a small



**Fig. 9.3** *Top*: Part of a bunker complex at Falstadberget. *Bottom*: Commando bunker at Vevang Fort

wooden workshop. The area surrounding the bunker has rich grass vegetation and is grazed by a local farmer's cattle and is today defined by an electric fence. Despite these new elements, the fortifications are in a good state of preservation (Fig. 9.4, top left). The other two main fortification complexes on Gossen Island, *Gossen Mitte* at Falkhytten in the centre of the island and *Gossen Nord* at Rishaugane, are also well preserved. In contrast, there is little surviving of the massive military airport on Gossen Island built by Luftwaffe in cooperation with Organisation Todt and with significant use of slave workers, though it is still used as a recreational airport for small planes.

Monumental coastal grave cairns built of stone and dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages in Aukratangen at the southwest part of the island were used, and partly destroyed, by German troops for deployment of flak guns to protect the area from air attacks by British Air Forces (Ringstad 2007:97).



**Fig. 9.4** *Top left:* Fortifications at Tangen og Gossen Island. *Top right:* POW camp in Riksfjord, Gossen Island just after liberation (Courtesy Archive of Aukra Municipality). *Bottom left:* Camp for Soviet POWs in local Prayer House in Bud (Courtesy Archive of Fraena Municipality). *Bottom right:* The Prayer House in Bod today

## The Slaves

The total number of PoW and slave labour camps in Møre and Romsdal County that existed during World War II is still uncertain, though between 15 and 23 PoW camps of varying size, spread across at least 13 of today's municipalities, are known from documentary sources and oral tradition. It is not clear when the first PoWs and slave workers arrived in the county; local history publications mention December 1941 and early 1942 for the arrival of first groups to Gossen Island in Aukra Community, where German troops and subscribed Norwegian workers were already engaged in building one of the biggest military airports in Norway, and the defence line of strong fortifications (Rød 1995; Dreyer and Ringstad 2006: 261—263; Ringstad 2007:1941).

Before the invasion in April 1940, Gossen Island had a total population of around 2,000 inhabitants. The first German troops arrived in 1941 based on the decision to build a large military airport on the island, after which the island was rapidly transformed into a fortress with over 5,000 inhabitants. A quarter of the locals were forced to leave but the remaining 1,500 got new neighbours: 2,000 German soldiers, around 1,000 foreign PoWs, and about 600 civilian foreign forced workers (Rød 1995:141; Ringstad 2007:326). The first location used for Soviet PoWs was the old whaling

station at Nyhavna, where the existing kitchen and crew barracks were surrounded by barbed wire fences. German guards used the station's office building as accommodation. Some oral sources suggested that there were approximately 60–70 prisoners at the whaling station, though in 1942 they were moved to a newly built PoW camp in Riksfjord in the central part of the island. Timber whaling stations buildings were also moved, including the “*Spisemessa*- eating barrack” relocated to Løvik. Today this is the only building from the Nyhamna PoW camp still surviving in the Gossen cultural landscape. The last physical traces of the camp itself were erased in 2004 when the Ormen Lange Gas Plant was constructed in Nyhamna by Norsk Hydro ASA.

The Riksfjord PoW camp on Gossen Island was the largest in the region. According to archive sources by June 1942 there were 681 PoWs, decreasing to 289 by April 1945 (Stokke 2009). British aerial photographs of September 1943 and photographs taken just after the liberation in May 1945 show that the camp contained standard barracks, some barracks with oval roofs, tents, possible rectangular cottages built probably of plywood, and few workshops, all surrounded by double barbed wire fences with at least one main gate (Fig. 9.4, top right). The camp was administered by the Luftwaffe in cooperation with Organisation Todt, and prisoners were used mainly to build the airport and as labour force at the local docks.

In addition to the main camp there were at least three small auxiliary camps on the island—in Småge with 22 prisoners in April 1945, Tangeskogen with 26 prisoners, and Myrstad with 12 or 13 prisoners placed in a barn which still survives today (Myrstad 2009, personal communication). Prisoners from these camps were employed mostly to build the Festung Gossen fortifications and defence positions spread around on the island.

Despite major publications (Soleim 2004), articles by local historians and by Fraena's inhabitants in the yearbook *Old from Fraena* (Hestad 1995), oral information from local witnesses indicates that some smaller camps have yet to be described. A typical example is the Malme Valley where it turned out that the Soviet PoWs were in two different periods placed in wooden barracks surrounded by fences on a local farm taken over by Werchmaht (Eidem, August 2010: personal communication). Another small camp was established in Malmekleiva just off the Malme Valley in 1942, where prisoners were placed in Kock House. Oral testimony collected by Anne Holen Helseth (September 2010: personal communication) from local elderly inhabitants indicates there were about ten Soviet prisoners kept there, enclosed by barbed wire. According to the eyewitnesses, these prisoners had very poor clothing and no shoes. Other PoW and slave labour camps existed in Fraena Community in Bud and in Farstad (Sanden). A group of 30 Soviet PoWs arrived at Bud in August 1942 and were placed just north of the Ergan Fort in a temporary camp of a few small modular rectangular plywood cabins fenced by barbed wire. According to a report given by 14 of these prisoners to Norwegian Intelligence in June 1945 their living conditions were extremely difficult with freezing, starvation, and violence as every day experiences (Anon 1945). After 2 months the prisoners were moved to the village Prayer House once it was made secure with barbed wire fences (Fig. 9.4, bottom left, bottom right), though the very bad treatment of the prisoners continued.

During the fall of 1942, Bud received 110 Polish PoWs. According to Åsmund Engelsberg, a local witness, they were at first placed in the local elementary school in the centre of the village, and in late 1944 or early 1945 moved to large barracks near a local quarry at the foot of Ergan Hill (Engelsberg, 2009–2010: personal communications). The Polish PoWs were moved away before May 1945. Both Soviet and Polish prisoners were engaged in building of the Ergan Fort, but they were working in separate areas of the site without daily contact with each other.

A minor camp for Soviet prisoners in Farstad was established at a local farm at Sanden in the Village of Farstad. Sverre Farstadvoll, a Fraena inhabitant, mentions Russian PoWs in his article published in *Gammelt Frå Fraena* 1995 (Farstadvoll 1995: 129–130, and map on page 135). According to Soleim (2004: database 5), there were ten prisoners stationed at this camp while a local eyewitness Andreas Skotheim remembers a rather higher number—approximately 20 prisoners (August 2010: personal communication). According to Skotheim, the prisoners were lodged in a red-painted turf-roofed building 10 m long on the farm surrounded by barbed wire fences and close to the barn, while the German guards stayed in the main farm house close by.

Written sources do not mention any foreign PoWs or slave workers in Vevang, Eide Municipality where the substantial Vevang Fort was built. However, local inhabitants still remember that Soviet prisoners were used by the Wehrmacht to build the fort. According to Edvin Sivertsen (2010: personal communication) the prisoners were at first placed in the local Loge House and later on moved to a wooden barrack several hundred metres away.

Archive information regarding five different camps related to Soviet and Polish prisoners and Todt workers survives for Molde city, the capital of Møre and Romsdal County. Michael Stokke (2009) listed following camps in Molde with Soviet prisoners based on written sources: Langmyra, Cecilienfryd/Bolsøy, Fjaerlijordet, Moldegård, and Jul Fort in the vicinity of Molde. To find the detailed locations for these camps in what is now Molde's urban landscape would not be possible without direct help of Andreas Mauseth, an inhabitant of Molde and eyewitness of many episodes connected with PoW and slave workers (personal communications under surveys in July 2010). According to Mauseth the Langmyra Camp (today 10–12 Schneider Street) was the largest in Molde, and as early as February 1941 about 80 Polish PoWs were placed in a huge wooden barrack. After the Polish prisoners were moved from Molde to Åndalsnes, a group of around 120 Soviet prisoners arrived. As the wooden barrack could not house so many prisoners the nearby hen house was incorporated into the camp as additional accommodation. The Cecilienfryd Camp (now the school area of Bekkenvoll) comprised one wooden barrack with around 15 Soviet prisoners and a large horse stable, according to Mauseth (July 2010: personal communication). The Fjaerlijordet Camp (now 38–40 Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsonsvei) consisted of one wooden barrack with about 15 Soviet prisoners placed near a large wooden house accommodating German officers (Mauseth, July 2010: personal communication). Andreas Mauseth could not recall any camp at the Molde Gård area, but did remember very clearly a camp at Kviltrop in Molde which consisted of a large building (still standing) for German soldiers, a stable at the present camping site and a wooden barrack for Soviet prisoners at what is now 2 and 4a Komet Street.

## A Typology of PoW and Slave Labour Camps

Based on the historiography and archaeological surveys it can be assumed that at least six types of camps for PoWs and slave labourers were used in Norway.

1. Relatively large camps, for several hundreds of prisoners, built from scratch and consisting of one or more types of wooden barracks, wooden cabins, and sometimes tents, all surrounded by barbed wire fences, watch towers, and control posts.
2. Medium size camps consisting of one or more wooden barracks.
3. Medium or small camps where existing buildings (local schools, prayer houses, farm buildings) were used to accommodate prisoners.
4. Auxiliary camps with a few small, mostly rectangular, prefabricated cottages for prisoners.
5. Camps where prisoners were placed in earth/stone built huts partly dug into the ground (quite a common category in camps established in northernmost regions of Norway).
6. In some cases, there existed a mixture of above arrangements.

The guards had their own barracks either inside or just outside the camps, or in some cases were stationed in requisitioned Norwegian houses. The first four categories are represented on the Romsdal Peninsula.

## Living Conditions and the Treatment of Prisoners

Several documents describe PoW and slave worker living conditions in their camps on Romsdal Peninsula. In the report given by 14 Soviet prisoners from Bud to Norwegian Intelligence in June 1945 in Molde regarding their living conditions and treatment (Anon 1945), the prisoners describe starvation, freezing, and violence as every day experiences. They recount the fate of two Soviet prisoners who escaped in 1942 from Bud (both were captured and shot death after few days) and the bestiality of a German guard during the execution of the third Soviet prisoner who escaped from Bud in February 1943.

Several local witnesses verify the treatment that at least the Soviet PoWs and slave workers received. Those who lived in the vicinity of the Nyhamna Camp on Gossen Island remember the screams of beaten and tortured prisoners, and some also remember how prisoners were brutally pressed into the freezing seawater by German guards in the vicinity of Nyhamna Camp as a substitute of washing and delousing (Ringstad 2007:330–331). The Norwegian oral tradition stresses the appalling living conditions for Soviet prisoners, with very poor clothing, frequent starvation, and brutal treatment by guards.

The mortality rate of Soviet prisoners on Romsdal Peninsula and Gossen Island is uncertain. There are 30 graves of Soviet prisoners at the Aukra Graveyard on Gossen Island; most if not all died between September 1942 and June 1943, during

the occupation of Nyhamna Camp (Ringstad 2007:331–332). One grave (of the prisoner from Bud who escaped in 1943) is still known and cared for by inhabitants of Bud at the local graveyard at the outskirts of the village. There are also other known Soviet graves in Molde, but oral tradition from the Romsdal Peninsula implies that an unknown number of prisoners who either died or were killed never received burial in local cemeteries but were either dumped in the sea or buried in woods or remote locations. According to Andreas Mauthset (2010: personal communication), German Guards at Langmyra Camp in Molde City ordered Soviet prisoners to dump the body of one of their deceased comrades into the camp latrine.

Nothing is known regarding mortality rates for foreign workers of Organisation Todt on Romsdal Peninsula. The existing oral tradition suggests that because of better treatment and food, and more reasonable living and working conditions, the death rate among these forced workers was much lower than that was the case with Soviet prisoners.

## Present State of Preservation of the Camps

Today, very few physical traces of Nazi camps at Romsdal Peninsula are still visible. Exceptions are three buildings that existed prior to the war and were used as lodges for PoWs and slave workers, and traces of concrete foundations of prisoner's barracks at three other sites. The "Spisemessa" from Nyhamna Camp at Gossen Island subsequently moved to Løvika where it still stands on a local farm; the local "Prayer House" in Bud, located close to the Ergan Fort lodged Soviet PoWs in the period 1942–1945 (Fig. 9.4, bottom right); and the local Loge House in Vevang that lodged Soviet PoWs during the construction of Vevang Fort (Fig. 9.5, top right). None of these three buildings is marked with any sign recognising that PoWs lived in them during World War II.

Foundations of prisoners' barracks in the region exist at three locations: the Malme Valley site in Fraena Municipality, at Julneset in the vicinity of Molde City (Fig. 9.5, bottom left), and at Tangen on Gossen Island. It is uncertain, however, if the last of these are traces of a prisoner's barrack or of a barrack for German guards. The undisputable traces connected to the prisoners' story that still exist at this site are remnants of barbed wires which partly lie on the surfaces of the site and partly grown into surrounding trees (Fig. 9.5, right).

## Methodological Lessons to be Drawn from the Project

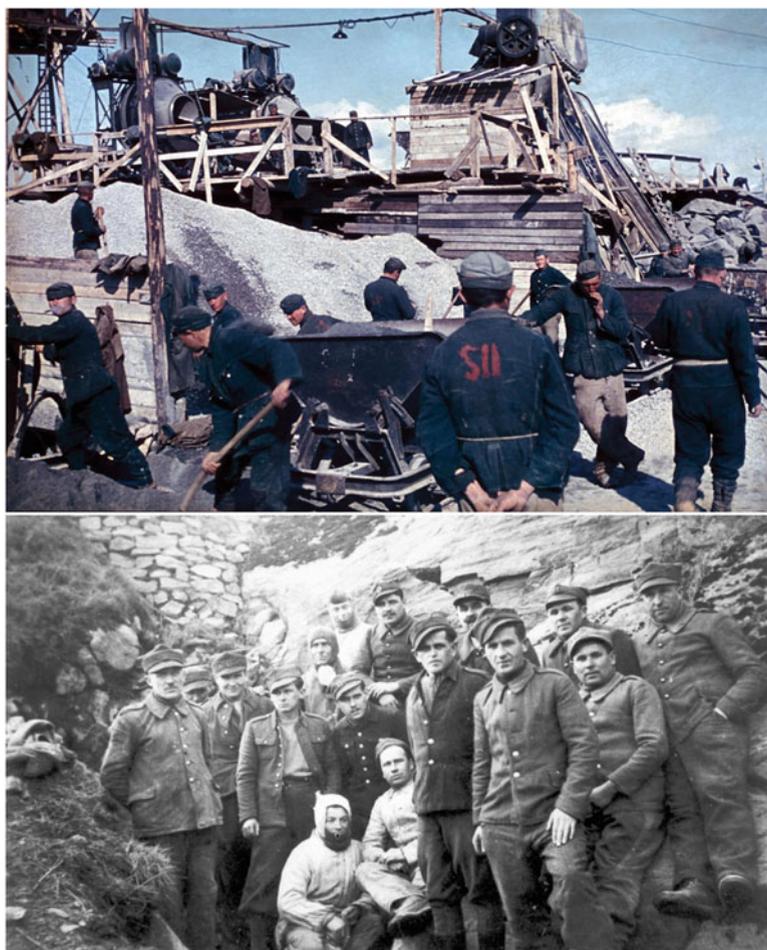
The archaeological survey of the Romsdal Peninsula carried out in 2009–2011 brought to light a relatively wide spectrum of experiences and new data, but have also created new research questions, as well as some dilemmas.



**Fig. 9.5** *Top left:* Loge House in Vevang today. *Bottom left:* Foundations of Soviet POW Camp barrack at Julneset. *Right:* Barbed wire—traces of POW Camp at Tangen, Gossen Island

One observation is that the field search for particular camps can be time consuming and complicated, taking days, weeks, months, and in some cases even years. As the archive sources seldom give geographical coordinates for camps, finding the sites is often dependent on oral information from surviving local Norwegian witnesses, an urgent process due to the age of those with first-hand observations. Another problem is the state of the memory of these witnesses, and the extent to which their individual memories have with time been reworked within the national consensus, and the impact of collective memories upon their personal memories. Still another problem is that local place names can become confusing during the search for camp sites. Documentary sources and local witnesses often use different names for particular camps, creating the initial impression that there were more sites than was the case.

One more significant problem with local memory of the foreign PoWs and slave labourers was the issue of prisoner nationality (Fig. 9.6). Informants usually distinguished only two or three groups—Russians and Todt workers, or Russians, Poles, and Todt workers. It is clear that the term *Russians* comprises all nationalities from the Soviet Union—both from European and Asiatic republics. Polish PoWs are in some cases also remembered as Russian prisoners. These two nationalities are perceived as PoWs (*Nor. krigsfanger*), though in reality many were civilian slave workers. The Todt workers in local memory are other nationalities, especially from



**Fig. 9.6** *Top:* Soviet PoWs at work on Gossen Island (Courtesy Archive of Romsdalsmuseet, Molde). *Bottom:* Polish PoWs at Ergan Fort, Bud (Courtesy Archive of Fraena Municipality)

Western Europe, although in fact many were of Eastern European origin, including forced workers from Poland. Local memories from 1940 to 1945 were subsequently aligned to the later political division of Europe during the Cold War. It must be stressed here that terms used by German Nazi authorities with regard to PoWs and slave workers were also complicated and it seems that the complex and unclear divisions of competences between different institutions (including the Wehrmacht, the SS, Organisation Todt) created a mosaic of terms now hard to comprehend (Herbert 1985; Soleim 2004).

One of the larger Todt camps established during World War II in Central Norway is that on Gossen Island (Fig. 9.6, top). According to Johan Julnes (1995:120) the Organisation Todt's troops at the island comprised "404 Germans, 198 foreigners, 206

Norwegians, 44 prisoners (*sic*), 110 German civilians, and 40 Luftwaffe soldiers.” This list raises two major questions regarding perceptions of different groups of foreign workers, both by the Nazi German authorities as well as by Norwegians. Who were the above mentioned 198 foreigners, and what was the difference between them and the 44 prisoners? Julnes (1995:120) also provides another list that gives different picture of the Todt’s troops at the island: “550 men, Dutch, Belgians, and Poles, together with 60 Germans and 110 Norwegians”, and mentions that it is not possible to explain the differences between the two lists. The issue of Todt’s workers, and the differences between them and the PoWs and slave workers in terms of their officially authorised status, living conditions, mortality, is still unclear and demands further research.

The state of preservation of PoW and forced worker camps as physical structures is even worse than assumed before the survey. While the Nazi forts and other military constructions built in reinforced concrete and steel not only still exist but also dominate local cultural landscapes on Romsdal Peninsula through their monumental size and appearance, the PoW and slave labour camps are, with very few exceptions, almost completely effaced. The very few sites with either existing permanent buildings used for prisoner accommodation, or other physical traces of camps, lack any sign or other form of information telling visitors the prisoners’ story. In contrast, the largest German forts in the area—Julneset Fort, outside of Molde city and Ergan Fort in Bud—are both equipped with signboards and, in case of Ergan, exhibitions inside the bunkers and guide services during summer season that primarily interpret the occupiers’ story and with limited mention of PoWs and slave workers.

This situation both reflects and causes two problems. The first is a strong conflict between the present cultural landscape and the collected memories of inhabitants who have to recognise the duality of these landscapes: concrete, monumental forts of the occupants as opposed to the fate of the prisoners that were forced to build them. The second is that the very limited information on the victims of slavery often leaves a false impression on visitors and younger local generations that these impressive forts and other types of defence constructions were built by the occupation forces themselves, which can even create a fascination with the apparent power, strength, and superiority of the occupiers.

### *Politics and National Amnesia*

National consensus and a united collective remembrance of traumatic episodes are extremely important in Norwegian society. During the current Norwegian debate on immigration and terrorism that affected Norway on 22nd of July 2011, Prof. Thomas Hylland Eriksen from the University of Oslo called Norway the “Prison of Consensus” (*Nor. Konsensusfengsel*) (after Bisgaard 2011). This is, however, not a new phenomenon. As with other European countries, postwar Norway had to start to manufacture a national consensus regarding World War II and weave this into the tissue of national identity, history, and collective common sense. Manufacturing a national consent is a complex matter (Herman and Chomsky 2002), especially in democratic societies where a unified, generic meaning and mind-set regarding painful

processes and events from the past cannot be pressed upon society by law and rules, as is often the case in totalitarian regimes.

The process started with the return of the Royal Family and the exiled government in May 1945. The young Norwegian state that had regained its independence only in 1905 after five centuries of Danish and Swedish rule had some difficult problems to solve and had to find answers regarding what had happened in the country during World War II, and not least why. The most obvious problem was collaboration with Nazi Germany forces that invaded in April 1940 and occupied the country until 1945. This problem was partially solved by the effective and harsh legal process (*Nor. Oppgjøret*) against around 93,000 Norwegian citizens accused of collaboration (Dahl and Sørensen 2004; Hagen 2009). Although the *Oppgjøret* had severe legal weaknesses, it solved this problem for the Norwegian public, at least for a while.

The second problem for Norway's national consensus was the issue of the approximately 140,000 foreign PoWs and forced labourers taken to Norway by Nazi Germany, and exploited not only by Wehrmacht, the SS and Organisation Todt, but also by many state-owned and private Norwegian companies. Over time the most complicated political problem was caused by the East European prisoners. The long period of the Cold War created a situation where the East European countries that up to 1945–1946 were counted as allies against Nazi Germany became the enemies of the Western World, in the confrontation between democracies and communist regimes of Eastern Europe. The relatively fresh and mostly positive memories of these prisoners soon became problematic. The Stalinist Soviet regime made it even more complex by at first totally denying that there had been Soviet PoWs in Norway. According to Stalin's ideology soldiers of the Red Army would always fight to the end and rather die than surrender, so by definition Soviet PoWs were traitors. They were repatriated back to the Soviet Union, finalised by an eager Norwegian state in 1946, despite clear warnings regarding their fate (Soleim 2004:320–360). Many Soviet PoWs would rather have stayed in Norway than return to their country; this was never a solution for Norwegian authorities, though a few managed to avoid repatriation and later became Norwegian citizens.

The Norwegian authorities and local inhabitants wished to erase all physical traces of the hated Nazi regime that they could, both the construction plants and the camps. With the Atlantic Wall this was impossible because of the scale of the fortifications built in reinforced concrete and steel. As one of informants told me during my surveys on Romsdal Peninsula "We would need many small atomic bombs to destroy these bunkers and get rid out of them." Camps for PoWs and slave workers were in contrast easy to remove. In Southern and Central Norway demolition started soon after the camps were emptied, as there was a shortage of building material. Some camps were burnt down because of a supposed danger from epidemic diseases, but was often the simple wish to forget the traumatic war period and move on. The process of erasing the story of East European prisoners and slave workers from the Norwegian collective memory started soon after this, with support from the political consensus described above. This resulted in a total lack of interest in the preservation of many shown by the Norwegian authorities until the July 2011 when remains of the camp at *Øvre Jernvatnet* (a camp for Yugoslavian prisoners) in Norland County were protected by Norwegian Cultural Heritage Directorate. In most other cases, only the surviving war

generations remember more or less clearly what happened under the occupation, and the postwar generations know either little or nothing. The present situation can be summarised by a young Norwegian female journalist during a radio interview with me in 2010 regarding the 140,000 foreign prisoners and slave workers in Norway: “I am young Norwegian journalist, I have attended Norwegian schools of all levels ... why didn’t they teach me about it at all?”

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**Part IV**  
**Twentieth-Century Britain and Europe:**  
**Civilian Prisoners of War**

## Chapter 10

# Materiality Matters: The Role of Things in Coping Strategies at Cunningham's Camp, Douglas During World War I

Harold Mytum

**Abstract** Internment for any length of time is a stressful situation, and those incarcerated had to develop strategies to cope with the overcrowding, loss of privacy, limited diet, restricted activities and separation from family, friends, and the rest of society. The threat of depression and other psychological conditions, known in World War I as “barbed wire disease,” was ameliorated by a range of strategies on the part of the internees. Material culture in the form of buildings, equipment, personal possessions, and items produced within the internment camp all played a crucial role in enabling survival. Utilizing medical and psychological studies of coping strategies, it is possible for archaeologists to understand the use of material culture in stressful contexts in the past, here using the World War I example of Cunningham's Camp in Douglas, Isle of Man.

## Introduction

In most instances, PoWs live within defined, controlled and limited material worlds. This is manifested in the physical structure of the camps in which they spend most or even all their time and in the albeit limited range of material culture to which they have access. Whilst the constraints of movement and association also form part of the framework that creates psychological challenges for internees, even these limitations are represented through the material conditions in which the prisoners live. Since World War I there has been a medical and psychological interest in the effects of

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internment (Lunden 1949; Solomon et al. 1995; Vischer 1919), and this has increased in recent years as military medical science has become a specialist area of research. The result is that there is now a growing literature on coping strategies that can throw light on the ways in which PoWs have dealt with the degrees of confinement and degradation which they have suffered. Using some of the categories proposed to define coping mechanisms, it is possible to see how internees have used the material world of the camps to manage their condition, with varying degrees of success. The survival of a large number of photographs commissioned by German internees at Cunningham's Camp in Douglas on the Isle of Man means that it is possible to assess the ways in which material culture items were used there within coping strategies.

Archaeologists have evoked past coping strategies in their analyses and interpretations in both prehistoric and historic contexts (Hardesty 1980; Hodder 1979; Wiessner 1982), but these have almost all been linked to adaptive changes reacting to environmental change or direct danger caused by the natural world or competing human groups. Material culture is often claimed to have been used in stressful conditions as a way of defining identity, articulating resistance, and preventing boredom, and these have been identified in conflict (Saunders 2009) and internment situations (Carr 2011; Casella 2007). However, rarely have coping mechanisms been explicitly cited to explain these uses (Mytum 2012), and never integrated fully into any argument based on a review of scientific studies of coping strategies. By combining the results of research in medicine, psychology and sociology with the archaeological evidence of material culture use, it is possible to offer a more robust argument concerning the role of the material world in a variety of coping strategies within internment camps.

## **Cunningham's Camp: A Material World of Internment**

Cunningham's Camp was chosen by the British government as the first PoW camp in the Isle of Man as its existing role as a holiday camp for young men made its conversion a relatively easy matter (Mytum 2011). As the war proceeded, however, and xenophobic feelings intensified (Panayi 1991, 1993), increasing numbers of internees required accommodation. A riot caused by the poor conditions at the camp led to a much larger facility being established and then repeatedly extended at Knockaloe, near Peel (Sargeant 1920), but Douglas Camp was nevertheless retained and continued to house around 3,000 prisoners throughout the war.

The original holiday camp was adapted as the privilege camp and a secondary area, reached by a tunnel that ran beneath the road that separated the two compounds, was established as a normal camp (Cresswell 1994). This distinction is in itself significant as the privilege camp was for those who could afford to pay for less cramped living accommodation, and who would also have the resources to purchase items from outside the camp. This clearly affected the material conditions of different sections of the Douglas Camp population, and the types and degree of stresses that they would have endured. The privilege camp comprised tents for one or two

individuals, and chalets that seem to have been occupied by three people at a time. In contrast, the normal camp contained barrack blocks that housed many individuals. All internees of the camp used the central facilities for dining and social activities that were adapted from the central holiday camp buildings, and some of its sporting facilities were retained. In addition, another compound was erected nearby which was for exercise, including football and athletics.

Sadly many of the administrative documents relating to the camps have been destroyed, but two important historical sources survive—newspapers produced within the camp (Kewley Draskau 2008), and photographs commissioned by internees and taken by professional photographers from the seaside tourist town of Douglas. Although other items of material culture made in the camp do survive, including postcards, calendars, and some souvenirs, it is the newspapers and photographs that provide the best opportunities to see how the material worlds of the camp created stress and at the same time could be adapted and used to mollify this condition.

Internment involved close control of bodily movements through space, as exemplified by the various enclosures defined by barbed wire—a phenomenon frequently referenced in the photographs (Mytum 2012) and art such as postcards (Cresswell 1994). Although the world beyond could be seen through the wire, only for those on the rare work party excursions was access to any of these spaces possible for much of the war, though a small number of photographs, largely from 1918, do show prisoners in woodland scenes which may be from areas close to, but outside, the camp (Mytum 2012). How far these were visits only for the purpose of photography, and how far they reflect a reduction in control late in the war is uncertain. All sources support the assumption that for most internees for most of the time their world was small, crowded, and with a limited range of stimuli. It is in this situation that the range of potential coping strategies can be evaluated.

## Medical and Psychological Perspectives on Coping Strategies

Whilst the most relevant studies of coping might be those of PoWs, these have often been undertaken on veterans who have been professional, trained soldiers and often interned within an extremely unfamiliar cultural context, such as US soldiers in Vietnam or Middle Eastern conflicts. However, other coping studies such as those in prison or going through stress of loss or isolation in some other form can also provide insights as they involve civilians detained within a wider socio-cultural world that is familiar to those incarcerated. Moreover, some of the stresses within a camp are similar to those felt outside it, and so some other studies also throw light on how humans adapt under strain. It is therefore worth considering the types of coping strategy that have been identified by social and behavioral scientists in the first instance from a range of situations. From this position it is possible to consider how using material culture and bodily practices could be applied within such coping strategies, and how more or less successful these were in combating the effects of “barbed wire disease” (Vischer 1919).

The problems of internment were numerous, including living in crowded conditions, narrow (though nutritionally adequate) diet, few opportunities to experience the world beyond the camp, limited activities to fill the time, and no meeting with close family and friends. Whilst the physical needs of the internees were scrupulously calculated and provided for, the psychological impact was much harder to address. Whilst many of these challenges also faced the wider civilian population and those in the armed forces, where overcrowding, poor food, and long periods of separation of those fighting from their loved ones were commonplace, those who were free all had greater choice and had more to occupy their time, minds and bodies in a pattern of relationships that were seen as valuable and affirming. This positive element was less easy to create and maintain within PoW camps.

In one of the standard works on stress and coping, the latter is defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person” (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Some of the key elements to be noted here are that these efforts vary over time and in response to what is perceived as stressful. Rapid changes in mood may only be visible archaeologically through variability within the evidence, which can also be caused by a range of responses by different internees. However, some of the widespread changes in attitude and behavior that occur over the longer term, such as during the incarceration at Cunningham’s Camp as it dragged on from months to years, can be identified. Some of the cognitive strategies are visible within the material world of the camp, created and adapted as it was by the behavioral choices made by the internees. The camp was run with strict levels of discipline and high levels of observation, but there was a recognition by the authorities that a certain level of internal management and flexibility was both practicable and could combat the negative effects of internment. Moreover, some individuals at the camp had access to considerable financial resources that could allow the purchase and consumption of goods within limits set by the camp authorities and wider wartime conditions.

The most recent research on the coping strategies of PoWs (Ursano and Rundell 1995) indicates a wide range of elements that are of varying relevance to the Manx World War I case study, but which emphasize the multiplicity of factors that can be considered (Table 10.1). Some of these coping mechanisms are largely created by individuals, in their thoughts, attitudes and actions, but others are more social, collaborative endeavors. These headings do not explicitly incorporate material culture, but in acting many of these out there are specific material implications and connections that would vary from context to context, as will be explored through the Douglas Camp evidence.

Studies on coping strategies have taken two main forms, interviews with those who have been through the experience, or studies of behaviors and outcomes of groups in particular situations. Two main phases of research are relevant here; an early phase in the 1970s and 1980s when many initial studies and frameworks were set out, and work from the late 1990s with a more nuanced approach considering variation within individuals and over time. Many of the studies have concentrated on illness or bereavement, and whilst the long-term separation from family can have

**Table 10.1** Prisoner of war coping mechanisms as outlined by Ursano and Rundell (1995)

Emphasizing the greater good	Conscious efforts
Caring for another	Acceptance of fate
Feeling closer to God	Communication
Focusing on the good	Control of panic
Loyalty to country/family/PoW group	Discipline
Motivation for life	Flexibility
Survival for some purpose	Maintaining self-respect
Defenses	Maintaining military social structure
Denial	Physical fitness
Humor	Realistic expectations
Intellectualization	Repetitive behaviors
Obsessional thinking	Rituals
Rationalization	Self-development activities
Relationship to captors	“Talking to family”
Collaboration	Well-controlled sensitivity
Cultivating relationships with captors	Will to live
Resistance	Psychological/fantasy
Study guards’ habits and use the knowledge to gain favor	Apathy
Withdrawal	Dissociation
Social	Fantasies of retaliation
Buddy system	Fatalism
Chain of command	Hope
Code of conduct	Idealized expectations of post-release life
Communication	Introversion
Group activities	Passive-dependence
Group affiliation	Personality flexibility
Military experience	Psychological regression
Peer pressure	
Withdrawal	

some similarities with the latter, most of these studies are not easily applicable to the internment context. Of greater relevance are the smaller number of studies that concentrate on prisons or other stressful situations that in some way parallel those found in the camps. These researches have attempted to identify factors which cause stress such as overcrowding (Bonta 1986; Cox et al. 1984; Jan 1980), but have not produced conclusive results—partly because of the varying conditions within the institutions studied, but also because it is clear that not all individuals react in the same way. Moreover, in some cases the studies have not analyzed what aspects of overcrowding is stressful, and factors such as the invasion of personal space seems to be more significant than simple population density (Evans and Wener 2007; Vischer 2007; Worchel 1978). Whilst age has been demonstrated to be not a major factor in the selection of coping strategies in the face of similar problems (McCrae 1982, 1989), personality traits seem to be much more significant. These are relevant as it is generally agreed that how the individual perceives the situation and therefore

what stresses they experience are key to the form of response chosen. Most studies assume that this reaction is a conscious one (McCrae 1984), though recent research has begun to recognize that people may subconsciously respond behaviorally to stress (Sommerfeld and McCrae 2000). Archaeologists recognize that cultural practices include both conscious, explicit elements, but also unconscious, implicit sets of rules, learned patterns of action and interaction, and attitudes to people and things that affect behavior. Both what stresses may be felt, and how they could be coped with, can include both conscious and unconscious elements.

## Material Culture in Coping Strategies

Research on contemporary groups from a range of western cultural contexts demonstrates the psychological importance of material goods, even though what is given meaning, and what types of meaning such objects hold, varies culturally (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). It is not known what the normative attitudes to material goods were in the early twentieth century amongst those of German descent in Britain, and these may well have varied according to class. Moreover, all contemporary studies show a variation around the norm in attitudes and behaviors, and this should be expected in the internee population. Study of the over 800 Cunningham Camp photographs reveals a number of set patterns of use of material culture in, for example, the chalet interiors, demonstrating that there was not one common strategy of material culture use in these contexts, but neither was the variety not patterned. The advantage of such a large sample is that variability can be evaluated and incorporated into the analysis. Many of the individual items of furniture and fittings, as well as portable goods, are clearly not standard camp issue, so choice (albeit within limits framed by issues of cost and accessibility) was a factor in these domestic interiors.

None of the laboratory and few of the ethnographic studies that have been consulted for this research have explicitly evaluated the role of material culture in the creation of or coping with stress, apart from physical conditions and overcrowding. In contrast, studies on workplace environments do consider the physical arrangement of space and individuals' control over elements of that space as a major factor in creating or ameliorating stress (Vischer 2007). A few other studies also provide some indications that material goods can be significant in relation to stress, but in these cases it is rather attitudes to materialism and consumer goods rather than the detailed role of particular items that has been the subject of the study. In coping with family breakdown, Burroughs and Rindfleisch (1997) found that the importance of prized possessions or the formation of a collection was significant to older teenagers, whilst Chang and Arkin (2002) found that self-doubt and anomie—instability through lack of purpose—could also be ameliorated through the use of material goods. Other studies have examined the private and public role of goods (Richins 1994), and the role of objects in migrant groups (Mehta and Belk 1991). Migration, family separation, and having no clear social role, are indeed elements of the PoW

experience. Therefore, these studies provide some backing for archaeological assertions regarding the importance of the material world of spaces and things in coping with internment. Some of the most recent studies of consumption incorporate agency and actor-network theory, reflecting the complex ways in which material culture can have significance and relationships within groups (Epp and Price 2009), an approach similar to that taken here.

The variety in attitudes towards or access to material culture in Cunningham's Camp can be illustrated by comparing chalet interior views. These are all found in the Privilege section of the camp, and therefore house those with resources to pay for enhanced accommodation, and so potentially internees who had resources to purchase material goods both from within the camp and from outside. Whilst there are a variety of compositions for such chalet interiors, one is by far the most frequently selected because it could reveal the greatest amount of space within the chalet. This is a diagonal view which incorporates a significant amount of two walls against which furniture is placed, with the foreground containing a table. The walls can support pictures and shelves, the furniture can also display coverings and other fittings, and the table can have a cover and artifacts on show. The human subjects of the photograph sit around the table, intimately associated with the physical space and the items on display. There is thus much opportunity to indicate the importance of material goods generally, and not only individual people but specific items can also be identified. Taking an actor-network approach to the relationships between people and things, arguing that both in union are necessary for practical action and emotional responses (Latour 2007; Mytum 2012), these interiors reveal coping strategies in these constructed domestic spaces where, in an all-male world, an adapted form of normality was played out. The internees were active agents having strong functional and symbolic relationships with many aspects of the material world.

Some chalets remain spartan, right through to 1918, whilst others are more heavily decorated with pictures and ornaments, as well as books and other items such as sporting and musical equipment. Whilst this might be purely financial (staying in the more costly chalet may have consumed all available disposable income but was preferable than being in a more heavily fitted out part of a communal barrack), it is more likely to reflect both taste and strategy in managing the stress of camp life.

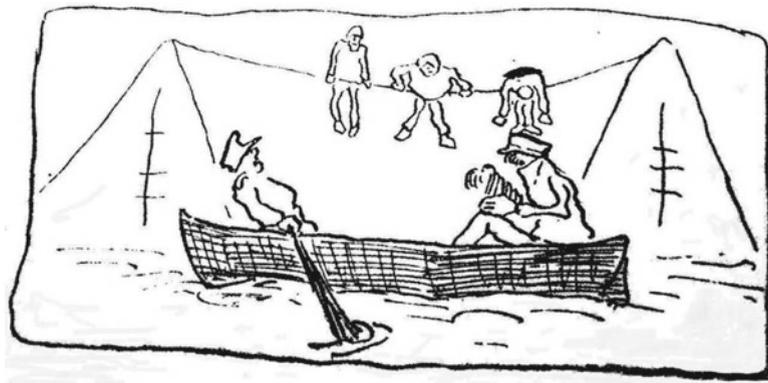
Various factors seem to influence reliance on material goods, including insecurity, cultural values where objects define identity and personal self-worth, or an attitude where material culture can act as a form of social and even monetary capital and so a form of security. Those not reliant on material goods may have a higher self-worth, non-physical attributes that give status and confidence, or a cultural attitude that places greater significance to interpersonal rather than person-object relationships. Most chalet interiors display a moderate amount of decoration, both fabrics over the furniture and pictures on the walls, with some containing a larger amount of goods to the point where the walls are almost completely covered. In contrast, there is a small minority where the walls are almost completely bare.

One example of a chalet with few items (Fig. 10.1) has a tennis racket and chess board in the background indicating some activities used to fill the time. There is one



**Fig. 10.1** Photographs of chalet interiors at Cunningham's Camp, Douglas. *Top*: Interior with few items of material culture. *Bottom*: Interior with many items of material culture. Note also internee servant making coffee (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

comfortable upholstered chair, and the table is covered with a cloth, but the book open on the table is not one of many on shelves behind, and the number and range of pictures is pitifully small. This image suggests that the material world was used in only a limited range of coping strategies here. Another image (Fig. 10.2) shows a



**Fig. 10.2** *Top*: Humorous cartoon showing the problems of a holiday camp being used in the wet winter, *Camp Echo*, 1914. *Bottom*: Two male internees in theatrical costume on the stage set (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

contrasting attitude, with more pictures on the walls and many books and other items on the shelves. The elaborate equipment associated with coffee drinking is also prominently displayed in the foreground, and indeed the servant preparing the beverage is also an integral part of the composition. The material goods owned and used within the internment context are here center-stage. They indicate their importance in the creating and cementing of social relations but also reflect an attitude to material goods and their role on the lives of those pictured.

The ownership of a few personal items might imbue them with great significance whilst similar items owned by another individual who has many other objects may not hold similar emotional value. However, it is likely that portable artifacts which have strong associations and relationships with the owner will be positioned within the view of the camera lens and will thus be displayed to the outside world. Within the context of the camp, everyday objects and items which evoke memories and relationships would have held far greater significance—and been part of more active object–person relationships—than would have been the case in normal life. These relationships and meanings were central to many coping strategies, some acting as physical reminders of past lives and loves and others enabling new relationships to be fostered and maintained through activities that were possible within the camp.

## **Categories of Coping Strategies**

The photographs and newspapers produced in the camp can be analyzed to reveal how its material world not only contributed to the stress of long-term communal living with limited external contact but also framed that experience. However, material culture was in many cases central to the practice of coping mechanisms, as people and things together dealt with stresses also caused by people (both guards and other internees) and things (from barbed wire to beds). Each of the main headings given in Table 10.1 can be considered to review coping mechanisms that were operated at Cunningham's Camp, with a view to assessing the role of material items enabled or constrained internees' agency in adapting to their stressful social and physical environment.

### ***Emphasizing the Greater Good***

The Cunningham's Camp sources reveal remarkably little religious imagery or activity in the camps apart from that associated with the Jewish community, though this may have been mainly an expression of ethnicity. The Jews had their own dining arrangements, and some photographs show the Menorah candlestick in their dining hall. It is notable how little religious activity is reported in the camp newspapers, and neither is it very visible in either the articles or any form of material product. A few Christmas cards reveal Biblical imagery, but most relate to seasonal

scenes, largely with snow and trees evoking German associations (though some had become part of British traditional iconography following the adoption of German tropes in the nineteenth century). Examples of loyalty, however, can be seen at many levels in the sources. Increasing nationalistic feelings are represented, despite censorship, in the newspapers (Kewley Draskau 2009, 2012), and this is also revealed in the iconography and images within these publications. Other items such as calendars and drawn postcards also display features which would be read as German by the intended viewers, though they were not offensive to the censors and so were allowed. In contrast, few overtly nationalistic images can be seen in the photographs of chalet interiors, though some do show German scenes (Mytum 2012). A continental-style pipe lying visibly on the table in one such interior scene may be referencing a family gift, prized possession or a national, non-British artifact to emphasize identities beyond the place of confinement, but the numbers of such items is remarkably small.

In the photographs, loyalty to kin is demonstrated by the presence of family pictures, small but no doubt recognizable by those to whom they mattered (Fig. 10.1), and loyalty to colleagues within the camp is also demonstrated by the social activities that created associations with shared interests. These newly-formed sets of relationships were consolidated and affirmed through the numerous group photographs taken throughout the period of internment which were used as postcards and sent out to cement and reinforce kin relationships attenuated by the war. They reveal alternative categories of belonging that acted as surrogates for family and work structures during internment.

## *Defenses*

Research has indicated the power of humor in coping with the stresses of internment (Henman 2001), and this form of defense against imposed authority is visible at Douglas. Humor is very visible in the newspapers in the form of both comic accounts of life in the camp and cartoons of activities and individuals. These can be cartoons of specific individuals, or comic images revealing aspects of camp life, particularly linked to the weather and communal life (Fig. 10.2, top).

Most of the photographs are static, formalized representations that do not reveal humor, but it can be seen in some of the theatrical scenes which clearly indicate amusing antics in appropriate costumes (Fig. 10.2, bottom). Newspaper advertisements and reviews reveal that comedy sketches, musicals, and plays were all produced in Douglas Camp, often to high acclaim. Humor must have been a significant coping strategy even if its form and sophistication varied greatly across the camp.

One of the coping mechanisms not listed in Table 10.1 but clearly linked to defenses is that of protection of privacy and personal space. Many studies have indicated that it is not the overcrowding but the perceived invasions of personal space that are most stressful in prisons (Evans and Wener 2007; Vischer 2007; Worchel 1978). Therefore, the definition of such spaces and indications of privacy



**Fig. 10.3** Employment and privacy. *Left*: Internees working as waiters. *Right*: Subdivision of a barrack block by curtains; this example is at either Douglas or Knockaloe (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

are important coping mechanisms within the high density living of Cunningham's Camp. The definition of personal spaces were partly achieved through the physical structures of rooms within the chalets and the structural form of the bell tents, but in the communal barracks spaces could be defined, at least temporarily, by the draping of blankets and creation of bounded space (Fig. 10.3, left). This strategy is noted in World War II internment contexts (Chap. 11), but it was already much used in earlier situations, suggesting that this is an important independently-developed response to create and maintain personal space that recurs in western cultures across time and space when overcrowding occurs.

### *Relationship to Captors*

The negative aspect of the relationship between prisoners and captors is the most obvious in the photographs, with guards visibly outside the wire and the internees inside. Positive association between internees and guards would not appear common in these sources, though there is a small number of images from 1917 that depict guards and internees sitting together. These suggest a level of friendship that

was strong enough to be recorded on commissioned photographs by this stage of the war. Resistance was celebrated, however, in articles and cartoons of the riot in November 1914 that sadly led to the death of some internees, and continued critical comments about British newspaper coverage of the war suggests that independence of thought was not hidden and did not lessen as the conflict continued. Many positive relationships with guards, though no doubt important in reality, would probably often have been against regulations, so they would have had to remain hidden from the censors' eyes, a filter that applies to all the sources available at present.

## *Social*

The social structures that were formed in the camp to create identities and purposes, and support networks when individuals felt depressed, were established in many ways. These were largely supported by the authorities who wished to maintain order and keep the camp occupants as content as possible. The newspapers themselves formed a physical method of communication, one that was largely delivered in German, often with regional dialects represented in the texts to further create particular identities and associations (Kewley Draskau 2009). Whilst the papers contained news—advertisements of coming events and reports on concerts and sporting events—this was inevitably limited in an enclosed world where mundane repetition was the norm. Much of the content, therefore, was editorial and features, communicating ideas and concepts that reinforced peer pressure to conform to certain attitudes and patterns of behavior. Despite the censorship, the publications reveal a clear tendency towards nationalistic opposition to the authorities that had incarcerated them. These papers could be kept, circulated, read and re-read to create patterns of reinforced thought and behavior that reinforced group affiliation at the level of the camp. The diverse collection of civilians brought together by the British label of “alien” were increasingly united by common values of Germanic “otherness” in which material items such as newspaper designs and other artwork, as well as intangible culture including carefully selected musical and dramatic performances, created distinctive identities within the camp.

The physical conditions in the barracks created group affiliation, as did football teams and those interested in other activities. The members of an orchestra or theatrical group not only met and consumed time and concentration on the production of a cultural performance, but they also created a widely-known camp persona and a sense of belonging to a special and valued group. The same opportunities were available for those with some sporting prowess, across a wide range of activities from snooker and bowling (Fig. 10.4, top) through athletics and gymnastics to boxing and wrestling. Even if competition was between individuals, training would be communal, and the results of competitions were widely reported in the newspapers, ensuring that knowledge of success was spread beyond those involved.



**Fig. 10.4** Activities as coping strategies. *Top*: Bowls players at the bowling alley at Cunningham's Camp, Douglas. *Bottom*: Administration office run by internees; this example is at either Douglas or Knockaloe (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

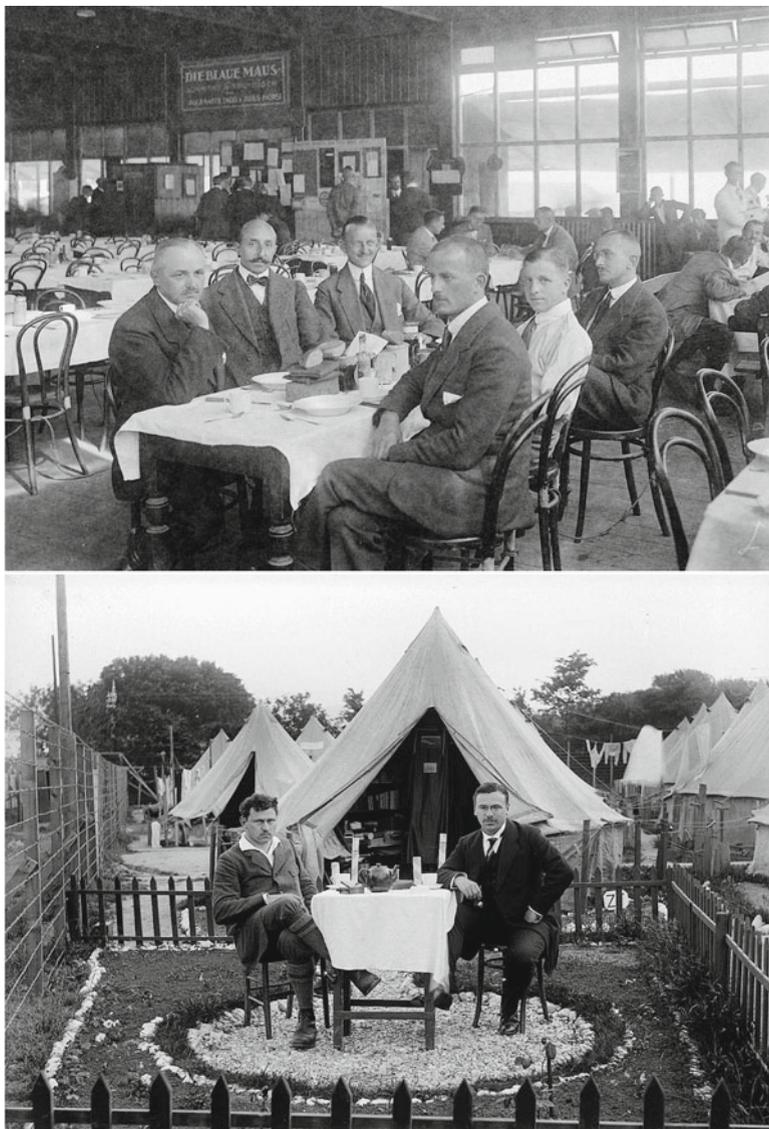
### *Conscious Effort*

Unlike military PoWs, there was no command structure already existing for those who entered the camp. This had to be formed by the internees themselves, and this was recognized by the authorities who encouraged the creation of an internal

administration that both spread the workload onto internees from the guards. It also created a measure of self-determination and at least apparent control back to the internee community itself. Within a culture where class and education created clearly differentiated groups, it would have been apparent who had both skills and standing to operate in these roles. The photographs showing internees in offices, with the material culture of office life in the early twentieth century around them, indicate how these items demonstrate to the viewer of the image that real work was being done (Fig. 10.4, bottom). The walls are covered with shelves with files and books, the notice board has neatly arranged papers and clip boards. The table has scattered papers, stamps, pens and ink wells around which cluster the office workers, and on the right sits a typewriter. The internees were responsible for various aspects of site administration and proud to have this captured by a photograph and distributed abroad to demonstrate that they could continue to function in a workplace context. The desire to take work in a range of positions within the camp was partly for the income that such posts provided, but also because they gave structure to the day, the sense of achievement in doing something useful, and in the camaraderie and social interactions that such activities allowed.

One of the most important ways in which structure was created within the camp was through activities. Sporting and artistic endeavors have already been mentioned, but much else was established, often within a very short time of the camp being formed, including many forms of educational classes. Some of these could lead to formal qualifications, and many to enhanced employability on release. These classes allowed social interaction but also led to the creation of timetables and the ordered use of time and spaces, whether inside buildings or in outside spaces such as the exercise compound. There were also opportunities for work to earn money by manufacturing goods such as furniture and brushes, in enterprises supported by the Quakers (Cresswell 2005; Hughes 1926; Sargeant 1920), or through acting as personal servants to affluent internees (Fig. 10.1, bottom) or as camp catering workers (Fig. 10.3, left). Material culture was often used to signal such roles within the camp, whether waiters' uniforms or factory overalls, creating a sense of shared identity with colleagues and demonstrating this role to others. The photographs display these outfits to those to whom the postcards were sent, indicating an active and more normalized lifestyle than was in reality the case. These images formed part of the coping strategy for the internees both for themselves and for their families and friends.

Some social rituals are well represented in the photographs, suggesting that they were not only frequent and popular, but also that they held a special role in the structuring of time and in the ordering and managing of relationships between people. There was clearly conscious effort to maintain elements of normality as far as was possible within the constraints of the camp. Dining room photographs show packed tables of diners, and those in the Privilege Camp had all the accustomed linen and cutlery to match their perceived status, even if wartime rationing meant that the menu was limited (Fig. 10.5, top). Even dining for the rest of the internees may have resembled the factory workplace canteen, a familiar experience even if not acting as a respite from hard work for most internees but rather a moment of activity within the humdrum life of constrained leisure.



**Fig. 10.5** Photographs of social rituals at Cunningham's Camp, Douglas. *Top*: Privilege dining room. *Bottom*: Taking tea in a small fenced garden area (Courtesy Manx National Heritage)

Rituals such as taking tea or coffee provided contexts where people met but, equally important in the crowded camp conditions, excluded others. These could take place in the privacy of the tent or chalet (Fig. 10.1, bottom), or in the barrack behind curtains or drapes. Alternatively, tea could be taken outside if the weather

was suitable, within one of the small, fenced, plots that created defined oases of calm that, whilst not separated from the sights and sounds of the camp, could form a small, bounded space where at least symbolically the participants could distance themselves and create an air of contrived normality (Fig. 10.5, bottom). The view in one direction was to cramped rows of tents with laundry hanging between them, and in another through barbed wire to the inaccessible town of Douglas and the sea, towards family and home beyond. But within the fenced space there was an order, calm, and sense of place that was maintained in a conscious effort to create the fiction of normality, the albeit fleeting sensation of privacy and control.

### *Psychological/Fantasy*

By their very nature, psychological reactions may leave little obvious material trace, though theoretically the opportunities for art and literature could reveal this aspect. Some of the articles in the newspapers are indeed fantasy, particularly revolving around food and Germanic themes. They also relate to idealized notions of life following release, a form of escapism that helped both the writers and readers cope with the sense of the world moving on outside the camp without them. All held the fear that employment, home, and family relationships might not return to how they had been before the war. The creation and reading of the newspapers provided opportunities to release fantasies, as the numerous short stories and poems indicate. Romantic resonances of the homeland and humorous critiques of camp catering form the main focus of these accounts. Equally important were the numerous theatrical productions that made use of the existing facilities within the holiday camp. These were highly structured fantasy creations where apparent females could be viewed and heard (Fig. 10.2, bottom), where elements of normality could for a short time be projected upon the audience. Images of women, relations, famous actresses, or idealized females were also widely displayed on the walls of the chalets (Fig. 10.1) and communal sleeping blocks. These could create triggers for fantasy, as indeed could the idealized rural scenes also popular as room decorations. All could provide inspiration for memories of times past and fantasies of time to be had. They should not be treated as mere decoration; they functioned as reminders of the world beyond, of the world lost but eventually to be restored and, in the meantime, to be imagined.

Other fantasies no doubt remained private or at most discussed amongst close friends. Indeed, the practical, action-focused attitudes within the camp suggest that the introverted ways of coping were not encouraged and that peer pressure would have kept this to a minimum, though periods of lying on one's bed staring at the images on the walls would have been a routine activity, especially in bad weather. Whilst not clearly articulated because of cultural and social pressures, this probably was a significant part of coping for many individuals, though not taken to dangerous levels of self-delusion which are the cases which have attracted psychological analysis when observed in more recent contexts.

## Conclusions

The examination of the photographs commissioned in the camp, combined with the newspapers written and read by the internees themselves, reveals the role of material goods—whether built spaces such as the chalets or portable objects such as books or pictures—as important in the creation of networks of meaning and action that allowed a wide variety of coping strategies to be undertaken at Douglas Camp. Whilst “barbed wire disease” was seen as psychological, it was created by physical conditions and was largely ameliorated by those using the material world to create spaces, places and things which could enable positive actions and thoughts. These coping strategies could overcome the boredom and loss of purpose brought about by internment, and could in some small way compensate for the routine family and workplace interactions that had been lost.

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# Chapter 11

## “My Home Was the Area Around My Bed”: Experiencing and Negotiating Space in Civilian Internment Camps in Germany, 1942–1945

Gilly Carr

**Abstract** In 1942 and 1943, 2,200 Channel Islanders were deported to civilian internment camps in Germany. The role of the material culture made by internees from the recycled contents of their Red Cross parcels allows understanding of the use and perception of space in the internment camp. The most ubiquitous images produced in the camps showed how internees experienced and negotiated space and territory in the camp on a variety of levels: around their beds; their barrack room or dormitory; and in the buildings and grounds of the camp as a whole. Beyond this lay the immediate vicinity of the camp—the fields, village or townscape visible through the barbed wire. At yet another level of remove was the space of their unrestrained imagination which was usually the landscape of home. Using these nested levels of experienced and imagined space, this paper examines the confined world behind barbed wire that the civilian internees called home.

### Archival Sources and Abbreviations

GOMG    German Occupation Museum, Guernsey  
IWM     Imperial War Museum  
JHC     Jersey Heritage Collections  
JWT     Jersey War Tunnels  
RCMAA  Red Cross Museum and Archive

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## Archaeology and Internment

There are various data sets that archaeologists can and have used to analyze the experience of living in a camp, whether studying the civilian internee or the military prisoner of war (Chap. 1; Myers and Moshenska 2011). Such studies depend on what survives on and in the ground and in archives, and whether former prisoners are still alive to interview. Where little or nothing survives, excavation or survey is necessary to identify the location or function of various structures which remain. The archaeologist is sometimes also able to find and identify artifacts from the camp, some of which may have been made by hand, and which help in understanding the daily life of internment (Chaps. 4, 5, and 8). A desk-based survey, involving photographs and administrative camp paperwork from archives, can also help to bring color to the understanding of camp life. This can be enhanced considerably by examining the personal archives of former inmates. These include diaries and letters, although many tend to focus on the four topics of food, the weather, family and friends, and (heavily encoded) rumors surrounding war-related news. This restricted subject matter was due to strict rules of letter censorship, fear of the discovery of private diaries by either other inmates or guards, and general shortage of paper. Nonetheless, such sources are often understandably privileged by those who would learn more about perceptions of life in camp.

The first-hand accounts of living former internees and prisoners of war, provided through oral testimony, can contribute much to the understanding of the use of space in the camp, especially if items survive to prompt the memory. These men and women and their memories sadly grow increasingly fewer in number and dimmer in detail as the years pass.

One of the most important sources we can use to understand the spaces of internment—perhaps, in addition to excavation, the most important—is often to be found in the material culture of personal archives which bear witness to the creativity behind barbed wire. The embroidery depicting an untidy barrack room; the watercolor of the camp buildings; the illustrated theater program showing the camp-built stage and scenery; the design of the camp garden; the birthday card depicting children playing in the camp grounds; the metalwork engraving of the view beyond the barbed wire, scratched onto a camp-issue mug: all of these items can be defined as “trench art” (as defined by Saunders 2003:11), and are rich sources of information for the archaeologist, and reveal meaning and significance to the space behind and beyond the barbed wire.

In the past, many of these personal artifacts have been discarded or dismissed as meaningless ephemera, perhaps superficially attractive and interesting but unable to tell us as much as other (largely written) sources. They have been seen as secondary or tertiary in importance behind diaries and other papers. Even collectors have often favored the PoW letters, stamps, and postmarks, the ID-tags, and the paperwork of POW officialdom above the hand-made birthday cards, the musical scores, and the embroidered tablecloths. However, perception of the importance of PoW material culture has slowly changed. “Creativity Behind Barbed Wire,” the first international and interdisciplinary conference with this explicit focus, took place at the University

of Cambridge in 2010 (Carr and Mytum 2012). This was prompted by museum exhibitions which have prioritized the creativity of internees such as the 1994 exhibition at Manx Museum, “Living With The Wire: Civilian Internment in the Isle of Man during the Two World Wars”; the “Patchwork of Internment” exhibition, held at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol in 2001 on the subject of civilian internment in the Far East; “Captured: The extraordinary lives of Prisoners of War,” held at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) North in 2009; and “Occupied Behind Barbed Wire,” on the subject of Channel Island civilians deported to German internment camps, exhibited at Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery, and curated by the author in 2010.

Art historians, anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists have also helped to change the focus and widen perceptions with the study of internees and internment through their camp-made arts and crafts. While art historians have tended to focus on high-profile subjects, such as Fred Uhlman and Kurt Schwitters, who had already made a name for themselves before internment, and who continued to produce “high art” in the camps (Behr and Malet 2004; Hinrichsen 1993; Müller-Härlin 2005), others have instead focused on the objects and artwork made by ordinary people (Archer 2004:156–165; Becker 2004; Carr 2009; Cresswell 2005; Dusselier 2008), shifting the focus of attention from the well-known individual to the heterogeneous group, and from illumination of one person’s experience to insight of varied experiences of internment of the wider camp community. This includes the specific experience of interned children and women (Archer 2004), previously largely overlooked within academic narratives of internment.

It is likely that increasing interest in the details of the experiences, perceptions, and emotions of internment has been prompted by the awareness that those who lived through such experiences are now moving toward the edge of living memory. At the time of writing (2010), we are commemorating the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II. While the youngest military PoWs of this period are in their mid-80s, those who experienced the war as child civilian internees are now mostly in their 70s. As these generations leave us, there is a greater urgency to discover more about their camp lives. The role of material culture and art as memory objects can be invaluable in prompting recollections of interned life. As Saunders (2009:39) has argued, like other items of trench art, their “significance comes from their visceral associations ... their power to recall via memory and imagination the circumstances of their production.” Oral testimony coupled with material culture can be a powerful tool.

## Hidden Worlds and the Meaning of Space

An enquiry into the meaning of space is part of the desire to discover and to recapture the small details of interned life in order to populate or embody the past. As well as being an end-point in terms of data collection, it can be a springboard for further research questions regarding the use and experience of space by men, women and children, and internees of different status, rank or class. How was territory perceived and divided in the camp? How were power structures enacted and subverted,

and how can these be recognized through space or material culture? How was space demarcated for different functions from theater, schooling, and sports to eating, washing, and sleeping? How were privacy and private activities maintained, if at all? Did children perceive the camp space in a different way to adults? Was it possible to pass beyond the barbed wire from time to time, either metaphorically (in the imagination or in dreams, facilitated by theatrical productions or aided by music), or in reality (through escape or organized walks)? Oral testimony and the products of creativity reveal hidden worlds which archaeological excavation alone could never hope to uncover. Art and craftwork can expose the secret places of courtship, flirtation and procreation in mixed-sex segregated camps; the “haunted” basements and empty dungeons of internment camps in German schlosses; and the concealed childhood “homes” for insects and small animals inside Red Cross boxes and empty food tins. Such “thick description” is surely the ultimate aim for the researcher.

It is some time now since Parker Pearson and Richards (1994:xi) complained that, by obsessively recording architecture and physical features in great detail, archaeologists were somehow “missing the point in their substitution of description for understanding.” Internment archaeologists have gone much further in their interpretations than mere description and identification of barrack blocks or prison cells. Archaeological studies of this subject are a relatively new phenomenon and include Burton (1996), Myers (2008), Myers and Moshenska (2011), Neike and Neike (2003), Seitsonen and Herva (2011), Thomas (2003), and Thomas (2011). Such studies have been greatly enhanced by the interpretation of excavated small finds, which have revealed much about subversive daily life and practices, such as the maintenance of traditional foodways among Japanese-Americans at Manzanar camp (Majewski 1996:809), and the illicit bartering and black market exchange at the Australian colonial prison of Ross Female Factory which subverted the documented institutional landscape of domination and subordination (Casella 2000, 2001).

Prisoners may well have sung patriotic songs, composed defiant poetry, traded goods with German guards, dug tunnels, and other subversive acts, all in the same area designed for sleeping, eating, and daily life, and bound by strict rules, daily orders, and architecture. In order to understand these actions, the meanings to those who performed them, and the resulting memories that these actions and meanings engendered, a holistic approach is needed which draws upon not just excavation and historical written records, but also oral testimony and the wider archival record of material culture and artwork that exists for many camps. Whether excavation is an option or not, the material culture produced behind barbed wire should be center stage when interpreting interned space, as Dusselier (2008) has shown to excellent effect.

## **The Internment of Channel Islanders, 1942–1945**

Channel Islanders deported to German civilian internment camps during the German occupation of the Islands during World War II were selected on Hitler’s orders in retaliation for the British invasion of Persia (modern day Iran) in 1941, and the subsequent

deportation to Australia, at the hands of the British, of German civilians who worked and lived in Persia at that time (Bevege 1993:128–129, 241). The Channel Islanders were deported in two waves. Individuals and families who left in September 1942 were targeted if the male head of the household was English-born (as opposed to being born in the Islands) and was aged between 16 and 70. The remainder, sent away in February 1943, were targeted under categories which included officers who had fought in World War I; Freemasons and British Jews; and “undesirables” or political prisoners. Also included were some from the Channel Island of Sark. A British commando raid in October 1942 was suspected of having received local assistance, and German retaliation against the local population came 4 months later.

After many weeks in squalid transit camps, the islanders arrived at their permanent camps in southern Germany. Families from the island of Jersey were sent to Wurzach, where they were stationed in the town’s schloss, and families from the island of Guernsey went to Biberach, a recently emptied barrack-block military POW camp just outside the town (see Chap. 12). Both of these camps were segregated by sex at night. Unattached men from both islands were sent to schloss Laufen, near the border with Austria, a camp they shared with American civilians. Later in the war, some unattached women were moved to Liebenau, where a variety of nationalities were interned in the local schloss which also functioned as an insane asylum. Handfuls of other islanders were also sprinkled across a variety of other camps further afield.

Those in all camps passed their time in creating a wealth of trench art, mostly recycled from the empty contents of their Red Cross parcels: cardboard, parcel string, food tins, cellophane packing material, and the wooden parcel crates. These raw materials were pressed into service, making anything and everything from theater scenery to carnival costumes, communion chalices to sports trophies, hair curlers to sun hats, and from baby high-chairs to armchairs for the older members of the internee community (Carr 2009). In an overcrowded camp and in an era when keeping emotions under control was valued, expected, and even a necessity, internees poured their fears, anxieties, frustrations and anger into the objects they made and the artwork they produced (Carr 2011). Thus, these objects of art and craftwork offer unexpectedly potent insights into the daily lives of the internees.

## **Personal Territory and Communal Areas: The Levels of Experienced and Imagined Space**

While there are many ways for the archaeologist to examine interned space (Casella 2007), the material culture specialist dealing with objects which have lost their original context requires a different approach. Space can be perceived as having been experienced in internment camps at five nested levels; levels which also embrace issues of gender, age, status, or class.

The first level or unit of analysis is the camp bunk and the space immediately around it stems from two sources. Internees frequently sketched or painted their

beds (often strewn with personal possessions or clothes), the view from their beds (as seen when sitting or lying in it), or drew themselves or were drawn sitting or lying in or on them. This observation was illuminated further during conversations with former internees. Jerseyman Michael Ginns, a former internee in Wurzach, explained that his home was the area around his bed (interview, August 2009). Godfrey Le Cappelain from Jersey, interned in Wurzach and Laufen camp, clarified this further, stating that his bunk was his territory. That was it. Everything else had to be shared (interview, August 31, 2009). Jerseywoman Gwen Bisson, also interned in Wurzach, described her bed as the place where she went to be alone (interview, September 1, 2009). A retreat to one's bed during the day may have acted as a signal to other internees that one was not to be disturbed. A series of caricatures of 60 Biberach camp personalities by artist Mr Dickinson shows his fellow Biberach artist, Eric Sirett, sitting on his bunk and painting with his sketchpad on his knee (JHC JA 1095). That he chose this place to do his work is indicative of the private, personal nature of both the location and the work itself.

The understanding of the bed as territory or inviolable personal and personalized space is quite understandable in an overcrowded, communal camp. That it was also perceived as a place for solitude in the same conditions seems a little surprising. However, the artwork clarifies how this was possible. A couple of watercolors of rooms in both Wurzach and Biberach camps by Jersey artist Harold Hepburn shows that during daylight hours people would lie on their beds with their back to the room and their eyes closed to shut out the overpopulated camp life (JHC ref. L/D/25/E3/C/4 and L/D/25/E3/A/9). Even more important, the bed was a place for sleep and for dreaming. A few watercolors survive which show the importance of dreaming for internees. P.J. Doughty, interned in Wurzach, drew a cartoon sketch of images from the camp in the winter of 1944–1945 (JHC ref. L/C/46/B/10). The bottom right hand corner shows the occupants of a bunk-bed. The person in the top bunk is dreaming of “home sweet home,” and a house on a cliff is visible in his dream-bubble. The person in the bunk below is dreaming of “bonny England.” The scene is labeled “warmth and dreamland,” reminding us that the bed was an important place for keeping warm, just as much as it was for escaping the confines of camp life by dreaming. While dreaming of home must have been a very common theme during sleeping and waking hours in the camp, people also dreamed of items which were unobtainable. A birthday card made in Wurzach and now in private ownership in Jersey shows a smiling but fast asleep internee dreaming of a big glass of foaming beer. It seems that every internee knew that they could only obtain their hearts' desire in their day- or night-time dreams. No wonder the bed was such a cherished place.

The bunk-bed appears in various items of camp-made material culture. Two made in Biberach are in the IWM: a child's toy bunk-bed, made by Guernseyman William Walker (IWM ref. EPH 772), and a simple tapestry made by Doris Aitken, which features three features of camp life: tinned food, beetroot soup, and the bunk-bed (IWM ref. EPH 804). The bunk-bed also features prominently in camp-issue mugs engraved by Guernseyman Byll Balcombe; c. 15 are known, most still in private ownership in the Channel Islands and the UK. Balcombe engraved these

mugs to transform them into Christening or wedding anniversary gifts, but others celebrate Easter, birthdays, and other important dates. His mugs are full of symbols, some of which were meaningful to internees, and others of which were very specific to Byll's life and experiences (Carr 2008).

The private territory of the bunk-bed also extended to the space underneath and above it. This was personalized by items of artwork pinned to the wall around the bed, the placement of possessions under and on the bed and on shelves above it, and home-made crocheted bed-spreads. Suitcases and Red Cross parcels were also kept under or above the bed. Children used this space for newly acquired pets. Twins Henry and Maurice Matthews kept frog spawn, acquired on guard-accompanied walks, in an empty Klim tin (which originally contained Canadian dried milk) on the window ledge near their bed in Wurzach (interview with Henry and Maurice Matthews, Wurzach, April 29, 2008). Ralph Godwin and his twin brother Neville, interned in Biberach camp, kept insects and snails (similarly acquired on walks) inside empty cardboard Red Cross parcels and Klim tins. These boxes were kept under the bed (interview with Ralph Godwin, December 29, 2009). Ralph Godwin was given a birthday card in camp, illustrated with a snail crawling along the edge of a Klim tin, and this item acted as an important memory object in prompting the recall of this childhood practice.

The second level at which camp life was experienced was that of the barrack room or dormitory. Like the bed, this space also acted as “home.” The barrack room or dormitory at each camp held different numbers of people. Those high in the camp administration (a position generally held by ex-military men with officer rank) might have a smaller room with fewer people, providing an insight into how power structures and even social hierarchy might be imposed onto space. Otherwise, one would be put into a large room with many other people from all walks of life, causing arguments and bad feeling in the class-conscious 1940s (Sinclair 1944:71; Coles unpublished, entry for June 18, 1943). In Laufen camp, men recognized to be of high class or status slept in a room called the “House of Lords” by other inmates, showing how class and status could be self-selecting in structuring space. All camp rooms were generally spartanly furnished with closely packed bunks, a single stove which rarely seemed to generate enough heat to keep the occupants warm, and a plain wooden table with stools for each room member. In surviving artwork, the tables are frequently depicted with the meager rations issued to internees: bowls of watery soup, slices of bread, small portions of butter, and a communal jug of the much-despised mint tea (Fig. 11.1). Camp-issue mugs and bowls are usually on view, and very occasionally these are joined by a Red Cross parcel or, even less frequently, by its contents. The deliberate display of these poor rations was a form of mute protest about conditions.

Although Red Cross parcels arrived regularly from December 1942 onwards (but were disrupted towards the end of the war), their contents are rarely displayed, and even then as tins recycled into other items of material culture, such as the ubiquitous Klim tin turned into a teapot. This kind of recycling was encouraged by the Red Cross. Leaflets on how to make objects out of empty tins were sent out to military and civilian camps (RCMAA 95/50 [P41]), and letters, diaries and art work feature tantalizing descriptions or sketches of these. Among Channel Islanders, engraved



**Fig. 11.1** A barrack room in Biberach camp showing rations laid out on the table. Picture by Harold Hepburn, Jersey Archives ref. L/D/25/E3/C/4 (Courtesy Jersey Heritage)

commemorative trays, plates, and dishes made from Canadian maple leaf butter tins were among the items popularly brought back to the islands after liberation.

Another feature of the barrack room which is apparent from the surviving arts and crafts is the degree to which the room was domesticated and made comfortable. This is stronger in camps where women and children were present, indicating how space was gendered. As Sørensen (2000:145) reminds us, “gender relations are embodied in the way space is understood and responded to, and space provides a medium for its performance.” While the theater of all-male camps could be a performative space for cross-dressing and trans-gender identifications among prisoners of war (Rachamimov 2006), the women’s barrack rooms in family camps such as Biberach became gendered through inhabitation, practice and the performance of female roles. During the day, and especially at mealtimes, the men would come to the women and children’s barracks where the food would be eaten. Uprooted from their homes and prevented from enacting other expected “wifely duties,” many women inscribed their femininity, with its associated domesticity, upon the space where they lived for the benefit of their husbands. The crocheted bedspread, made in Biberach and on display in La Valette Military Museum in Guernsey, has already been mentioned. Placemats and doilies were made by women in Liebenau camp (RCMAA 0551//9/5-6); slippers survive from Wurzach (JHC ref. JERSM 1993/525/16) and Biberach (German Occupation Museum, Guernsey (GOMG)), and an embroidered tablecloth with defiant symbolism was made by Norah Hadgetts in Wurzach (JHC SJM, 1992.224). By enforcing the sexual segregation of the camps

only at night the guards, the architecture, and the spatial ordering of the camp, conspired to control internee sexuality and reproduction. That babies were conceived and born in the camps shows that internees found ways to subvert these institutional and architectural constraints.

Whilst soft furnishings were made by women to domesticate their space, the men fabricated wooden furniture for the oldest and youngest within their community. In Biberach, men with carpentry experience volunteered to recycle the wooden parcel crates in which the Red Cross parcels arrived. The fruit of their labor is apparent in pencil, pen and ink sketches and in a photograph from Biberach camp. Sketches of barrack rooms in Biberach in La Valette Military Museum and the German Underground Hospital in Guernsey both show home-made armchairs, complete with “Red Cross” still printed on their sides, made for the older members of the camp. One armchair is positioned next to a coffee table, a packing truck transformed into more domestic use by the placement of two pot plants (recycled food tins) on top. While few photographs survive from the camps in which Channel Islanders were interned, all date from after liberation, a period during which at least one internee bartered a camera and film from one of the guards (Peter Sirett, personal communication 2008). One shows Carole Anne Ashton, born in Biberach, sitting in a home-made baby’s high chair in the camp.

If parents were unable entirely to turn barrack rooms into comfortable domestic space for their children, they could create children’s toys, thus “domesticating” their imagination and imaginative play. Examples include a peach-colored silk toy sofa made in Liebenau (RCMAA ref. 0551/2) and a toy stove, complete with pots, pans and utensils, made in Biberach from a recycled biscuit tin. A photograph probably taken by a visiting Red Cross representative in Biberach just before Christmas 1943 shows the camp workshop with its production line of children’s toys. Among these can be discerned cots, a dolls’ house, cranes, and airplanes. A watercolor painted in Wurzach shows a messy room inhabited by women and children. Toys are strewn on the floor and beds, and in the middle of the picture is a doll’s bed, made from an empty cardboard Red Cross parcel (Fig. 11.2).

Although the layout of architectural space in the camp was not of the internees’ making, but was imposed upon them in order to control their bodies and movements, the artwork shows how they subverted or worked around such architecture of control. Internees carved up the larger territory of the barrack into smaller units by hanging washing lines and clothes across the room. This was explicitly forbidden by the camp authorities, as they were afraid that damp clothes might also make the room damp. Henry and Maurice Matthews, interned in Wurzach, recall women in their room hanging up blankets for privacy. Former internees often remark on the difficulties experienced by older members of the camp, especially women, in sharing their space with small boys who were not yet old enough to leave their mothers and move into the men’s rooms (Tough 1995:69; interview with Henry and Maurice Matthews, Wurzach, April 29, 2008). Thus, communal space could also be carved up along age and gender lines by the hanging of blankets.

At the third level of analysis, art and craftwork let us perceive the wider camp and its grounds through the eyes of the internees. While we know that various rooms

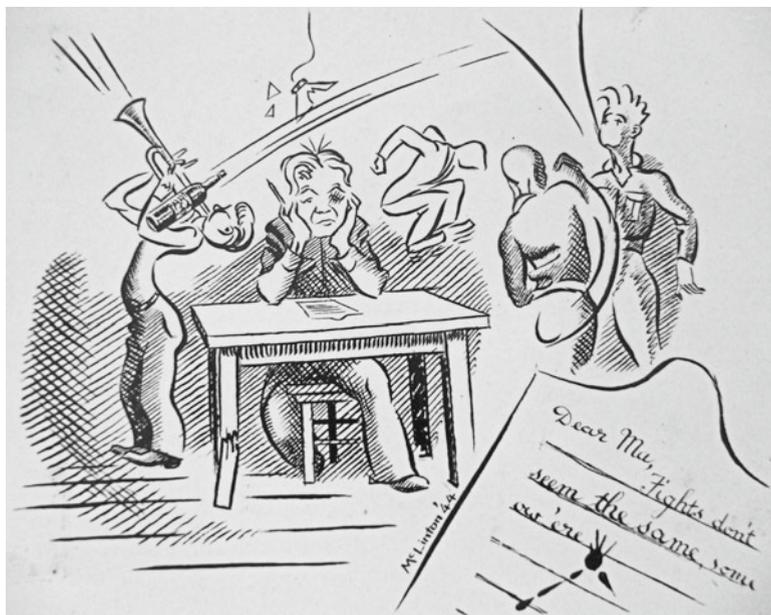


**Fig. 11.2** The inside of a women and children's room in schloss Wurzach, in private ownership (Courtesy Jersey Heritage)

or barrack huts were transformed into the camp theater, classroom, and dance hall by internees, showing agency in the manipulation and creation of interned space, oral testimony, written evidence and art work tells us how this space was perceived by those who lived in it. An article on “education in captivity” by Herbert Gompertz in Laufen, written for the camp publication (Anon 1945), describes his pleasure in entering a room and seeing men engrossed in algebraic problems, poetry composition, portraiture, languages and astronomy, despite the “background noise and discomfort.” A pen and ink sketch done in Laufen depicts a man trying to write to his mother, despite one person in the background playing a trumpet and a group of others having a fight (Fig. 11.3).

Education was important in camp because it enabled internees to forget temporarily that they were behind barbed wire. It afforded them periods of “oblivion of internment” so that they could “evade the barbed wire” (Anon 1945:55, 56). Theater and musical concerts were also a very popular distraction in all camps. Music could carry the internees’ spirits high above the barbed wire, away to loved ones or their homes in the Channel Islands. For the actors in theatrical productions, putting on a costume and pretending to be someone else who was not interned in a camp was also a welcome release.

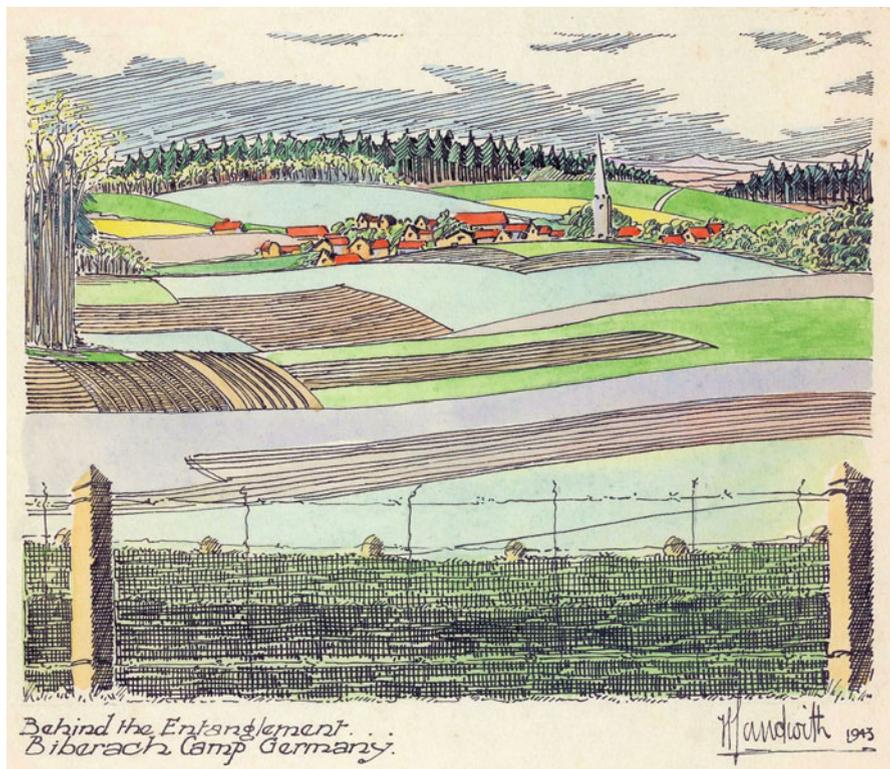
Some surveyed the camp grounds with bitterness, as a letter by Sinclair (1944:71) records: “Imagine long white buildings with two rings of high barbed wire, gravel, 1,000-odd people all of different classes, mix them up and there you have us. No quiet, no peace ever, nowhere to go to be alone, no privacy of any sort.” Biberach camp seemed particularly drab and lacking in color. This explains the abundance of brightly colored craftwork and embroidery made in the camp, as islanders tried to



**Fig. 11.3** Pen and ink sketch drawn in Laufen by McLinton (Courtesy German Occupation Museum, Guernsey)

inject some beauty into their surroundings. Paintings made in camp show clearly that the kitchen garden which could have been used for growing vegetables also grew brightly colored flowers, the seeds for which were sent to the camp from the British Horticultural Society. This would have done much to gladden the heart of the internees, and was a way in which they could express their identity as people from islands abundant in flora.

Caricatures of camp personalities at Biberach drawn by Mr. Dickinson (JHC JA 1095) depict many of them walking around the camp grounds, hands in pockets, looking highly disgruntled. Jerseyman Michael Ginns explains that the internees used to walk around the camp grounds for exercise; it was also an opportunity for husbands and wives to talk to each other privately (interview, August 2009). To understand the perception of various public spaces or barracks in the camp, we must remember the sadness and bitterness with which such spaces may have been imbued in the minds of the internees. The camp hospital (usually just a single room)—and indeed the barrack room bunk-bed—was a place of pain and death for some. Epidemics such as scarlet fever swept through the camp at Wurzach, and Channel Islander deaths from illnesses such as meningitis and diphtheria were not unknown. Accidents within the camp grounds claimed lives, as did stress-related conditions such as cancer, heart attacks, and even chronic depression. Several children lost parents in the camp, which affected them for the rest of their lives. Simple illnesses also affected internees. Although they received Red Cross supplies within several



**Fig. 11.4** “Behind the entanglement,” image of Biberach camp by William Sandwith (Courtesy German Occupation Museum, Guernsey)

months of their deportation, a lack of vitamins from fresh fruit and vegetables meant that colds, coughs, and flu were endemic to camp life. Cuts from opening Red Cross tins led to infections, which in turn led to the amputation of fingers for some.

The view beyond the barbed wire provides the fourth level of analysis, characterized as a “landscape of longing” (Carr 2007)—the first step of the journey home that internees wished to make. Gazing beyond the barbed wire, as if it could facilitate the escape of the body as well as the imagination, was depicted in a pen and ink sketch made in Laufen, captioned “if the body could but the thoughts accompany” (GOMG). The view outside the camp was a popular theme in camp-made arts and crafts, as with Byll Balcombe’s engraved mugs which often show the “Wieland Linde,” a linden tree planted by Biberachian writer and poet Christopher Wieland in the eighteenth century to mark his engagement. This tree was visible from the camp, and became a motif in the work of Balcombe and others. Guernsey commercial artist William Sandwith, also interned in Biberach, became known for his hand-painted greetings cards. Many were entitled “beyond the entanglement” (Fig. 11.4), and show the trees and gently undulating hills visible from the barbed wire. For all artists and artisans who painted the view, the barbed wire itself was always visible in



**Fig. 11.5** The kitchen garden of Biberach camp by Ethel Cheeswright (Courtesy German Occupation Museum, Guernsey)

their work and rarely, if ever, excluded. It was difficult for internees to get past the wire, even artistically. Its presence, surely so easy to leave out of artworks, probably also served as a statement of their resentment at being interned. Its presence in their lives as an insurmountable obstacle was unavoidable.

Passing beyond the wire was also a theme which occurred in greetings cards in the camp—surely among the greatest gifts which internees could bestow upon each other. This is illustrated in a card made in 1944 by Mr. Dickson, interned in Biberach. The front contains a tracing paper panel, upon which was drawn the barbed wire, and through which can be seen the image inside the card of the view beyond the wire. On opening the card, the barbed wire is removed and the view is uninterrupted. Sark artist Ethel Cheeswright found a novel way of lessening the sting of the architecture of confinement in one of her watercolors. Her depiction of the colorful camp kitchen garden, with the pretty town in the distance, and the green grass and trees outside the camp, make the barbed wire and watchtower lose their power (Fig. 11.5).

The landscape beyond the wire of Biberach camp was not perceived in the same way by local townspeople and internees. Islanders reinterpreted and renamed what they saw from the camp, so that a small wood in the middle distance, captured in so many camp watercolors, for example, was nick-named the “Black Forest.” In Sandwith’s greetings cards, the rolling landscape looks deceptively English, and in a child’s birthday card drawn by Ethel Cheeswright, Mickey Mouse makes an appearance at the camp. The necessity to familiarize space and diffuse the fear that it may have held by renaming and reimagining it gives us an insight into internees’ perceptions of landscape. While most landscapes draw their meaning from bodily inhabitation and the physical movement of people within them, the landscape beyond the camp could never be experienced in this way for internees.

The fifth level of analysis is, in many ways, an extension of the fourth. The imagined landscapes of home, equally unobtainable, lay a long way beyond the barbed wire—a place that may as well have existed only in the imagination for the internees. Biberach internee Ron Harris expressed this well when he wrote to friends in Guernsey on April 19, 1943, saying that “news is greatly appreciated, serving to

remind us that there is another existence outside our present one, because at times one feels that everything outside our present boundary belongs to a dream life” (RCMAA ref. 2378/2-5). The “dream life” of internees can be divided into two different destinations: England and the Channel Islands. Both were embroidered, engraved, painted or sketched in a variety of media, and were represented in different and distinct ways. Nearly all images of England were reproduced as romantic and traditional thatched cottages, an idealized home complete with roses around the front door. For most of the men and many of the women in the camps, England and not the Channel Islands was the place of their birth, although many had left England years before. The best example of these images are to be seen in the work of Joan Coles, interned in Wurzach, who made colorfully embroidered postcards and badges of English cottages (JHC ref. L/D/25/E1/2 and L/D/25/E1/4). Unlike the generic and idealized images of an English home, the representations of the Channel Islands were all of specific landmarks, such as Castle Cornet in St Peter Port, the Corbière Lighthouse in Jersey, or the cliffs of Sark reproduced, often with extraordinary accuracy, from memory. Many images of home (of either location) were presented to other internees as gifts, perhaps as a birthday card or a Christmas present. What better gift could someone trapped behind barbed wire receive than the gift of home?

## Conclusion

As archaeologists we can seek to understand the use of space in a camp—the cultural landscape of the PoW—by going further than simply identifying the location, use, and function of various buildings. Using camp-made material culture and artwork, coupled with oral testimony, we can strive to understand these buildings, the camp as a whole, and the embodied spaces inside it, in terms which would have been familiar and authentic to those who once inhabited them. This includes the individual and communal experiences of interned, confined space and how meaning and power relations were inscribed onto it by people of different ages, genders, social classes and status, and by guards and the guarded. *Here* was where the older women hung up blankets across the room so they could wash in private; *there*, guards and internees met to exchange food and cigarettes; *there*, the male camp guard watched as the women took communal weekly showers, and *there*, behind that barrack, on edge of the men’s side of the camp, the babies of Biberach camp were conceived.

While lying outside the limit of most archaeological investigations, we must also appreciate the importance of the unconfined, imagined, or dream life of the landscape beyond the barbed wire, and of home, which existed on the horizons and in the minds of the internees. In order to approach and interpret the space of the internment camp and its surroundings, it can be useful to perceive it as multiple levels of nested space. This provides a holistic structure for analysis, approached by using as many sources as possible. Traditionally, these have involved oral testimony, photos, diaries, and letters, but the multiple forms of creative outlet of the

interned, especially their art and craftwork, can add much in the way of nuance and (quite literally) color to our interpretations.

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# Chapter 12

## A Tale of Two Towns: Heritage and Memory of Civilian Internment in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, 1942–2012

Gisela Rothenhäusler and Reinhold Adler

**Abstract** Biberach and Bad Wurzach are two communities linked by the tragedy of war to the two largest British Channel Islands, Guernsey and Jersey. Although the background story of the two internment camps in the two small towns which are only 30 km apart is almost identical, there are some major differences in the situation of the camps and the postwar developments that led to the present differences in the atmosphere of the relationship between former internees and the places of their internment. The relationships between past physical and social conditions and present-day perceptions of an interlocked heritage reveal the complex ways in which individual and social memories are created, lost, and recreated, as understood by avocational researchers linked to some of the communities involved.

### Introduction

In September 1942, some 2,200 British citizens were deported from the Channel Islands to Germany as a reprisal for the internment of German citizens in Persia. Originally, Hitler's order had been to deport ten British citizens for every German interned, but the order was lost in the jungle of German government bureaucracy. When the matter was brought up again nearly a year later, the Führer's order had to be immediately implemented. The only large numbers of British citizens within German reach were British residents in the occupied Channel Islands. But the

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number deported was in the end considerably smaller than the number originally aimed at, partly due to remonstrations of the German Foreign Office and the Wehrmacht, who were not all enthusiastic about the deportation of families with small children for which they would be responsible.

The deportees were transported to various camps in southern Germany in what is now Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria; three of them had been used as PoW camps before. Two of the camps—Laufen in Bavaria and Liebenau near Tettngang—were mixed nationality internment camps for male and female prisoners respectively. Biberach and Wurzach were family camps with the Channel Islanders as the predominant group, and can thus be compared. These two camps were situated close to each other in a very rural region with small agricultural towns and villages. Biberach internment camp was situated about 2 miles from a town of approximately 11,000 inhabitants. The camp of Wurzach was located in a baroque schloss or castle right in the center of a small town of about 2,000 inhabitants.

Upper Swabia—Oberschwaben as this area is called—was and still is predominantly Catholic, which in political terms meant a certain distance from Nazism. The political leaning before the Third Reich had been very conservative, the dominant party being the Center party which politically represented the Catholic population. This does not mean that most people were opposed to the Nazis; many of the local unemployed had voted for Hitler in 1933, as had some former supporters of conservative parties, though disillusionment grew as the war continued. This was an attitude that the more observant internees noticed in Wurzach and was probably a basis for mutual understanding which helped to overcome any hostility they may have felt towards the townspeople.

The political structure of Biberach was different, with more votes for the Nazi party and the Social Democrats, so that only a small majority of Roman Catholics politically favored the Center party. Yet for the internees in the camp these differences were not easily observed or understood; they sometimes mistook some of the stubborn conservative Upper Swabian people with very conservative leanings for Nazis, whereas they did not always recognize a number of committed Nazi party members. These appear to be minor divergences in regard to the general political and war situation, but they contributed to significant differences in how the local population related to and treated the internees. This was one reason why it was easier for the townspeople of Bad Wurzach to break the collective silence concerning the Nazi past in the postwar period.

During the first few months of internment of the Channel Islanders, the Wehrmacht was still responsible for the camps, but in December 1942 the Württemberg Home Office took over the administration of the camps and the military guards of around 200 armed men were replaced by a small number of elderly policemen, mainly from the Stuttgart area. All the camps were under direct control of the SS *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA—Reich Security Head Office) in Berlin, a department of the SS responsible for all the police forces in Germany. The responsible civil servant in Stuttgart had to report to an *Obersturmbannführer* in the RSHA. But the internees and local people did not see much of this SS influence—in stark contrast to what some internees later recounted who claimed to have been guarded by SS men. The local authorities of Wurzach and Biberach had nothing to say in

these matters. The ignorance of this structure was revealed as late as spring 2010 in an online discussion in Jersey, following a report about the liberation ceremony in Bad Wurzach, about the question of whether the people in Bad Wurzach should be forgiven or not (Jersey Evening Post, April 29, 2010). This discussion would have been incomprehensible for people in Bad Wurzach—had they known about it.

## The Camps

Lindele camp in Biberach, situated about 2 miles from the town, was founded as a garrison in February 1939 and consisted of standard-sized barracks. In August 1940, it was turned into a PoW camp, Oflag VB. The neighboring camp in Wurzach became Oflag VC. Oflag VB was used first as a PoW camp for about 900 British officers, 26 of whom escaped through a tunnel, and later used for Serbian and French officers. The first civilian internees arrived from Jersey on September 20, 1942. On November 11, 1942, Guernsey civilian internees were transferred from Dorsten camp in Westphalia to Biberach after many of the Jersey people had been moved to Wurzach.

When the Wehrmacht handed over the camp to the Württemberg Home Office on December 1, 1942, Lindele camp was converted into an exchange camp for British and American nationals. This was the reason why Jewish prisoners from the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen came to the camp towards the latter stages of the war and were “kept in stock” for a German-American exchange via Switzerland and Marseille, which was never implemented.

After the Channel Islanders were repatriated to the UK in June 1945, Lindele camp became a camp for German refugees. Since 1951 the compound has been used as a training center by the Württemberg Police (Adler 2002; Binder 2007). The old huts were removed in the early 1970s and new buildings were erected, so the only building that still reminds former internees of Lindele camp is the main building (known to the internees as “the White House”), with its easily recognizable clock tower (Binder 2007:94).

The Schloss, as the former internees still call the place of their internment, is a baroque castle at the center of the small town of Wurzach, which the internees used to call a village. Before the war the castle had been used as a Catholic boarding school which was closed down by the Nazis. The castle owners, the Catholic order of Salvatorian Fathers, were forced to rent it out to the German Wehrmacht. The prisoners were housed in the castle itself whereas the guards were accommodated in barracks which were erected in the grounds. The first men to be detained in the castle were French officers, most of whom were of Corsican origin. These French prisoners hardly came into contact with the local population as under the Geneva Conventions the officers could not be forced to work. In general, only those who stayed in the town, working on the farms or for the local craftsmen, were remembered by the civilian population, because their presence was unusual in this rural part of Germany. This PoW camp for French prisoners was dissolved in the autumn of 1942 after it had been downgraded as a branch camp of Oflag VD then stationed in Biberach.

At the end of October 1942, the castle was turned into an internment camp for some 600 men, women, and children, who were moved to Wurzach because Biberach camp was overcrowded and a delegation of the Swiss Legation had reported unfavorably about the conditions and various quarrels between Jersey and Guernsey internees there. Apart from one Guernsey family, all of those who were moved to Wurzach had been deported from Jersey. Although the PoW camp had been dissolved, its registration cards were used for the internees. This is why the file cards which some internees took home as a souvenir after their liberation were the pre-printed forms of *Oflag 55* or *Oflag VD*, long after these units were deployed elsewhere, and these can be correlated with the surviving camp register.

The policemen who guarded the internees in Biberach and Wurzach received very strict instructions resembling those of military PoW camp guards, but discipline soon relaxed as it became obvious that there was no real danger of escape attempts. The situation of the internment camp became more complicated in spring 1943 when a Hitler Youth military training camp (*Wehrtüchtigungslager*) was set up in empty barracks in the grounds of the castle. The two camps on both sides of the wire constituted a strange and not always friendly neighborhood. Groups of Hitler Youth boys arrived every 3 weeks to be not only trained in military skills but also subjected to ideological schooling. One internee, Michael Ginns, remembered that “Villagers were never hostile and the only sign anyone saw of Nazism was the Hitler Youth barracks” (Jersey Evening Post, August 6, 1993). The internees were seen as the enemy by many of these boys, whereas the internees themselves commented rather pitifully that the boys were being trained as cannon fodder. It is notable that the existence of the Hitler Youth camp was totally erased from social memory in Bad Wurzach, and only through research about the internment camp were people reminded of this part of the Nazi past.

After the internees were repatriated in June 1945, the castle was temporarily used as a UNRRA camp for displaced persons. By November 1945, the Salvatorian priests were able to reopen their boarding school in one part of the Schloss, thus taking the first steps back to a “normal” life which also meant erasing the unpleasant memories of the “Thousand-year Reich” as discussed below.

## **Communication Across the Wire as a Basis for Future Remembrance**

In the autumn of 1942, Biberach and Wurzach townspeople were bewildered to see civilians, including women and children, in “their” camps. Information was scarce, but as the reasons for their deportation were not known even to the internees themselves, it was much more difficult for the townspeople to understand why they were there. English was not yet a very common foreign language, which enhanced the difficulties of communication. Usually, the internees were referred to as “the English people.” Nobody knew anything about the Channel Islands from where they had been deported.

The internees from Jersey stayed in Wurzach camp much longer than the French prisoners, so some were able to develop close ties which were later to form the basis for a town twinning process. As they were only guarded by a few elderly policemen, opportunities for contacts increased. People became used to the sight of families behind the barbed wire and of children playing in the courtyard of the castle. Moreover, the internees were able to watch everyday life in the town from their windows; after all they were at the very center of the settlement, just opposite the town hall! This picture of everyday life behind the barbed wire is one of the main reasons why many Wurzach people still have vivid memories of the camp, even if they were only children at that time.

The situation was different in Biberach, where the camp was outside the town so the local people did not have many opportunities to encounter internees. Only members of the German camp administration and the guards had a chance of making close contacts with them. People generally tended to be anti-British because of World War I, particularly in a town with a small National Conservative, Protestant majority in 1942. However, some of the elderly guards had experienced several years of imprisonment as PoWs in England and could talk to the internees and understand their problems, despite the fact that direct contacts between German personnel and the internees were strictly prohibited by their superiors and could only be executed secretly (Thomas Schilling, interview June 2011).

In Wurzach the internees and some of the guards built up a relationship which was considered far too friendly by their superiors in Stuttgart. One guard was transferred for disciplinary reasons because he had been reported by a Hitler Youth boy who had seen him give an apple to an internee child. The German commandant, *Leutnant* Martin Riedesser, was generally characterized as very strict, but the internees soon came to appreciate him as someone who did his best to run the camp effectively, dealing fairly with them. Even 65 years after their liberation, former internees remember incidents which proved him to be a decent man. For example during the visit in April 2010 Paul Atyeo, whose father had died in the camp in 1945, recounted how Lieutenant Riedesser had addressed him with the German *Sie* which is used as a polite form when talking to grown-up people instead of the *du* for children which he had used before his father died, thus showing his respect for him after his father's death. However, in the long run he was not rewarded for his conduct because he had been a member of the Nazi party although nobody in the camp considered him one, and therefore he lost his position during the denazification process after the war and was never able to take up his career as a police officer again. A testimonial about his proper treatment of the internees by the former deputy camp leader, Frank Ray, was of no avail.

In Biberach, as well as in Bad Wurzach, there are still many people who remember getting chocolate and biscuits from the internees and, being children at the time, believed that they were very rich as they were in possession of fancy things. The internees used the contents of their Red Cross parcels to barter with the townspeople in order to receive milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables. In Wurzach, there were far more opportunities than in Biberach, where bartering directly through the barbed wire was impossible. In Wurzach, 200 internees sometimes paraded through the town on

their regular walks, only guarded by one or two policemen. Sometimes they were even allowed to stop for a drink in one of the small village pubs and the guards had made sure a few days in advance that village people would know where to find the internees. In 2005, Mary Cornish, one of the former internees, described these walks, saying, “the villagers used to sit in their windows, and some of them wanted to talk to us. We felt that they did not want to be at war” (Jersey Evening Post, April 25, 2005). There are accounts of internee children who received toys from local people or were able to go ice-skating in the canal in the grounds of the castle because the Salvatorian priests opened up the boarding school stocks of ice skates for them, and the guarding policemen allowed them to leave the camp.

In Wurzach camp the barbed wire itself gradually became more and more permeable as part of the original fence was removed in order to build another fence in the grounds where additional recreation space had been granted to the internees. It was common knowledge, even for the German guards who pretended not to see or know it, that some internees left the camp on bartering business.

In Biberach the relationship between internees and local people or guards were not as close as in Wurzach. Internees were allowed to go on guarded walks outside the camp but they hardly ever visited the town. A lot of Biberachers, however, remember having secretly swapped apples, eggs, and fresh vegetables for chocolate bars, real tea, or coffee. Genuine friendship grew mainly between those female internees and local women who shared a room when giving birth to their babies in Biberach hospital.

There were opportunities to work outside the camps, but only a very small percentage of the internees availed themselves of this. Many believed that taking up work meant collaboration with the enemy and fiercely objected to any demands. Usually those internees who were willing to work were met at the main entrance gate of the camp by one of their employer’s children. The friendships which were forged in these cases became the nucleus of the future twinning efforts, both in Bad Wurzach and Biberach. Obviously, the internees came to see a different sort of German than their fellow Channel Islanders were exposed to during the Occupation period. In Biberach, many German members of the guard and camp administration, as well as an unknown number of citizens, maintained close contacts with the internees after liberation, links which in some cases continued for years.

Inevitably there was ample opportunity for frictions and misunderstanding both in Biberach and Wurzach. Some people believed that the internees were better fed than the Germans and envied their apparently peaceful and lazy life. They did not know that the internees were treated according to the Geneva Conventions and that the main basis for decisions concerning the internees was the principle of reciprocity, with the preliminary concern being how one’s own people in enemy hands were treated. It is true that even nowadays some local German townspeople find it hard to consider the internees as real victims of the Third Reich; they prefer to see them as “privileged prisoners.”

When in 1944–1945 some Jewish prisoners from the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen were transferred to the camps, local people could not fail to see their miserable state. One of the internees describes in his diary how the behavior of the

German guards and townspeople changed after this. They became more distant and obviously were afraid of what was to happen after the war.

The coming of the Jews was a dreadful shock to all of us, inside and outside the wire, but to the German staff and townspeople it also brought much more, principally shame and embarrassment, but also fear ... The town changed after the Jews came. Now, whenever I went outside the camp, I began to notice that people I passed ... were suddenly not so friendly. Our old friends, for that is what they had really become, would turn aside or look away if they could, or hardly return a greeting (Graham n.d., 28ff).

This period of the internment camps proved to be the most difficult aspect to be digested by local people as it had suddenly become part of the terrors of the Holocaust which “had not taken place” in the small town because there had been no Jewish inhabitants. The majority of townspeople preferred to “forget” this and it was erased from collective memory for the next 50 years, whereas it was much easier to talk about the “English” internees.

The final days of the war provided ample material for stories and local legends that were remembered, half-remembered, and created. One incident from Wurzach can illustrate how the treatment of the camp and its inmates could be instrumentalized for other purposes. There have been persistent rumors, for which proof has never been found, of an attempt by the SS to blow up the castle in Wurzach with all of its inmates, but which was allegedly stopped by courageous local people. Several denazification files of local Nazi party members show that this rumor was exploited to whitewash them by claiming that they had defended British citizens at the risk of their own lives.

In Wurzach, the end of war was seen differently by internees and local people, but they stood side by side watching French tanks and army trucks moving into town, the internees cheering, the local people dejected but glad nonetheless that the war had finally ended. One positive shared memory from these first weeks under French occupation is firmly anchored in the memory of elderly people, especially women. The commander of the French combat unit that pressed on towards the Alps made the deputy camp captain, Frank Ray, provisional mayor of the town. Many old Wurzach people still hold him in high esteem as they firmly believe it was due to him that no serious incidents took place and, particularly, that no rapes were reported.

## Postwar Contacts

The internees left Wurzach in June 1945, most of them determined never to return. Yet already a few years later the first ex-internees came back to visit people with whom they had made friends during their internment. With its return to an “everyday” use as a boarding school, they did not come back to a prison camp. The rightful owners of the castle, the Catholic priests who had not been involved with the Nazi regime, welcomed these visitors warmly and showed them the rooms they had occupied. Thus the Schloss has always served as a bridge between past and present, as a nucleus of



**Fig. 12.1** Visitors in front of the schloss at Wurzach, April 2010 (Courtesy Tony Pike)

remembrance. Even today, the tour of the castle is one of the indispensable elements of the annual visit of the former internees in Bad Wurzach (Fig. 12.1). Some stories are told over and over again on this occasion, but every year new memories resurface.

The first postwar contacts were purely personal, between friends. It was not until 1966 that a visitor from Jersey and an inhabitant of the town, who had met by chance, visited the cemetery together to look for the graves of those internees who had died in Wurzach. Shocked by the derelict state of the graves, he made it his personal task to see these graves restored and received support from the local authorities. These efforts stimulated a series of new contacts. When the open air chapel of the local cemetery was rebuilt, the names of all those who had died in the camp were added to the names of the German soldiers who had lost their lives in the two wars of the twentieth century, thus making them part of the town's war memorial. Since then, the graves have been maintained by the town authorities, always decorated with flowers as required by local tradition (Fig. 12.2). In 2007, however, the graves were nearly flattened in the process of restructuring and extending the cemetery, as the town administration planned to remove the graves and simply put up a new memorial for all the victims of war and terror. This may have been due to thoughtlessness rather than the wish to forget this embarrassing part of the local history. One of the authors (GR) and a member of the town council, Egon Rothenhäusler, started a campaign to emphasize the importance of these graves as memorial, a landmark of the reconciliation process, and convinced the town council and the planning office to abandon this plan.



**Fig. 12.2** Grandchildren of a former internee lay flowers on the graves of those who died in Wurzach camp, April 28, 2010 (Courtesy Tony Pike)

In 1973, a large party of former internees came for the first official visit to Bad Wurzach, one of the results of which was an exchange between Bad Wurzach students with children of former internees, which helped both sides to learn more about their common past. These student exchanges were organized annually over a period of more than 10 years, but were not continued when the internees' own children left school, although attempts at revival have periodically been made by those in Bad Wurzach.

In spite of these recurrent contacts, the camp disappeared (or was buried) in the memories of most people in Bad Wurzach, who were reluctant to recall it. The discussion of Nazi crimes made it very difficult for the local people, who were unsure of the difference between a concentration camp and an internment camp, so they preferred not to talk about it at all. Memories were pushed aside and hardly touched. One former internee, Mr. Chinn, noticed this attitude during a visit in 1993, remarking, "Younger people in the town have a guilt feeling which came across very strongly. They want to bring it out and discuss it. But the older generation want to forget, they want to black it out" (Jersey Evening Post, August 6, 1993). There is no municipal museum in Bad Wurzach and so the few remaining artifacts have never been systematically collected and displayed. It was not until the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the camp that a plaque was attached to the wall of the Schloss to commemorate the darker aspects of its history (Fig. 12.3).

In Biberach, contacts between internees and local people had been made by Guernsey women during their stay in local hospitals while giving birth. There have been at least three families who have kept in close contact for three generations. Most of the other contacts broke down due to language or financial problems, or when people passed away (Frau Anne Figel, interviews January 28 and 30, 1999; Haug 2009). Denazification measures by the French Occupying Forces caused



**Fig. 12.3** Mayor Roland Buerkle and former internee, Michael Ginns, unveiling the plaque on the Schloss at Wurzach, April 28, 2005 (Courtesy Tony Pike)

suspicion about the former guards and the town's administration, although the latter had never been involved in camp affairs in Biberach (Biberach Town Archive 1953). People preferred not to discuss their camp publicly and, over the years, social memory of Lindele camp faded away.

For visitors to Biberach, the situation was different from Wurzach as the camp was on the outskirts of town, less convenient to reach, and therefore easier for the local people to forget. People from Guernsey who returned after the war found that Biberach people were not able even to locate the former internment camp. Only a few inhabitants admitted knowing that the town's present police training college used to be an internment camp during the war. Former internees who wanted to visit the site of their captivity were often upset, returning home with the impression that local people closed their eyes to the past and their fate. It was only when the police administration became aware of the history of the camp that they started to welcome former internees (Fig. 12.4), which changed the situation for the better.

## The Long Road to Town Twinning and Present Relationships

The first attempts at twinning Bad Wurzach with Jersey were made in 1973 by a former internee and the *Procureur du Bien Public* of St. Helier, but met with a lot of resistance—not in Bad Wurzach, which was very keen on forging such a friendship, but in Jersey, where the memory of the Occupation was still very vivid. The idea was dropped, despite repeated attempts by Bad Wurzach for a formal twinning which was more or less ignored by the official representatives in Jersey. In 1988, the Bad Wurzach mayor, Helmuth Morczinietz, and the Vice Dean of Jersey, Michael



**Fig. 12.4** Former internees and members of the Biberach Friends of Guernsey standing outside the site of the camp, now a police training college, 2006 (Courtesy Werner Drews)

Halliwell, made another attempt but again to no avail. The mayor tried, again unsuccessfully, to establish closer ties, supported by the Jersey Ex-Internees Association which in 1979 developed from the Channel Islands Ex-Internees Association (founded in 1971). In 2002, the Bailiff of Jersey, Sir Philip Bailhache, took the decisive step to invite Mr Morcinietz and his wife to attend Liberation Day commemorations. In his speech, the Bailiff called for reconciliation and welcomed the guests in German, a language a lot of Jersey people did not want to hear—and especially on that occasion. But the time was right and, by the end of the year, the twinning of St. Helier and Bad Wurzach was made official, 57 years after the end of the war. When the twinning was officially performed, the mayor of Bad Wurzach, Roland Bürkle, made a public apology on behalf of the town.

In 2005, a large party of former internees returned to Bad Wurzach for the 60th anniversary of their liberation. The town made it clear that it acknowledged its past with a program of commemoration and acts of remembrances, and the commemorative plaque was unveiled on the wall of the schloss. As a special gesture, the ex-internees from Jersey were invited for an official dinner in one of the rooms of Schloss, which had been used as a dormitory during their internment.

There was still a lot of uneasiness in Wurzach concerning the Jewish inmates of the Schloss during the last months of the war, but one member of this group, a Dutch Jew, had agreed to return to Bad Wurzach on this occasion. He stretched out his hand for reconciliation saying, “For me Wurzach was heaven after Bergen-Belsen. I was reborn in Wurzach.”

It has become a tradition for the former Jersey internees to return to the small town for the anniversary of their liberation, with the group becoming bigger every year with people coming back for the first time after more than 60 years. Their visit to the Schloss is often a very emotional experience; they often start to cry when the

place brings back very vivid memories. But these memories are usually personal memories of family members rather than bitter recollections of bad treatment and injustice. The visit always conjures up long-forgotten stories and some former internees start talking about things they have not spoken about for decades. They gain a better understanding of their parents' experience, as most visiting ex-internees were children when they were in the camp. In general, they return home with very different feelings towards the local people. When the question of compensation is touched upon, it becomes clear that the former internees are aware that it has never been the town's responsibility.

In 2005 and 2006, those on both sides who had worked hard for the twinning were awarded decorations, thus showing the importance which is attached to the reconciliation process. Since then it has become increasingly commonplace for people from Jersey and Wurzach to visit each other. Former internees still visit the town, speaking to local school children about their experiences and people from Wurzach visit Jersey to the Liberation Day celebrations, observing that there still remains some resistance to the twinning and reconciliation process.

If the path to twinning was difficult in Bad Wurzach, it was even more so in Biberach. While the Jersey Ex-Internees Association was formed in the 1970s and favored twinning long before it became official policy, the Guernsey Deportees Association was not founded until the first contacts to Biberach had been successfully established in the late 1990s, even though the local townspeople had been tending the graves of former internees since the 1950s.

Local memories were first reawakened in Biberach in 1983, when local students won an award from the Koerber Foundation for their research on National Socialism in Biberach (Blanck et al. 1982). Research had not been easy as the town's archive service kept few files about this subject (E509, 549, 551, 555; Az. 730-61/4), and was worried about local sensitivities. Local people were interviewed, although some conflated details about the Channel Island internees and British officers interned earlier in the war. Others did not want to speak to the students as they were afraid of being accused of having been Nazis. The subject of internment was still a taboo in the town. In the end, most information came from an English publication on the story of the Islanders (Harris 1980). The students' work was eventually published.

It was easier to conduct research on the Nazi period in nearby Bad Wurzach. The work conducted in Biberach was already complete, more time had elapsed since the end of the war, and more files were open for consultation. Help from Jersey was easily available, but research on the Jews of Bergen-Belsen, who arrived in the camp and were cared for by Islanders, was much more difficult. Local people were afraid that the names of Nazi party members would be exposed.

From 1985 there were repeated attempts by a resident of Biberach (Marianne Sikora-Schoeck), whose family had employed an internee during the war, to foster links with Guernsey. It was not until 1997, however, that a group of former deportees and a party from the Guernsey Council of Churches accepted an invitation from the Mayor of Biberach to join a "Reconciliation Week." That led to much publicity in the media both in Germany and the Channel Islands, as have many of the subsequent reconciliation events (Table 12.1). A year later, members of the Guernsey Council of

**Table 12.1** Media attention for reconciliation events

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**Biberach “Reconciliation Week”**

Robilliard, N., Biberach: From Oflag VD 55 to internment camp, *Weekender*, July 12, 1997; Guernsey Evening Press, July 17, 1997; Schwäbische Zeitung, July 14, July 16, July 17, July 19, 1997; Schwäbische Zeitung, July 21, 1998

**Biberach Friends of Jersey**

Schwäbische Zeitung, January 17, 2004

**War memorial, Biberach**

Kopien des Kulturamts der Stadt Biberach: Ansprachen anlässlich der Erinnerung an die Verstorbenen des Lagers Lindele in der Aussegnungshalle des Biberacher Stadtfriedhofs am Sonntag, September 8, 2002; Schwäbische Zeitung, 9.9.2002; Guernsey Evening Press, September 9, 2002; Medienwerkstatt Biberach e.V.: Guernsey & Biberach, Remembrance and Reconciliation 08.09.2002 (Video Tape)

**Guernsey plaque**

Schwäbische Zeitung, May 10, May 12, May 14, 2005; INFO, May 11, 2005; Wochenblatt, May 19, 2005; Guernsey Press, May 10, 2005

**Linden tree planting, Biberach**

Schwäbische Zeitung, May 10, 2005

**National Socialism in Biberach exhibition**

Schwäbische Zeitung, December 12, December 20, 2006, January 9, 2007; Brunecker, F., 2006, Nationalsozialismus in Biberach; Stuttgarter Zeitung, January 3, 2007

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Churches and a group of former deportees revisited the town, leading to the foundation of “Biberach Friends of Guernsey.” They also initiated a war memorial similar to the one at Wurzach Cemetery with all the names of the British PoWs and internees that had not survived imprisonment at Biberach camp; it was erected in Biberach Town Cemetery in 2000 and officially dedicated by a group of former deportees and the Bailiff of Guernsey in 2002. On this occasion, the Town of Biberach and the local Historical Society published a book commemorating the history of Lindele Camp (Adler 2002), and Biberach Museum included some photos and exhibits concerning Lindele Camp as part of the permanent exhibition about Biberach history.

Exchanges between Guernsey and dignitaries and citizens of Biberach continued from this date, even though there has still not yet been any official twinning. On Liberation Day in 2005 in Guernsey, the Mayor of Biberach, Thomas Fettback, gave to the Island a plaque commemorating the people who had been interned in the camp. In the same year, the Biberach Friends of Guernsey, local citizens, and the police training college planted a linden tree in front of the former camp compound in memory of all the deportees and internees that had been liberated from the camp 60 years previously.

Local knowledge of the wartime events in Biberach was enhanced in 2006 by an exhibition on “National Socialism in Biberach” and a bilingual book was published in 2009 on the subject of memories of local Biberach people of the camp, and of former internees about local townsfolk (Maerker 2009). The clock tower of the administration building of the internment camp was taken down for safety reasons in 2010 (Fig. 12.5). This was viewed with sadness by former internees, as the building



**Fig. 12.5** Picture of Biberach camp's clock tower, taken down in 2010 (Courtesy Gilly Carr)

was the only remaining feature of the camp that had survived to the present day, and the clock tower, whose timepiece governed their lives, was a key physical feature in their memories. Many former internees and townspeople hope that the tower will be converted into a memorial in the grounds of the former camp, but no decision has been taken at the time of writing.

The history of the camps in both Biberach and Bad Wurzach has now been published (Adler & Guderlei 1984; Adler 2002; Rothenhäusler 2008), with the authors awarded the *Landespreis für Heimatforschung*, the Baden-Württemberg award for research into local history. Research into local Nazi history is still a difficult venture in small towns, and very often is carried out by “outsiders” not born in the town, as they are less likely to be encumbered by personal relationships.

## Discussion

Commemorative days related to the World War II have become part of a public ritual in Germany; rituals which are performed by politicians in order to be considered politically correct. The commemoration of internment camps presents just such an opportunity to talk about the difficult years of the Third Reich without touching upon more “delicate” matters, as no one in Biberach or Bad Wurzach can be personally blamed for the deportation of the Channel Islanders. Clearly, memory work in these two towns is easier than in places such as Dachau. Yet the internment of Channel Islanders was part of the two towns’ history, and although it is not a glorious or easy history for local people to celebrate, it is now acknowledged (Jersey Evening Post, April 25, 2005).

Clearly the type and the composition of the prisoners have played a major role in the commemoration process. Unlike many other German PoW camps, those in Biberach and Bad Wurzach were almost entirely filled with people of one nationality who mainly stayed in one camp throughout their internment, enabling them to develop close ties with the town. This can be contrasted to the women’s camp in Liebenau, the third camp in Baden-Württemberg that held Channel Island internees. The Jersey and Guernsey women were only one group among many of the inmates of this camp. In Liebenau, no such distinct memory of the internment developed or was cultivated; here the commemoration relates to the euthanasia of the mentally disabled people who inhabited the schloss before and during the war.

The old ties between individual people in the Channel Islands and in the two German towns were the decisive factors in creating new relationships between the Islands and Germany. The twinning process in Bad Wurzach has also been pivotal in keeping relationships alive, with the schloss at the center of this process. As Sir Philip Bailhache noted on the occasion of the opening of the Blampied exhibition in Bad Wurzach, the former internees have often been at the forefront of those in Jersey who have been most strongly in favor of reconciliation with their former enemy. They have been a powerful force in the twinning process, despite the constant reminder of an unhappy past that it provides. Unlike in Wurzach where it was the other way around, in Biberach research and memorialization came before contacts were renewed with the Channel Islands. Here, the path to reconciliation has taken longer as it lacked the presence or support of the former internees for many years.

These two small towns have taken a long time coming to terms with their past, and in much the same way as the nation as a whole. This period manifested itself locally through several stages, the first of which was characterized by the ambivalent nature of memory in the first decades after the end of the war. In private, friendships between internees and some local people existed, but in public a collective amnesia prevailed. In the 1950s, this attitude made it difficult for the local population to understand the difference between concentration camps and internment camps. The fact that some internees mistakenly remembered SS guards exacerbated the problem. It was easier to simply ignore the subject.

The long period of suppression of memory was followed by indifference, but the next generation had questions about guilt and responsibility. The first attempts to face the past were characterized by public apologies on the German side, with many official gestures and pleas for forgiveness. The frequent visits to Wurzach by former internees made it possible to commemorate events on a personal level and not just with “abstract” victims. This in turn spread awareness to a wider audience and enabled a “normalization” of relationships between local townspeople and those in Jersey in a way that has yet to be fully realized with Biberach and Guernsey.

Efforts are made to continue the commemoration and reconciliation process in both towns today. In Bad Wurzach former internees go to schools to talk to the students about their memories, which is at least as important as the wreath-laying ceremonies and the official speeches. It helps young people to become aware of the human stories that lie behind their history textbooks. Nowadays in both Wurzach and Biberach the memory of the camps is part of the greater commemoration of the atrocities of the Third Reich and the World War II, but it is not seen as a matter of personal responsibility. This contrasts with perceptions which still exist in the Channel Islands, where some still prefer to see it in these terms. Although both towns have now arrived at the same place in the perception of their history, differences can still be discerned among the former internees from Jersey and Guernsey. While local people in Wurzach no longer feel the compulsion to eternally apologize for events of 70 years ago, some former internees from Guernsey still need to hear the words, but this is perhaps understandable, as they have not been making the return journey to Germany for as long as their Jersey cousins. There is an awareness on both sides, in both towns and in both islands, that reconciliation cannot be taken for granted, but that the efforts for memorialization and reconciliation must be continued and that it is human relationships which, in the end, have made the difference.

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# Chapter 13

## Writing and Experiencing Internment: Rethinking Paul Jacobsthal's Internment Report in the Light of New Discoveries

Katharina Ulmschneider and Sally Crawford

**Abstract** Professor Paul Jacobsthal was one of several eminent archaeologists to be interned on the Isle of Man. His report on his internment experience, written up shortly after his release and widely circulated, is one of the best surviving personal testimonies of the event. Recent work on Jacobsthal's archives deposited at the University of Oxford has now revealed the original, personal diary he kept during his internment on which the later report was based. In addition, an early, unfinished and unpublished autobiography has also come to light. These discoveries allow a reconsideration of Paul Jacobsthal's internment report and his motivations in writing it.

### Introduction

After World War II, the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (S.P.S.L., renamed the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA) in 1998) asked Professor Paul Jacobsthal to provide a synopsis of his contribution to Britain since his arrival as a refugee. He declined to contribute, however, saying that he had achieved only two things—he had been interned, and he had published *Early Celtic Art* (S.P.S.L. 182/1-7). *Early Celtic Art* was published in 1944 by Oxford University Press, and is still the seminal work on the subject. Jacobsthal's report on his internment (hereafter “the Report”) was not published until 1992 (Jacobsthal 1992), although it was widely circulated amongst Jacobsthal's friends.

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The Report has always been described as a “diary” (Jacobsthal 1992), and this was how Jacobsthal himself described it to his colleagues and editor (OUP Archive: Letter of 31.12.1940). Recent work on his archives deposited at the University of Oxford, however, has shown that Jacobsthal based his internment Report on a previously unrecorded diary. This original, personal, diary (hereafter “the Diary”) came to light during research on an uncatalogued box of Jacobsthal’s papers held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary). The Diary was written during Jacobsthal’s internment. A comparison of this contemporary Diary and the later Report makes it possible to explore how Jacobsthal perceived his internment experiences at the time, and to analyze what he chose to include and exclude from his later “official” account.

The Diary and Report make it clear that, for Jacobsthal, internment was a difficult but also important experience, and an isolating one in which he found himself facing personal questions about his own identity as an academic refugee in Britain, about loyalty, nationality, and religious identity, and about his past. The internment camps also brought Jacobsthal into contact, for the first time, with the truth about the Holocaust in which he himself was to lose members of his own family. So who was Jacobsthal, and what impelled him to record his experiences?

## Personal Background

Paul Jacobsthal was born in Berlin in 1880. Though baptized, he came from a well-to-do German Jewish family (Losemann 2004; Schefold 1977). His father was a doctor, and his mother’s relations were merchants at Hamburg, with offices in Dundee, Scotland (Jacobsthal et al. in preparation). Jacobsthal considered following his father into medicine, or going into partnership with his Hamburg cousins, but found himself instead drawn into art history and Classical archaeology (Jacobsthal et al. 2011). By 1912, he was a Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Marburg, Germany. During World War I, Jacobsthal’s family background in medicine seems to have led to him becoming an orderly at a camp for Greek prisoners of war (Losemann 2004:503), though surviving letters indicate that he had a more significant function as a translator (*Militaerdolmetscher der Kommandantur*) (Bod. Spec. Coll.: Envelope dated 2.8.1918), with the inevitable likelihood that he was also gathering information from the Greek prisoners.

As a Classical archaeologist, Jacobsthal became a good friend of John and Maria Beazley at Oxford. Warm letters survive between Jacobsthal and John Beazley, largely in English, and between Maria and Jacobsthal, largely in German (Beazley Archive).

In addition to Classical archaeology, Jacobsthal had a great interest in the developing discipline of prehistoric archaeology, and he was instrumental in setting up the first German Chair in Prehistory in 1927 (Frey 2007:7; Ulmschneider and Crawford 2011:233). This brought him into conflict with the growing influence of the Nazi party and its ideology (Losemann 2004). Further signs of impending disaster were brought home to Jacobsthal. By the early 30s, he found his academic reputation under personal attack, and he found himself discriminated against when he



**Fig. 13.1** Jacobsthal at his desk in Oxford (Courtesy of the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford)

considered moving to a more prestigious post (Beazley Archive: for example, letter dated 22.6.1931). At about this time, he began to develop his interest in the relationship between Greek and Celtic art—a move which would ultimately allow him to relocate to Oxford. When Jacobsthal asked John Beazley's opinion on his new “barbarian” art project, Beazley voted against it (Beazley Archive: Letters 13.5.1930; 3.6.1930), but Jacobsthal persisted with the plan. It was an auspicious decision—it would have been hard for Oxford to have pleaded a need for another Classical Archaeologist, given Beazley was in post, but Oxford could, and did, argue that a post could be given to a Reader in Celtic Archaeology when Jacobsthal sought refuge from an increasingly dangerous Nazi Germany (Fig. 13.1).

Jacobsthal was forced to resign his position at Marburg in 1935. He also had to give up his large art and archaeology negative collection and photographic equipment (Ulmschneider and Crawford 2011:234), but his plans for moving to Oxford were already in place, and he was able to inform the S.P.S.L. that he did not need their financial support (S.P.S.L. 182/1-7). After a period as a Visiting Professor, Jacobsthal finally took up a post as a Fellow of Christ Church in 1936, and became a Reader in Celtic Archaeology in 1937 (Christ Church Oxf. Archive).

## Jacobsthal's Report and His Newly Discovered Diary

In Jacobsthal's words: "on Friday July 5th 1940 in the morning when I was peacefully writing on Celtic Geometric Ornament a knock came at my door in Christ Church and a plain clothes Police Office entered producing a warrant of arrest" (Report:1). These opening lines of Jacobsthal's internment Report are followed by a detailed account of the rounding up of academics and others from Oxford, to be interned first at Warth Mills (Lancashire), and later on the Isle of Man.

The original version of the Report was, according to Jacobsthal, decorated with vignettes drawn by Hellmuth Weissenborn (Report:15). This may have been the version in the possession of Lady Simon in 1992 when she passed it to Ray Cooper for inclusion in his book (Cooper 1992:11). Lady Simon and her husband, Sir Francis, were close neighbors and good friends of the Jacobsthals. The present location of the Report with the vignettes is unknown. The Oxford archives at Christ Church and The Institute of Archaeology only hold copies. The original is not included in the Jacobsthal material donated to the Bodleian by Lady Simon.

Jacobsthal's Report as we have it now starts without any introduction as to what the text is about or why Jacobsthal chose to write it. Did he write it as an historical document or did he have a political purpose? Did he mean it to become well known, or was it written as a personal, cathartic exercise, as he suggested in a letter to Kenneth Sisam in 1940 (OUP Archive: Letter of 31.12.1940)? The fact that Jacobsthal went to the trouble of preparing an extended written account of his internment is also at odds with his laconic dismissal of the experience in his subsequent writings. In a report to the British Academy, for example, he talks about a loss of 4 months "due to circumstances beyond my control" (Jope/Jacobsthal Archive: Box 3, Letter 159, 20.1.1941). On the other hand, Jacobsthal described writing about his internment as "pleasurable" (OUP Archive: Letter to Kenneth Sisam, 31.12.1940). If the experience of internment was indeed so unimportant, why did Jacobsthal go to the trouble of writing about it? If he was so little interested in talking about it to others, why did he make sure that the manuscript was seen by so many? There are many apparently conflicting issues.

The original Diary Jacobsthal kept during his internment may provide answers to some of these questions. The Diary was discovered in spring 2011 among uncataloged manuscripts in the Bodleian Special Collections (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary). The Diary is written in a lined school exercise book. The front cover is marked "DIARY INTERNMENT 1940." A section at the center of the book has been cut out, leaving 66 pages, with an additional interleaved page from Warth Mills with Hebrew exercises on it. The Diary begins on the last page of the exercise book. It is written mostly in English, in pencil, and continues from the back, interspersed with Greek quotations, Hebrew, Latin, German poetry, and music.

The Diary starts in much the same way as the Report, though it is mostly written in the form of short notes in tiny handwriting. This was perhaps a result of the severe lack of paper at Warth Mills, mentioned several times: "writing paper was confiscated";

“we were without writing paper”; “the greatest demand was for writing paper” (Report:4;8). There was also uncertainty as to how long this internment would last. Despite the lack of paper, Jacobsthal seems to have hung on to his Diary, and already was writing at Warth Mills. In his Report, he writes about these early Diary entries: “when later on, in the Isle of Man, I went through my notes, I realized that I had seen all through a mist. These figures moved and talked in an atmosphere of haunted reality, vision and sound were distorted, the men were hardly themselves, nor was I myself” (Report:10).

That the Diary was with Jacobsthal from the start is also corroborated by another passage in his Report: “There I sat and began to learn Hebrew with [Richard] Walzer: we had no Bible, but he knew the first chapter of Genesis by heart and penciled the words down for me on the note-paper of the bankrupt Cotton-Mill” (Report:9), and “I still keep some sheets filled with my copy of the first lines of Genesis” (Report:8). Just such a piece of paper, bearing the heading of the cotton mill, is found in Jacobsthal's Diary. The Hebrew text, not in Jacobsthal's handwriting, indeed consists of the opening lines of Genesis. The pencil it is written with may have been the one given to him by Beazley (along with an eraser, and a copy of Homer's *Odyssey*) when they said goodbye at Oxford when Jacobsthal was collected for internment (Report:2).

It was, Jacobsthal writes in his Report, “during all these days that I picked up many details of people, situations, and talk...” (Report:10). But when did Jacobsthal first think about publishing his text? The passage in his Report, quoted above, suggests that he already was re-reading his Diary notes during his stay at Hutchinson Camp and found them wanting. As an academic this must have jarred with Jacobsthal. At an early stage in the Report he set out his aim: “I have not to criticize or to accuse, but to describe” (Report:5). This is the clearest indication we have that even at this stage of drafting his Report Jacobsthal was writing for an audience and thinking of publishing it. At the same time, it also explains why more libelous passages would have been edited from the original Diary.

But when did the idea of broader circulation first come to Jacobsthal? Further passages from the original Diary suggest that the conflict and confusion about publishing the Diary was already in his mind at the camp:

If I should ever be out as I hope I shall have to make up my mind whether I ... jump at once into my work or spend 1 month on an essay of 25 pages on the different aspects of internment: my insider-perspective could teach something to *homines bones voluntatis*. It is impossible to give an idea of this life, which unlike the existence at W.M.C. [Warth Mill Camp] is [illegible] hardship, only completely aimless; people prevented from carrying on their more or less useful jobs, idling about, the plebs playing bridge or talking, others playing Beethoven or Bach, lecturing on Philosophy, history, ... (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary: unnumbered page).

At this point, Jacobsthal seemed merely interested in reporting his experiences as an insider and reporting on the waste of time, energy, and unnecessary idleness imposed on people. In another passage, however, we learn that there may have been even more compelling reasons for him to write. As an academic he acknowledges

the importance of an “unprejudiced” account, and most importantly one that is not overly emotional or spun to political ends. What was needed, he believed, was a neutral observer, but one writing from the inside of the experience, not the outside:

These lines, an excerpt of my diary, ... do not pretend to contribute to the rather lavish political discussions of the internment process in the papers .... I have found that even the letters of internees published in the *New Statesman* or the *M.[G?]*. are far from giving an adequate picture of the conditions: ... suicides of people with bad nerves do always happen when they are subject to tensions or hardship. What matters is an unprejudiced report on every-day-life (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary: unnumbered page).

## Censoring the Diary

If the experience was meant to be published as suggested here, a comparison of the internment Diary and the Report allows us to see how Jacobsthal was censoring his own text. What he chose to leave out is especially interesting. Comparing the two texts, it becomes apparent that Jacobsthal edited his original Diary text carefully, deliberately censoring names, such as “L.A., a flabby Viennese of 45–50 years, professional conjurer, chiromancer and bogus mystagogue” (Report:9), whose full name, with an additional comment in Greek, is written in the Diary. Omissions included not just names, but also politically highly sensitive and inflammatory matters. One example is an entry in his Diary on sanitation and the hospital facilities:

Prof. Isaac who was in charge of military hospitals in Poland in 1914–1918 said that he had never seen any camp of such ... neglect of elementary precautions. People who had been interned in Nazi Camps said that apart from the crude treatment and danger of life, food, comfort, accommodation there was much better. I am far from believing that all this was [illegible], but a symptom of unpreparedness, lack of organisation, efficiency. There was much grumbling and stupid criticism. I always tried to calm the people and said: this alien-business is uninteresting: I trust that matters of importance are handled differently! (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:9).

By comparison, the same passage in his later Report reads:

A friend of mine of the German Foreign Office, interned with me ... had never seen a place less fit for accommodation of human beings and I was told the same by Professor S. Isaac of the University of Frankfurt who in 1914–1918 was in charge of hospitals on the Russian front and saw much of poor emergency quarters. The commandant of the Camp was well aware of the scandal and had in vain protested to the War Ministry: it is in the public interest to find out with whom the fault lies and to call him to account (Report:4–5).

The disorganized and therefore unpleasant ways in which the camps were run led to these, with hindsight, surprising comparisons with German concentration camps. That the internment camps were woefully inadequate for the job they were called upon to do, and that they caused distress and discomfort to the people who were interned, is undeniable, and at this early date, German concentration camps were not fully fledged annihilation camps (Cooper 1992:43–44; Grenville 2010:29–31; Dawidowicz 1975:170). By the time Jacobsthal came to think about publishing the Report, however, such a comparison was untenable.

Other passages which were deliberately omitted are those which showed a severe lack of sensitivity or judgment by the British. In one example, Jacobsthal described an explosive mix of people: "In the same room 10 Nazi sailors taken for a prize off Iceland. [Gerhard] Bersu cleverly mediating between the groups and the Jews" (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:7). In another incident omitted from the final Report, Jacobsthal described what was intended as a reassuring visit which nonetheless provoked suspicion:

On the 27th and 28th a certain Mr Israel, grandson of the Berlin "Selfridge" N. Israel, British subject inspected the camps as commissaire of and go-between of Bloomsbury House and Home Office ... Many of them distrusted him and wrongly thought he was the organ of English Jewry, disliking an increase of the number of Jews and afraid of coming anti-semitism. It was again a wise measure of "native policy" reminding one of the treatment of ... Indian natives. One sends a distinguished native educated at Eton and ChCh [Christ Church, Oxford] to deal with them (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:15–16).

In the Report Jacobsthal noted that: "I have not met a single man liable to the faintest suspicion" (Report:28), but he omitted the scathing observation in the Diary on the effect of internment on the loyalty of the innocent people who had been locked up: "Among the thousand people I have talked to 1,000 men during these weeks, there was not one who was a 'fifth columnist'; but on the other hand England had deprived herself of the sympathy ... of 90 % of the internees: ... How could these good boys, farmhands, cow-milkers, [illegible]-grinders, welders understand that they were arrested to the obvious disadvantage of the country for which they drudged with devotion" (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:13). Jacobsthal's assessment of the impact of the "psychological blow of being unjustly imprisoned" was, however, accurate: for some refugees, it led to a lasting sense of grievance against Britain (Grenville 2010:33).

Jacobsthal also chose to omit some humorous scenes from the Report, such as the lecture by Olden, an anti-Nazi German lawyer and journalist: "Meeting on the lawn ... Eisler lecturing on 'old testament'; Olden on Hitler—but pouring rain interrupted him when he had just come to 1813/35 and Kleist..." (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:14). He may have felt that such anecdotes did not have a place in a "neutral" Report.

## Identity

The Diary is much more outspoken than the Report on the relationship between different Jewish groups as Jacobsthal saw them. Jacobsthal rarely mentioned his Jewish identity. The Megaws have drawn attention to the way in which Jacobsthal apparently distanced himself from his fellow Jewish internees (Megaw and Megaw 1998:124). However, a letter received by Jacobsthal during World War I indicates that his Jewish identity was an accepted matter between some of his friends. This correspondence, from "H. Koch," enclosed a newspaper cutting from the *Görlitzer Volkszeitung* of July 31, 1918, which had printed an anti-semitic letter by the mayor of Görlitz. Jacobsthal's friend wrote: "Auch seine Stunde wird schlagen—also lassen

wir ihn sich arisch verbluten [At some point his bell will toll as well—let us leave him to bleed his arian blood]” (Bod. Spec. Coll.: Letter of 2.8.18).

Jacobsthal’s a priori identity in the camp was as an academic, but consciousness of other identities did surface. The first mention in the Report occurred when Jacobsthal added names to his list of Oxford internees: these are younger scholars who had attached themselves to the ‘Oxford Group’. They included Carston, Grave, Stein, Leyser, Blumenthal, Marcus, and: “the best of all Gotfried Huelsmann: he was the son of an ‘Aryan’ father and a Jewish mother, he had been brought up in his father’s religion, but, under the impression of the Hitler years, decided for the other way; he was proud to have a Jewish passport with ‘Israel Gotfried Huelsmann’—Israel, to this other people a senseless stigma, was a very positive symbol to him” (Report:6). Jacobsthal’s language was careful in the extreme—“the other way”; “this other people”—and there was no explanation of why Gotfried was “best of all”; was it because he was Jewish, had escaped from Germany, and had worked on a farm in Oxford, and so epitomized the pointlessness of the internment process?

A surprising admission for a man so proud of his linguistic abilities was that Jacobsthal did not know Hebrew—a mark of how distanced his own childhood had been from Judaism. At Warth Mill, Jacobsthal settled down to learn Hebrew with Walzer. Jacobsthal noted that the only other people who were doing “any serious work at all” were orthodox Jews, studying Talmud, who were disappointed that Jacobsthal could not speak in modern Hebrew. Jacobsthal estimated that, “eighty percent of the inhabitants of the camp—about 1,200 men—were Jews, of whom only 150 were orthodox, and housed separately in kosher houses” (Report:25). For Jacobsthal, these orthodox Jews, who dressed differently, were “other.” Few were recent refugees from Germany, and many did not speak German. Some he found dignified, but others seemed vulgar in speech and behavior. Jacobsthal did not feel that he belonged to this group of Jews at all: “Jews are highly unsociable and utterly lacking the virtue of military discipline: at the roll-call they always had their hands in their pockets, and went on talking while the officers counted them ... it must be no easy job to govern Palestine” (Report:27).

Jacobsthal, though forceful in his Report, at this point again felt he had to make amendments compared to his Diary; a passage in the Diary reads: “A less pleasant side was that this majority of orthodox and especially nonorthodox Jews suspected all Non-Jews as ‘Nazis’ and always tried to push their candidates into the more important camp-jobs” (Report:27). For Gerhard Bersu, an archaeologist who had been dismissed from his position as First Director of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt, the consequence of mediating between the camp inmates and German prisoners was that he was suspected of being a Nazi, and: “they managed to remove Bersu from his office as ‘General Postmaster’” (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:15). This information was omitted from the Report.

Also omitted was another passage from his Diary which showed Jacobsthal’s distaste towards some of the other Jewish refugees: “I had an interesting lesson in the morale of London refugees. It was a common practice [*gang und gäbe*] to cheat the underground and the phones pennywise with shrewd tricks. And I learnt: ‘wenn man dir gibt, nemmes. Wenn man dir nemmet, schrei’ [if you are offered something, take it. When something is taken from you, shout]” (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:18).

Jacobsthal thus carefully distanced himself from religion and particular aspects of Jewish culture. He several times mentioned that he avoided the “very popular” performances of the “cabaret *Stacheldraht*,” which had, he was told, “the character of Jewish Varieties in certain quarters of Vienna” (Report:23). It is not clear why he had such a distaste for these popular performances—perhaps it was because they were low-brow. Jacobsthal was firmly against tasteless culture for “hoi polloi.”

Jacobsthal's primary identity at all times in the account was neither religious nor national, but professional. At Hutchinson Camp he found his house was divided into: “two distinct groups, one consisting of academic people the other of Jewish business-men” (Report:12). The business men were Jewish, but academics, for Jacobsthal, had no religious affiliation. It is at the camp, though, that Jacobsthal found out what had been going on in Germany since he was last there in 1937. He cited the case of Richard Cohn, 56, of Breslau; “the strongest and most interesting personality.” Cohn: “through the Nazis... had lost all, had escaped the Gestapo and wandered with his wife in Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and in No-man's land, had been in Nazi prisons, ill-treated and beaten” (Report:16). Hearing from men like Cohn was “a great lesson to me” (Report:17).

## Personal Experience of Internment

On internment, Jacobsthal wrote in his Report: “Confinement means a break in the continuity of existence, an interruption of the normal flux of life, it causes trauma: the natural relation and proportional importance of present, past and future become distorted. Suddenly, through the repression of the present the past creeps up, assuming gigantic dimensions and occupying an unproportionally large field of conscious life” (Report:28–29). The sentiments expressed in this passage were more fully explored in his Diary:

Internment means interruption of the normal flux of life: the thread is cut off, one lives on one's past which suddenly occupies an unproportionally large part of the total field of conscious life. People more than under normal conditions talk autobiography and memoirs. The two other topics were: the dark depressing uncertain future and legal, human, practical aspects of internment (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:13).

Equally poignant is a slightly later passage of the Diary:

Life gradually becomes timeless, the more as we are cut off from outside. Today on the 29th I am still without letters from home. Zaubenberg. Living a life with its own law, the trivial ?tasks/facts of food (1), health (2), digestion (3), sleep (4), furniture (5), W.C. (6), bathroom (7), discussed and discussed, the world outside far, forgotten, distorted... People still unknown to each other a fortnight before, now living closer to each other than married, sharing beds and rooms... (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:14–15).

The passage highlights the “loss of contact with the outside world” (Report:29), the physical discomfort and, perhaps most pressingly, the fear of forgetting the outside world and of being forgotten by it. Jacobsthal summed up in the Diary the dichotomy between submitting to the flow of camp life or remaining an outsider and observer: “Problem: one could either try to continue one's academic existence, to

form groups of decent people ... or ... to accept the 'common fate', to live with one's 'brothers'—I went the former way, but tried to study conditions and mentality" (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:8).

Despite the hardship, the internment process was not entirely unhelpful to Jacobsthal in terms of self-discovery. It certainly helped him to re-assert old ideas of himself as a likeable man, able to cross class boundaries. When the tired and hungry new internees arrived at their house in Hutchinson Camp, there was a stand-off between the academics and the others, and the atmosphere, according to Jacobsthal, "was dangerously electric" (Report:12). In these circumstances, Jacobsthal records that he took control, drawing on his World War I experiences which stood him in good stead as he: "exercised my authority and gift as mediator, bullying and soothing" (Report:12). There is no doubt that his attitude towards the businessmen was sometimes condescending: "they had their bridge-parties, read their cheap books, had their sort of talk" (Report:16)—but he had genuine admiration and affection for some of the nonacademic members of the house (Megaw and Megaw 1998:125).

We do not have to rely only on Jacobsthal's account to assess his behavior: his perception of himself as likeable and friendly is corroborated by Fred Uhlmann's diary (Brinson et al. 2009). Uhlmann recorded that Jacobsthal and his fellow Oxford colleague, Egon Wellesz, worked hard to draw the young artist out of his darkest depressions. After the war, Uhlmann met up once with Wellesz and Jacobsthal at Oxford, but felt then that he was outside their sphere (Brinson et al. 2009:109).

Why was Jacobsthal apparently less traumatized by internment than some of his contemporaries, such as Uhlmann? Anthony Grenville suggested that it was because he was "an optimist by nature" (Grenville 2010:30), but his Diary gives a different perspective. In it, he stated that it was: "... the report of a man mentally and bodily fit enough and trained by traveling and war to go through this Camp-life as an observer." He also claimed that he had the benefit of: "age and manifold experiences" (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary: unnumbered page). In other words, Jacobsthal felt able to cope because he had been through similar experiences before. Interesting in this context is the recent discovery of a previously unknown autobiography, written during World War I by Jacobsthal when he was about 36 years old. Parts of this autobiography, dated to about 1916, have recently been published in an English translation (Jacobsthal et al. 2011), while the full German text is currently being prepared for publication (Jacobsthal et al. in preparation).

The autobiography demonstrates that Jacobsthal was no stranger to writing reports of a personal nature. Indeed, in this autobiography he refers to an even earlier attempt to write his life story when he was in his twenties. He had abandoned that attempt when he realized that he had appeared like the "hero in a novel." So Jacobsthal had considerable experience in the writing of personal accounts in which he "tried to give an unprejudiced record of facts" (Report:28). His personal writing was critical and self-aware.

The 1916 autobiography also provides another potentially important clue to Jacobsthal's pragmatic response to internment. In it, Jacobsthal assessed his own character and his relationship with others. He identified himself as a naturally secretive

and private person, possessing the ability to keep uncomfortable circumstances separate from his internal world:

I must possess an abnormal ability to only absorb knowledge and experiences outwardly, keeping it away from my inner self, perhaps a lucky safeguard against an abundance of impressions and absorbed contents. In earlier years I was often troubled by this phenomenon, and I berated myself for being superficial and smug. But after I realized in later life that I was indeed able to absorb deeply and to retain what I learned and experienced, I developed the notion of my "forgetfulness" ... It is not surprising, that, with such a disposition, I have more imprecise memories of certain impressions and experiences ... than other people (Jacobsthal et al. in preparation).

This description may go some way to explain why, during his later internment: "I personally have never suffered from the barbed wire as others did and Uhlmann's visions of death, barbed wire and crucifixion, admirable as they were, expressed a feeling strange to me. I was quite content to sit in the sun on the lawn and to read Homer, and every second day I took part in one of the walks across the beautiful country..." (Report:28).

For Jacobsthal, the internment episode seemed more like a farce: "I was a victim of a very stupid measure, of no avail to the country" (Report:11). On his release, Jacobsthal commented of the Intelligence Officer and camp Commandant that: "they were very polite and, it seemed to me, quite aware of the absurdity of my internment though neither of us spoke of it" (Report:20). What Jacobsthal did not include in this passage was a final absurd little episode recorded in the Diary: "Friday 28th: release order arrived. ... Search of personal belongings. Talk with Capt. ... on impounded property: 'ring up the Prime Minister'" (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary:34).

## The Report in Context

Seen in the context of his other writings, Jacobsthal's Report was neither naive, nor without art. Its deliberately dramatic opening was designed to contrast the innocuous work of a peaceful, unworldly academic with the intrusive and unnecessary "outside" world. He was being somewhat disingenuous, too, to portray himself as a harmless academic with no connection to the wider world. Letters from the Jacobsthal Archive housed at the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford, show that Jacobsthal remained in contact with German colleagues until the outbreak of war (Ulmschneider and Crawford 2011). He was aware that his former friend and student, Alexander Langsdorff, with whom he had traveled and coauthored a number of works until the late 1920s, was now a high-ranking Nazi officer (Crawford and Ulmschneider 2011). Nor can Jacobsthal have been ignorant of the links between the study of Celtic archaeology and the Nazis. Only 3 years earlier, he had stayed at the house of Adolf Mahr, the German head of Ireland's National Museum, a man who had founded the Irish Nazi party and had styled himself "Dublin's Nazi Number 1" (Mullins 2007).

A survey of recently-released Home Office records suggests that Jacobsthal's presence in Britain was not without concern to the Home Office and MI5 (TNA:PRO HO 405/24418). His letters, and letters about him, were under surveillance. Thanks

to his contacts at Christ Church, Jacobsthal had high-ranking friends and supporters in England who put pressure on the Home Office before, during, and after his internment. Jacobsthal used his British contacts to the best of his advantage to make sure that his name was not on the “enemy alien” list, though in the end his influence was not enough to override British suspicion about him. His plea that an academic doctor should have the same exemption as a medical doctor did not cut any ice with the authorities (TNA:PRO HO 405/24418).

Despite his questionable archaeological contacts in Germany and Ireland, it did not seem to have crossed Jacobsthal’s mind that these same contacts would have made him quite rightly suspect. The basis for the suspicions is well illustrated in one of the Home Office letters about Jacobsthal. Robin Dundas, Master of Christ Church, wrote on Jacobsthal’s behalf to have travel restrictions lifted. The Home Office responded on March 20, 1944: “The next three months or so is, I fear, a period during which very little sympathy is likely to be forthcoming for persons desiring to travel round in the interests of Celtic archaeology, and as you probably know it has a bad name because the Germans have used it, particularly in Eire, as a cover for their interest in other matters” (TNA:PRO HO 405/24418). It seems to have been taken as a fact that the Germans were using Celtic archaeology as a cover for spying. Was the “knock on the door” such a surprise after all?

After internment, Jacobsthal continued to express the same dogged opinion exemplified in his Report, that an eminent scholar and academic should be given exemption from the petty rules of wartime. Jacobsthal had loyal supporters in Britain, but some archaeologists were much less enthusiastic about him. O.G.S. Crawford wrote such inflammatory things about him to the Council for the Assistance of Academic Refugees (who considered Jacobsthal a great man, and were delighted at the prospect of being able to help him) that the letter had to be destroyed (S.P.S.L.: uncatalogued letter). Jacobsthal’s relationship with Crawford’s very good friend, fellow internee Gerhard Bersu, is also difficult to fathom. There is little to suggest that they were on more than cordial terms. Letters between Bersu and Jacobsthal in the Institute’s Jacobsthal Archive are rare, whereas Jacobsthal engaged in regular and frequent correspondence with friends. However Bersu, though not in Jacobsthal’s house at Hutchinson Camp, was a “permanent guest” at the evening meetings of the house, where he once held a “Children’s Class” in prehistory. In addition, according to his Diary, Bersu was Jacobsthal’s only person from outside the house to spend the last afternoon on the Isle of Man with him: “Solemn tea with Bersu as only guest” (Bod. Spec. Coll. Diary: unnumbered page).

## Conclusion

Notwithstanding the sections he chose to leave out, Jacobsthal felt that his Report was too inflammatory for publication though several people, most notably his Oxford University Press editor Kenneth Sisam, were keen to see it in print (OUP Archive). As he went to the trouble of writing out the Report and amending it from the Diary, why did he not make it publishable? And so we reach a typical Jacobsthal

obfuscation; he wrote an inflammatory text which he did not intend to print, but which he intended to be read by as many people as possible, knowing that it would be passed around and copied. Indeed, the version of it in the Institute of Archaeology archives is witness to that process: our copy is in the Stuart Piggott archive, and it was photocopied for Professor Piggott from a copy held by Michael Vickers (pers. comm.). There is, however, a comparable text to the Internment Report, one which Jacobsthal also circulated amongst his friends but never published, even though he was pressed to have it printed in *American Antiquity* (Jacobsthal Archive: Box 49 Letter 182, 19.7.1949). "Leopold Bloom" was written for John Beazley, and was sent to him on September 13, 1943. It is an academic paper presenting the case for the transmission of Celtic art in the British Isles through immigrant artists from France, Switzerland, and Hungary. It ends, however, with a satirical, fictional portrayal of the transmitter of this art as a Jewish smith who was obliged to leave Hungary in 251 BC and traveled through the continent, though: "on his journey he declined tempting offers from Bohemian and Rhenish chieftains to enter their services: his prophetic mind foresaw trouble on the Continent." The tale ends with Bloom settled in Lincoln, where, retired, he: "devoted the rest of his days to study of Talmud and debauches: 'on revient toujours...' he used to say to Mrs Bloom" (Jacobsthal/Joep Archive: Box 2a).

Explaining his wish not to see "Leopold Bloom" in print, Jacobsthal informed Hugh Hencken that: "I do not bother much about what people think of me and my papers, but I really feel that this paper is dangerous stuff, should be marked with a skull and two bones crossed and kept in a special cupboard in my shop and shown to the very, very few of which you are one!" (Jacobsthal Archive: Box 49, letter 184, 18.8.1949). This exemplifies Jacobsthal's attitude to his Report, too; he knew that even though it was an edited version of the Diary it still contained too much "dangerous stuff": "if one cut out the libellous and tactless passages, it would become dull and uninteresting. And: cui bono?" (OUP Archive: Letter of 31.12.1940). To have made it into a more palatable internee account, so that internment became "sanitized into a jolly jape," was not something Jacobsthal was prepared to do (Grenville 2010:33; Kushner and Cesarani 1993:7).

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**Part V**  
**Twentieth-Century Japanese-American**  
**Civilian North America**

## Chapter 14

# “Life in Manzanar Where There Is a Spring Breeze”: Graffiti at a World War II Japanese American Internment Camp

Jeffery F. Burton and Mary M. Farrell

**Abstract** Confinement sites by design replace freedom with restriction and restraints, and individuality with anonymity. However, recent research has shown that even in strictly controlled circumstances, individual emotions, thoughts, and reactions to the social context can be revealed by graffiti. In settings and institutions of confinement, graffiti can have various meanings and functions, including self-identity, enduring dignity, and resistance. Over 280 inscriptions made in wet concrete have been recorded at the Manzanar Relocation Center, one of the ten internment camps where Japanese American civilians were confined during World War II. These hidden texts include militaristic slogans, poems, individual and group names, present and former addresses, whimsical sayings, and expressions of love. Numerous directly and indirectly dated inscriptions allow an examination of how attitudes within the camp changed through time, reflecting both internal camp politics and external world events.

The incarceration of almost 120,000 Japanese Americans by the US government during World War II is one of the more shameful episodes in American history. The “Relocation” removed all persons of Japanese ancestry from their homes, schools, and businesses on the West Coast of the United States and placed them under guard and behind barbed wire for most of the war. Over two-thirds of them were American citizens. Some accounts suggest that the Relocation was passively accepted, through the Japanese concept of *Shikatanagai*, which loosely translates as “it cannot be helped.”

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However, the most obvious archaeological features at the camps, such as guard tower foundations and fence posts, suggest how difficult it would have been to defy the incarceration. Moreover, graffiti at the Manzanar Relocation Center indicates that the Japanese American community did not, after all, passively accept the Relocation, nor the negative self-identity promoted by this government-sanctioned racism.

## Background

On December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II when Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor. About 1,200 leaders in the Japanese American community were arrested in the days following and sent to Department of Justice internment camps. Bank accounts were frozen, homes were searched, and contraband, broadly defined to include flashlights, radios, and cameras, was confiscated. Sensationalistic newspaper headlines talked about sabotage and imminent invasion. Public opinion grew in support of interning all persons of Japanese ancestry.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 9066, allowing for the removal of Japanese Americans from restricted areas without formal charges or trials. The first evacuations began in March 1942. After initial notification, residents were given 6 days in which to dispose of nearly all of their possessions. They were told to pack only what could be carried by the family. Shops, homes, and belongings all had to be quickly sold, usually for pennies on the dollar. After reporting to collection points near their homes, each group was moved to hastily contrived assembly centers, most of them located at racetracks or fairgrounds. From the assembly centers, the Japanese Americans were sent to relocation centers. Ten relocation centers were established in isolated inland areas. Although still in California, Manzanar was far from the coast, located at an abandoned town site.

Casella (2007:3) describes three reasons why a state would imprison members of its own citizenry: rehabilitation, segregation, and punishment. The relocation centers appear to have served all three functions: the government wanted to “rehabilitate” the Japanese Americans by relocating them from the West Coast to places in the interior of the country where they would not be so dangerous. Some argued that the “segregation” of Japanese Americans was for their own good: they were put into centers to protect them from potential racist violence. But to those interned, the relocation amounted to punishment for the crime of being of Japanese descent. In January 1942, newspaper columnist Henry McLemore wrote: “Herd ‘em up, pack ‘em off and give them the inside room of the badlands. Let ‘em be pinched, hurt, hungry and dead up against it” (tenBroek et al. 1954:75).

The 1-square-mile central area of Manzanar, holding 36 blocks of barracks, was completed in 6 weeks, and within 3 months 10,000 people were interned there (Unrau 1996). The relocation centers were designed to be self-contained communities, complete with hospitals, post offices, schools, warehouses, offices, factories, and residential areas, all surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers. Internees worked agricultural fields outside the central fenced area to provide some of their own food.

Stress within the Manzanar Relocation Center arose from day-to-day conditions, including food shortages in the summer of 1942 and oil shortages in October and November that forced the closing of some mess hall kitchens. More fundamental issues included the loss of income and property as a result of the relocation, the separation of Japanese aliens from their families, and the uncertainty about the future of Japanese Americans in the United States.

Imposed from outside, these conditions led to tensions within the community. Hansen and Hacker (1974) point out long-standing differences in the Japanese American community which were exacerbated by the mass incarceration. The immigrants themselves had been discriminated against the entire time they were in America, and were even barred from becoming naturalized citizens because of their race. They tended to see the relocation as one more example of prejudice; their reaction, as to previous ostracism, was to retrench into their Japanese cultural ethnic identity. Their children, born in the United States and therefore US citizens, tended to identify with American culture, but because of discrimination depended upon their immigrant parents and the ethnic Japanese community economically and socially.

A few of these first-generation citizens tried to prove their loyalty to the United States by acquiescing to, and even abetting, the evacuation. In this way, they tried to exonerate the Japanese American community from the unfounded charges of subversion, but "more ominously, they cooperated with authorities as security watchdogs," even helping the FBI identify and locate potentially dangerous Japanese Americans (Hansen and Hacker 1974:125). Those who cooperated with the administration appeared to receive preferential treatment in the allocation of jobs and food.

Erupting in December 1942, the so-called Manzanar Riot followed months of tension among different factions within the internee community. The center director called in the military police to control a crowd that had gathered to protest at the arrest and detention of Harry Ueno, leader of the kitchen workers union, on suspicion of having taken part in the beating of a suspected administration informer. Feeling under attack, the military police fired into the crowd, killing two young men and wounding at least eight others. In the ensuing events, 15 "troublemakers" were removed from the relocation center; of these, the immigrants were eventually sent to Department of Justice alien internment camps and the citizens were sent to an isolation center at Moab, UT.

More unrest followed the government's attempt to expedite leave clearances from the relocation centers via a "loyalty questionnaire" distributed in February 1943. One of the goals of the War Relocation Authority was to determine which internees were actually loyal to the United States, and then to find places for them to work and settle away from the West Coast, outside of the relocation centers. At first, each case had to be investigated individually, which often took months, since each person had to find a job and a place to live while convincing the government that they were not a threat. Eventually, to streamline the process, every adult evacuee was given a questionnaire entitled "Application for Indefinite Leave Clearance" whether or not they were attempting to leave. Unfortunately, the questionnaire had originally been intended for determining loyalty of possible draftees, and was not modified for the general population, which included women and Japanese citizens.

Further, the questions were ambiguous and poorly worded, and caused more confusion and contentiousness. Those who did not answer correctly were considered disloyal, and sent to the Tule Lake relocation center, which had been converted into a higher-security segregation center.

Some of the remaining internees eventually left the relocation centers, volunteering for or being drafted into the military or applying for “parole” to work away from the West Coast. However, the vast majority spent the war years in these relocation centers, for the “crime” of being of Japanese ancestry. At the end of the war when the camps closed, the wooden barracks and other buildings were sold at auction and removed. In some cases whatever foundations remained were bulldozed away. As the most salient tangible remains of the camps were physically erased, the memory of the relocation was also suppressed. The entire episode was left out of textbooks, because it contradicted the accepted narrative of democracy, fairness, and equality in American history. Former internees did not discuss the relocation outside of their Japanese American communities, because they considered the episode shameful and embarrassing. People who lived near the former “Japanese camps” often assumed they had housed prisoners of war, not citizens of the United States.

Although during World War II the relocation was justified as a “military necessity,” decades later, a US commission determined that there had been no true threat to national security. The incarceration of Japanese Americans was due to war-time hysteria, failed leadership, and racial prejudice (Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians 1982). President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided a formal apology and redress for all Japanese Americans interned during World War II. In 1989, the US government officially apologized and granted redress of \$20,000 to each surviving evacuee. On the 50th anniversary of the executive order that authorized the massive internment, Congress designated the Manzanar Relocation Center a National Historic Site.

## The Data

Since the Manzanar National Historic Site’s creation in 1992, the National Park Service has conducted archaeological work that has revealed many traces of the Japanese American confinement (Burton 1996). Some archaeological features, such as foundations for latrines and guard towers, were built by military contractors. Some, such as infrastructure additions and modifications, were constructed by the internees themselves. After the initial construction of the relocation center, internees formed the work crews that did routine maintenance, modified inadequate infrastructure, and built new structures where needed. Relatively cheap and abundant, concrete was used for foundations, floors, dams, irrigation ditches, and sewer systems. Wet concrete also provided a blank slate for graffiti. Most of the inscriptions were written on wet concrete, sometimes in a careless manner. Thus, some are hard to read. Most appear to have been made by Japanese Americans interned at the relocation center. Of course, the inscriptions represent the work of only a small fraction of the internees.



**Fig. 14.1** *Top left:* Internee-built traffic circle in the administration area. *Top right:* Testimony inscription within the administration area, “KUBOTA / 4-1-42.” *Bottom left:* Typical internee-built irrigation ditch outside the security fence. *Bottom right:* Testimony inscription at the Manzanar reservoir, “Jiro Matsuyama / 11/24/43” (Courtesy Jeff Burton, National Park Service)

Inside the fenced 1-square-mile central area of the relocation center, where internees were usually confined, inscriptions occur in foundations for the ironing rooms, on rock and concrete planters, on stoops placed to support steps to barracks, on a sidewalk constructed at the morgue, and similar features (Fig. 14.1, top left, right). Outside the central area, inscriptions occur where internees used concrete to improve facilities at the chicken and hog farms, to increase the capacity of the reservoir, and to reinforce canals and ditches (Fig. 14.1, bottom left, right). To date over 280 World War II-era inscriptions have been recorded at Manzanar during a variety of archaeological projects (Burton 2005, 2006, 2008; Inomata and Burton 1996 Appendix). The large number of preserved inscriptions makes Manzanar unique among the ten relocation centers and provides a special insight into the people interned there (Burton et al. 2002).

### *Japanese Writing System*

The Japanese writing system consists of three types of characters and letters: Chinese characters, *hiragana*, and *katakana*. Chinese characters carry meanings

and some of them can represent more than one syllable. *Hiragana* and *katakana* are phonetic writings and each character represents one syllable. These three types of writing can be used in the same sentence. Japanese can be written both vertically and horizontally. Vertical writings read from top to bottom, right to left. Horizontal writings can go from left to right or from right to left.

### *Notation for Manzanar*

In the inscriptions, “Manzanar” is written with three Chinese characters. Although today Japanese usually use *katakana* to write foreign place names, the use of Chinese characters was more common in the 1940s. In such cases, Chinese characters with the closest phonetic values were usually chosen. However, Chinese characters convey meanings, which are often considered for their selection. The place-name Manzanar in the inscription of the cemetery memorial tower uses three characters with the meanings of “full,” “sand,” and “what.” In other inscriptions, the second character is replaced with one meaning “seat.” It is possible that the Japanese Americans at Manzanar chose these characters just for their phonetic values rather than for their meanings, but “sand” and “full” might have been descriptive of the crowded, dusty conditions. Note that the reading of the characters is manzana instead of manzanar.

Another example, from a stele at Merritt Park seen in historic photos, appears to have no hidden meaning. Merritt Park, which included a pond, rose gardens, and a tea-house ramada, was built by internees to provide a respite from the severity of the barracks, guard towers, and barbed wire. First called Rose Park, then Pleasure Park, the park was eventually named Merritt Park, in honor of the relocation center’s director. When the National Park Service was trying to translate an inscription painted on a stele at the park, we asked native speakers of Japanese what it meant. They could make no sense of the inscription until they spoke the characters out loud and we recognized Camp Director Merritt’s name. In this case, for the first three characters it is not the meaning of the characters, but their sound (*mei-ri-to* = Merritt):

mei = light  
 ri = hometown  
 t(o) = climb  
 ko = public  
 en = garden

### *Chronology*

While dated inscriptions are relatively rare at Manzanar, 82 % of the graffiti could be dated. Because the inscriptions were made in wet concrete a single date would apply to many other inscriptions on the same feature (Table 14.1). Only 33 of the

**Table 14.1** Features at Manzanar with dated inscriptions

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1942	
April 1	Small slab at Administration Block
May 8	Block 34, Barracks 2 entry
June 6	Camouflage Net Factory
June 10	Traffic circle at Administration Block <sup>at</sup>
June 19	Block 10 ironing room slab
June 26	Manzanar Airport hangar apron
August 7 and 9	Blk 22 pond (first mess hall garden)
November 9	Service Station slab
October 11	Fire Station driveway <sup>at</sup>
December 30	Small slab at lath house
Unknown	George Creek ditch and cap wall added to Bairs Creek dam
1943	
February 11	Chlorination Tank improvements <sup>†</sup>
February 17	Reservoir Settling Basin improvements <sup>at</sup>
February 25	Reservoir cap wall <sup>at</sup>
February 25	Block 19, Barracks 12 faucet overflow basin
February 26–28	South Fields (ditch) <sup>at</sup>
March 1	South Fields (ditch) <sup>†</sup>
March 2–3	Reservoir cap wall <sup>at</sup>
March 10	South Fields (ditch) <sup>†</sup>
March 26	North Fields (N. ditch) <sup>a</sup>
March 30	Bairs Creek Ditch (weir box)
June 6–11	North Fields (N. ditch)
August 9	Chicken Farm (main building entry)
August	Cemetery Monument <sup>†</sup>
August	North Park grill
September 9–10	Morgue sidewalk <sup>at</sup>
September 22	Hog Farm (weir box)
October 7	Caucasian mess hall expansion <sup>†</sup>
October 14–15	Chicken Farm slabs <sup>at</sup>
October	Merritt Park Stele <sup>†</sup>
November 1	Far South Fields (weir box) <sup>†</sup>
November 9 and 12	Reservoir Sand Trap walls <sup>†</sup>
December 22	Chicken Farm (retaining wall) <sup>†</sup>
Unknown	Various <sup>at</sup>
1944	
January 28	Chicken Farm (main building addition)
February 12	Auditorium cornerstone
January 28	Chicken Farm (main building addition)
February 12	Auditorium cornerstone
March 6	Far South Fields (retaining walls) <sup>†</sup>
March 19	Far South Fields (S. ditch) <sup>†</sup>
March 23	North Wells pipeline
May 14	Block 17, entry?
May 21	Block 11, Barracks 6 entry

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(continued)

**Table 14.1** (continued)

June 6	Block 10, Barracks 11 faucet overflow basin
June 13	Auditorium sidewalk
July 24	Well #169 apron
Unknown	Farm shed foundation
1945	
Unknown	Reservoir Sand Trap retaining wall
1946	
March	Reservoir settling basin repair

<sup>a</sup>Includes pro-Japan, anti-U.S. statements; † includes Japanese characters

inscriptions, or less than 12 %, could be attributed to contractors, camp staff, or military police. Of the graffiti that dates to 1942, 89 % is within the camp. In contrast, 87 % of the 1943-dated graffiti is outside the camp, as the focus of internee work changed from finishing construction within the residential and administrative areas, to upgrading and repairing water system infrastructure and constructing facilities for the agricultural operations.

The few inscriptions dated to 1944 are found about equally in and outside the camp fences. By this time, the pace of new construction had slowed. Only two inscriptions date to 1945, when there was very little new construction associated with the camp. A repair at the camp reservoir is dated March 1946.

## Typology

The Manzanar inscriptions can be categorized using Casella's (2009) six categories for inmate graffiti: Testimony, Separation, Diversion, Dignity, Identity, and Resistance (Tables 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4). As Casella notes, graffiti can have several meanings, and the categories overlap. But in her useful scheme, names and dates would be "testimony"; places or people longed for would fit the separation category; doodles and pranks would be "diversion and amusement"; taking pride in one's work or trying to lead a normal life would be "dignity under adversity." A name in Japanese characters, proclaiming Japanese-ness, would be classified as "identity," and antiadministration or antigovernment graffiti would be classified as "resistance."

## Testimony

The most common type of graffiti at Manzanar is testimony, with 64 % of the inscriptions consisting of names, initials, and dates. The inscriptions at Manzanar include over 50 dates, 70 different identifiable people, and numerous initials at dozens of locations both inside and outside the fenced camp.

Testimony graffiti dating to 1942 are nearly all within the fenced residential and administrative areas of camp, except for one 1942 date on a dam repair and names

**Table 14.2** Internee inscriptions within the security fence

	1942	1943	1944	1945	Unknown	Total
Testimony	52	6	10		28	96
Separation	2					2
Diversion	4	2			2	8
Dignity	1	1			3	5
Identity	1	7				8
Resistance	2	1				3
Total	62	17	10	0	33	122

**Table 14.3** Internee inscriptions outside the security fence

	1942	1943	1944	1945	Unknown	Total
Testimony	7	49	8	2	3	69
Separation		2				2
Diversion		8	1			9
Dignity		15	1			16
Identity		24	3			27
Resistance		17				17
Total	7	115	13	2	3	140

**Table 14.4** Military and staff inscriptions

	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	Unknown	Total
Testimony	6		1		1	16	24
Separation			2				2
Diversion	2					1	3
Dignity							0
Identity	3					1	4
Resistance							0
Total	11	0	3	0	1	18	33

and a date carved into the wall of the Lone Pine train station. One common place to find concrete is at building entryways, where small pads of concrete were built by internees in front of steps to serve as a small landing. The earliest dated inscription (4/1/42) was by Ray Kubota (Fig. 14.1, top left), who must have been among the first to arrive when Manzanar opened, the last week of March. Kubota was likely one of the several hundred Japanese Americans who offered to go early to help build the camp and prepare it for the influx of internees who would follow. The inscription was found on an entryway in the administration area. Kubota was still in the relocation center in August 1943; his name and that date are on a barbeque grill in North Park. Jiro Matsuyama, whose name and the date 11/24/43 appear on one of the later reservoir walls (Fig. 14.1, bottom right), was manager of the reservoir and the sewage plant. Matsuyama had agreed to take on the reservoir job when he realized it would give him a chance to go fishing. Although he recalled many details of the water system operation, he did not remember writing his name in the wet concrete, which he recognized as his handwriting (Matsuyama 2005).

A “May 8, 1942” date on a concrete stoop south of Barracks 2 in Block 34 shows someone had managed to establish residence in Block 34 before the standard or official assigning of barracks there. Blocks were supposedly filled in numerical order, from 1 to 36, as internees arrived. By May 1942, only the first few blocks would have been occupied. This date also indicates that internees quickly became adept at acquiring materials such as concrete for their own use. A date of August 1942 on a concrete-lined pond at Block 22 corroborates Harry Ueno’s account that he built the first mess hall garden.

Only a few names are repeated at different areas. These include: crew leader “Tom Fujisaki” at three different areas dating to 1943 and 1944; “Tom Makio” at the north and south fields; and “Yoshinaga” at the hog farm and at the reservoir. The initials or nickname “NOB” occur at the fire department (October 1942), chlorination tank (February 1943), and reservoir (March 1943).

Notable names include “Kurihara” inscribed in the foundation of an internee-built ironing room, which also has a date of “6-19-42.” Joseph Kurihara was a US citizen and a World War I Army veteran. Embittered by the government’s refusal to make any exception to the evacuation for veterans who had already proven their loyalty by serving during World War I, Kurihara became a prominent spokesperson for the pro-Japan faction. When Harry Ueno was arrested under suspicion for the beating of a person accused of being an administration informant, Kurihara was the main spokesman demanding Ueno’s release. Kurihara was arrested and removed from Manzanar after the riot.

“Jackson Nakashima” appears inscribed in one of the concrete-lined ditches, built in March 1943, in the irrigation system for the fields far north of the central area. Kunihiro Jackson Nakashima came to Manzanar on April 28, 1942, from Los Angeles with his family. He had two brothers who enlisted in the military from Manzanar (according to the Buddhist Church directory), plus another brother and a sister. What makes Jackson Nakashima unique is that he is the only Manzanar resident who went to state prison for a crime. In January 1945, when Nakashima was 22 years old, he was convicted of molesting a 9-year-old girl, and was sent to San Quentin (James Howell, 2011, personal communication).

## *Separation*

Only six of the inscriptions fit the separation category. In 1942, two hometowns are identified, Elk Grove and Glendale (Fig. 14.2, top left). The name of the hometown of Venice, Calif, and a former employer (Oriental Steamship Co) date to 1943 (Fig. 14.2, top right). “Tucson” was written two times in wet concrete at a small diversion dam at George Creek, along with the names Ned and Harvey and the date 1944. No internees were from Tucson, AZ, but the camp staff included a Ned and a Harvey, and one of them may have been from Tucson.



**Fig. 14.2** *Top left:* Separation inscription within the administration area, “Gerd Kurihara / Glendale Cal. / 6/19/42.” *Top right:* Separation inscription at the chicken farm, “Okamoto / Venice / Calif.” *Bottom left:* Diversion inscription at the fire station, “TOM TAKAHASHI “JERK”” *Bottom right:* Diversion inscription at the chicken farm, “FRANK BAKATARE.” *Bakatare* is Japanese for stupid or foolish (Courtesy Jeff Burton, National Park Service)

### ***Diversion and Amusement***

Twenty inscriptions at Manzanar fit the diversion and amusement category, consisting of doodles, sexual images, and parody. They include foot and handprints, abstract designs, a possible drawing of a penis, a vulgar Japanese term for penis, and epithets referring to the author or to others as Jerk (Fig. 14.2, bottom left), Gimp, or *Bakatare* (Japanese for stupid; Fig. 14.2, bottom right).

One former internee, George Izumi, related the story that he and two other kids one afternoon found a retaining wall with wet concrete at the chicken farm, and inscribed their names (Allen 2002). Izumi had a broken leg at the time, and jokingly signed himself as Gimp. By December 1943, even a kid with a broken leg could easily leave the fenced area. From the archaeological perspective, Izumi’s story points out that inscriptions are not necessarily made by the same people who poured the concrete. Izumi and his companions wrote their names more than once in the concrete they found:

GIMP IZUMI Dec 22 1943

SHO with two Japanese characters translated as—*nakayama* (a family name).

MINORU and an abstract design  
 GIMP THE ... (with a possible Japanese character, erased)  
 GIMP (with erased characters?)  
 MIN  
 MIN SHISHIDO

George Izumi was born in 1921 in Los Angeles; at Manzanar he lived in Block 23, Barracks 3, Room 4. There were seven internees with the same family number, 2711. George joined the military and left Manzanar for Ft. Douglas on February 22, 1945. Sho Nakayama, born in 1919 and from Los Angeles, lived in Block 26, Barracks 7, Room 5. Nakayama was apparently a young single man without family, since he is the only one with family number 590. He left Manzanar for Chicago August 23, 1945. Minoru Shishido, born in 1925 and also from the Los Angeles area, had six others with his same family number (3704), and was a family friend of Izumi's (Allen 2002). Shishido lived in Manzanar in Block 3, Barracks 7, Room 1, until he left for Clearfield, Utah, September 14, 1944.

### *Dignity Under Adversity*

Twenty of the inscriptions convey the emotions and ideas of “normal” life. In the clearly abnormal confinement context, expressions of normality can be considered within the dignity under adversity category. They include barracks addresses, expressions of love (Fig. 14.3, top right), and six different work crew names (Fig. 14.3, top left), including the Emergency Crew. Tommy Miyaoka, who apparently thought highly of himself, wrote his name six times in one small area along a wall at the reservoir sand trap in November 1943:

TOMMY MIYAOKA  
 TOM M.  
 TOMMY - NOV. 1943  
 TOMMY M 1943  
 Tommy Miyaoka 1943  
 I LOVE MYSELF / TOMMY MIYAOKA (Fig. 14.3, bottom left)

Born in Sacramento in 1925, Tom Toshiaki Miyaoka was listed as a single male, probably living with parents and siblings at Manzanar, since four others had the same family number (22028). He would have been about 18 when he inscribed his name. He was transferred to the Tule Lake segregation center on February 26, 1944. It is likely that Tommy answered the loyalty questionnaire “incorrectly” in the eyes of the administration, whether from personal belief or, like many young Japanese Americans in the camps, to abide by his parents’ wishes so that the family would stay together.



**Fig. 14.3** *Top left:* Dignity inscription at the administration staff mess hall, “TOM’S CREW / Oct. 7th 43.” *Top right:* Dignity inscription on an irrigation ditch, “Jun, The LOVER.” *Bottom left:* Dignity inscription at the Manzanar reservoir, “I LOVE MYSELF / TOMMY MIYAOKA.” *Bottom right:* Japanese writing on an irrigation ditch transcribed as “*Showa* 18 [1943] / March 1 / E Group” (Courtesy Jeff Burton, National Park Service)

## Identity

Forty of the inscriptions convey explicit group or ethnic identity, apart from that inherent in being part of a work crew. The only work crew written in Japanese is the Emergency Crew or E Group (Fig. 14.3, bottom right). Japanese characters in themselves express Japanese ethnicity (Figs. 14.4 and 14.5). Of the Japanese inscriptions, 80 % were made outside camp, not surprising since the use of Japanese was initially banned.

The inscriptions at Manzanar use both Japanese and Western calendars. Near the water system’s chlorination tank foundation slab is Japanese writing transcribed as “... hachi nen ... kigensetsu,” and translated as “...eighth year ... National Foundation Day.” Kigensetsu was an important national holiday of Japan, occurring on February 11, that commemorates the founding of the nation and the imperial line by its legendary first emperor, Jimmu, around 660 BC. Damaged characters in the first part are probably “*showa* 1...” which, with the legible letters, would be translated “Showa 18th year.” The 18th year of *showa* in the Japanese system corresponds



**Fig. 14.4** *Top left:* Identity inscription at the administration staff mess hall, unclear Japanese characters. *Top center:* Identity inscription at the Manzanar reservoir, Japanese writing transcribed as “November 16 / 1943 / Nakahama [family name].” *Top right:* Resistance inscription at the fire station, Japanese writing transcribed as “Great Japan.” *Bottom left:* Resistance inscription at the chicken farm, Japanese writing transcribed as “Philippine independence / Showa 18 [1943] / October 14.” *Bottom center:* Resistance inscription at the chicken farm, Japanese writing transcribed as “Empire of Japan.” *Bottom right:* Japanese writing on an irrigation ditch transcribed as “Life in Manzanar where there is a spring breeze” (Courtesy Jeff Burton, National Park Service)

to 1943 in the Western calendar. Damaged letters in the second part are probably “February 11.” Although clearly expressing Japanese identity, this inscription could also fit the category of resistance, since it alludes to the legitimacy of the Japanese emperor.

As in the example above, and in the examples discussed under “resistance,” below, the use of Japanese writing was often associated with anti-American and militaristic slogans. However, one inscription in Japanese presents a clear Japanese identity along with a decidedly antimilitaristic sentiment. At the reservoir, five



**Fig. 14.5** *Left*: Japanese *tanka* on a pipeline support transcribed as “Pleasantly we will soon reap all spikes / If you want to be proud / be proud for now / Ugly Americans.” *Right*: Japanese writing at the Manzanar reservoir transcribed as “Beat Great Britain and the USA” (Courtesy Jeff Burton, National Park Service)

stones were placed atop a large boulder to evoke an *ishidoro* or Japanese stone lantern. An area on the front of the boulder itself was plastered with a patch of concrete, which was inscribed with the character *heiwa*, “peace.”

Three of the inscriptions express Caucasian identities. On a concrete stump next to the Sentry Post at the entrance to the camp is inscribed “319th MP.” The 319th Military Police Escort Guard Company, which included 3 officers and 135 enlisted men, was at Manzanar from June 1, 1943, to April 20, 1944. The 319th was commanded by Captain Donald R. Nail, who appears to have been a no-nonsense administrator who sought to correct lax enforcement of rules as well as lax maintenance of the MP facilities. However, by December 25, 1943, Nail had agreed to withdraw sentries from the guard towers and all the auxiliary gates except at night, and to discontinue perimeter patrols. Manzanar’s director, Ralph Merritt, considered Nail’s decision a “Christmas present,” indicative of drastic changes in the attitude of the military police toward the internees (Unrau 1996:655–656). Upon its departure in April of 1944, the 319th was replaced by a military unit less than half its size, reflecting the War Department’s decision that military police could curtail their security measures even more (Unrau 1996:657). By May 1944, the guard towers were not staffed even at night, and by November, the military police force was reduced once again, to 2 officers and 40 enlisted men, with the understanding that the military police’s primary function was to be on stand-by in case of unexpected disturbances (Unrau 1996:658). The concrete stump on which the inscription was written is one of two designed to look like tree stumps and function as decorative gate posts at the main entrance.

On a ditch near one of the guard towers “Jap Camp,” “1942,” “Ralph S...,” and “M.R.C.” are inscribed, and “Summers” is formed with embedded pebbles. Lone

Pine contractor Charles Summers began work on the first four guard towers in June 1942 (Wehrey 2008:58). “ART—Maillet / LONE PINE / 6-6-42” is on the foundation slab of the net factory. Although it includes a place name, this inscription expresses identity, rather than separation. Lone Pine is a nearby town, and Maillet likely worked on the slab. Art Maillet’s son is the current District Attorney for Inyo County, where Manzanar is located.

## *Resistance*

Over 20 of Manzanar’s inscriptions fit the final category, Resistance. They include expressions of anger and defiance, and militant slogans. Three examples were written inside camp. Two from 1942 are in Japanese: one at the traffic circle in the administration area translates roughly to “rice” or “America” and “urine” (dated June 1942, shortly after the camp opened). The character for America was the same as the character for rice; Americans were seen as rich and if you were rich you would have lots of rice. A second, dating to October 1942, was inscribed at the fire station (Fig. 14.4, top right). It consists of three characters which translate as *Dainippon* (Great Japan). Both inscriptions are in conspicuous locations inside the camp, but it should be noted that most of the Caucasian staff could not read Japanese. The third inscription inside the camp is in English and dates to 1943: at the hospital morgue sidewalk is “BANZAI” (along with Zero Boys and an unclear Japanese inscription). *Banzai* can be a Japanese cheer of triumph, but *Banzai* is used to mean “[let the emperor live] ten thousand years,” which would be a decidedly pro-Japan sentiment.

Most of the pro-Japan inscriptions date to between February and October 1943, and are located outside the camp. The expressions suggest a strong resentment against the United States as well as emotional attachment to Japan, and the Japanese characters marking National Foundation Day discussed above under identity could fall into the “resistance” category as well. Likewise, the name “Tojo,” which appears near the chlorination tank’s slab foundation, probably represents a subtle form of resistance, rather than identity. The only known person at Manzanar with the name “Tojo” was a young orphan. Shown the inscription over 55 years later, Dennis Tojo Bandhauer was surprised to see it. It occurs along with two other names and what could be considered a militant statement in Japanese characters. The inscribed Tojo, then, was probably not reflecting someone’s own identity, but rather resistance: Tojo was the name of the Japanese Prime Minister and army general who ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Several Japanese inscriptions at the chicken farm convey militant sentiments (Fig. 14.4, bottom center), with translations such as “Great Japanese Empire”; “Beat the US”; and “Unconditional US surrender.” The fact that the same text is written in slightly different ways suggests that more than one person created the graffiti. Two inscriptions commemorate Japan’s propaganda move of granting independence to the Philippines in October 1943 (Fig. 14.4, bottom left). The phrase, “BANZAI NIPPON,” inscribed at an irrigation ditch in the farm fields south of the central area,

can be translated as “Long live Japan.” Using the Romanized form of the native name of Japan, this inscription is the only one that someone who does not know Japanese would recognize as pro-Japan.

Some of the most militant graffiti occurs at the camp reservoir: “Beat Great Britain and the US” (Fig. 14.5, right) “Loyal to the emperor,” and “Black Dragons.” In Japan, the Black Dragon Society was a prominent paramilitary, ultra-nationalist group. At Manzanar it consisted of a dozen or so very outspoken men, most of whom had been educated in Japan. Working on repair and scavenger crews, they rode around on a trash truck with a black pirate flag. They were reportedly responsible for numerous acts of violence and intimidation, including beatings, trying to run over people, instigating unrest, and drawing up a death list (Inada 2000:161–162).

Some resistance is conveyed through poetry (Fig. 14.5, left). For example, in the South Fields irrigation system are two *tankas*, Japanese poems that consist of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables. Both *tankas* are written in Japanese characters, and are inscribed near concrete dated to February and March 1943. One transcribes as:

*kokoroyoku yagate mi(unclear character)zara*  
*karitoran*  
*hokoraba hokore*  
*komeno shuhi*

The translation is:

Pleasantly we will soon reap all spikes.  
 If you want to be proud, be proud for now.  
 Ugly rice (despicable Americans).

The Chinese character for rice is also used for the words of the United States or American. The poem carries double meanings, one about harvesting rice and the other about beating the Americans. The last two characters are hard to read, but probably *shu-hi*. They do not make a common word, but the meaning of the characters is “ugly despicable people.”

Poetry referring to “Ugly despicable Americans” is clearly defiant. The other *tanka* is more ambiguous:

*tawamurewa asaseno watashi*  
*samo nitari*  
*sawo nigī kawa(ri)*  
*atti kotti*

The translation is:

This play is like crossing a shallow stream.  
 Holding a stick.  
 (ramble) here and there.

It seems likely that the writer intended some double meaning, now unclear.

A third poetic inscription is in Japanese characters transcribed as *harukaze* (damaged characters) *fuku manzana seikatsu* (unclear character), translated as “Life in Manzanar where there is a spring breeze.” Although the inscription sounds like a paean to the beauty of Manzanar, we consider this saying to fit the resistance category.

Almost universally, former internees have commented on the harsh winds at Manzanar. Wind blew the recently disturbed soil into the poorly constructed barracks, so that internees often woke up in the morning covered with sand and silt. Swirling dust frequently obscured the nearby mountains and made breathing difficult. In the spring, especially, winds blow nearly constantly. Unlike the mild climate of Los Angeles, where most of the internees had lived, Manzanar's weather was extreme, with winter temperatures often below freezing and summer temperatures often exceeding 100°. Wind, in all seasons, was unavoidable, since internees had to stand outside in lines for the mess hall and latrines. "Life in Manzanar where there is a spring breeze" may have been ironic, a negative comment on the relentless wind. Or it may have been defiant, with the writer seeing beauty in spite of his circumstances and imposing that perspective onto a harsh reality.

## Conclusions

Together the Identity and Resistance categories comprise 20 % of the recorded graffiti at Manzanar. The only other relocation center with resistance graffiti, so far as is now known, is the Tule Lake Segregation Center. Most of the Identity and Resistance graffiti at Manzanar dates to the period from February to October 1943, the main period of concrete work outside the camp, suggesting it was safer to make defiant and angry inscriptions away from the eyes of the administration. But it may not be a coincidence that the proliferation of Identity and Resistance graffiti appears to begin about the time the Loyalty Questionnaire was issued, in February 1943, or that it abates after October 1943, when the first group of "disloyals" were shipped to Tule Lake Segregation Center. In November 1943, a Manzanar work group made inscriptions at the same location where numerous resistance and Japanese inscriptions had been previously made. But none of the November crew's graffiti would be considered to fit the category of resistance and only one included Japanese characters.

The Emergency Crew (which apparently contained members of Manzanar's Black Dragons), produced some of the most militant and defiant graffiti, but also did some of the least desirable work at Manzanar, including manual labor – like concrete construction. But, it should be noted that in spite of their angry rhetoric, their work was essential to Manzanar's operations (Figs. 14.3, bottom right and 14.5, right). One could infer that although they wanted the United States to lose the war, they did not want Manzanar to fail. The Emergency Crew was still around in March 1944, although its membership had likely changed, and still inscribing Japanese characters, but not with the resistance and defiance meanings.

In summary, confinement sites by design replace freedom with restriction and restraints, and individuality with anonymity. However, graffiti at Manzanar reveals a variety of individual emotions, thoughts, and reactions to the social context even in strictly controlled circumstances. Graffiti shows that many strove to retain their ethnic identity and dignity throughout their incarceration, and that defiance and

anger may have peaked in the months following the distribution of the Loyalty Questionnaire. However, the intended meanings of some inscriptions are difficult to understand without knowing the contexts and the people who wrote them. Further study of the inscriptions by native speakers, bibliographic and archival research, and interviews may clarify more hidden meanings and related contexts.

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## Appendix: World War II Era Inscriptions at Manzanar

### *Inside Security Fence*

#### *Administration Block, Caucasian mess hall addition*

TOM’S CREW Oct 7th 43

TOM FUJISAKI 10/7/43

Japanese (Katakana) characters transcribed as “ehu” (or “efu”). It does not appear to be a Japanese word, and may represent the letter F.

Chinese characters transcribed as “... ju hou ...”. The first and third characters are unclear. The second character means celebration; as a Japanese word it may be a transcription of a foreign place name. This inscription was scribbled over when wet.

Finger marking possibly the Buddhist character “mu” (nothing)

Outline of a bare footprint

#### *Administration Block, small slab*

KUBOTA

KUBOTA / 4-1-42

#### *Administration Block, traffic circle*

BUILT BY WADA AND CREW JUNE 10, 1942 A.D.

Paul TAKEUOHI “42”

M MASY

MII

Yosh YASUDA + B.N.

MASY M

N..AMI

Z (or N)

YANK

OKAMUDO

GERD KEHIHARA / GLENDALE CAL / 6/10/42

S KUMO

## ELK GROVE

SM...

OV

Yosh

Two Japanese characters transcribed as *ta* (rice field or paddy) and *yubari* (urine). It is not clear how the writer intended these characters to be read, they are not a typical juxtaposition and there are at least three possible ways of reading this character compound. In addition, the character used for urine is not the form used in common conversational Japanese; its use is usually confined to formal writing.

Handprints

Pebbles pressed into concrete

*Auditorium, concrete cornerstone*

AUDITORI... FEB. 12, 1944

*Auditorium, sidewalk*

MC 6/13/44

NN

YK 6/13/4...

FX 4...

*Camouflage Net Factory*

ART - Maillet / LONE PINE / 6-6-42

*Camouflage Net Factory, small slab*

MAR. 30th 194-

*Farm Equipment Storage Building*

1944

*Fire Department*

Bob UARAGAMI

TOM TAKAHASHI "JERK"

SHO MATSUSHITA

GEO H.

R... G...

HIDEO JUN (?)

Oshita

19 NOB

SHO N

J KIO...

KEN Hif...

TAK...

SOTO OCT 11 1942

MAS

MASA ...

AO - 42

F

MI

A

WANA ....A (?)

Japanese characters transcribed as *Dainippon* (Great Japan)

Imprint of a quarter

*Guayule Lath House*

12-30-42

*Hospital Laundry Room*

Jed...

*Merritt Park, west stele*

Pleasure Park 1943

Japanese Characters transcribed as "Merritt Park"

*Merritt Park, east stele*

Pleasure Park 1943

Japanese characters transcribed as "Memorial Marker / October 1943"

*Military Police Sentry Post, decorative concrete stumps for gate*

319TH M.P.

AW

B.C.

BERT

E.MN

JH

PL

WL. WELLES

XXXXXXXX

BG

*Morgue, sidewalk*

BUGS

SAM 9/9/43

1/4/... JACK

BANZAI

9/10/43 Zero Boy's

Indistinct Japanese writing / 1943

*Motor Pool Office*

E. K. (? ?)

L I

Handprint

Possible child's footprint

*North Park, barbecue grill*

Ray Kubota

August 1943 / hi

*Residential Block 2, small pond at Barracks 1*

Impressed pennies

*Residential Block 3, ironing room*

MY

M

Frank

*Residential Block, laundry room fat trap*

1942 MAS HAMA

Possible initials

*Residential Block 6, manhole fragment*

E KONI...

*Residential Block 7 (High School), manhole apron*

TAKOY

N K

V T

E N

... K

MAR

SAM

MASNIA

T ... I

LOVE (?)

TAK

... AN

T A

T H

K H T

J ...

N H

*Residential Block 8, ironing room*

"FRED JERK"

*Residential Block 9, entry at Barracks 6*

9=6=1 (shorthand for "Block 9, Barracks 6, Residence 1")

*Residential Block 10, overflow basin at Barracks 11 faucet*

June 6, 1944

*Residential Block 10, ironing room*

KURIHARA  
 GEO M... M  
 6-19-42

*Residential Block 11, entry at Barracks 6*

Shintoni May 21, 1944

*Residential Block, overflow basin at Barracks 3 faucet*

1944

*Residential Block 15, pond bridge at Barracks 7*

unclear Japanese characters

*Residential Block 15, slab fragments near Barracks 8*

K. ONISHI  
 M. NANISHI  
 M. NAKAZAW  
 ...S M 5  
 ...r 5  
 114

*Residential Block 15, entryway at Barracks 13*

15-13-4 (made with embedded pebbles; shorthand for "Block 15, Barracks 13, Residence 4")

*Residential Block 15, ironing room*

JACKSON / (...LORDAL)  
 K.N.  
 M.T.  
 abstract design

*Residential Block 16, laundry room fat trap*

G.T.  
 M.K.

*Residential Block 17, slab fragments near Barracks 1*

5.14.44. SA

*Residential Block 18, entry at Barracks 11*

Two deliberate handprints; one is very small and must be that of a child.

*Residential Block 19, overflow basin at Barracks 12 faucet*

Feb. 25, 1943

*Residential Block 22, mess hall pond*

8-7 1942 (within pond, made with embedded pebbles)  
 AUG. 9, 42 (on bridge)

*Residential Block 34, entry at Barracks 2*

May 8, 1942

*Residential Block 36, small pond at Barracks 12*

36-12

*Service Station*

M.F. 11-9-42

*Well #169, concrete apron*

BK 7/24/44

7/2.../44 M ...

M ... ../.../...

Finger and hand prints

## ***Outside Security Fence***

*Bairs Creek Irrigation System, dam cap wall*

1942

*Bairs Creek Irrigation System, diversion box*

WILLY 3-30-43

ITCH 3-30-43

WILLY + ALYEE

W... ..

WILLY + A

S.M. 3-30-40 (sic)

M.Y. 3-30-43

MAR. 30 1943

*Cemetery Monument*

Front transcription: *ireitou*, “memorial tower.” The direct translation is: “Monument to console the souls of the dead.” It is a common term for this kind of monument. Back transcription: *senkyuhyaku yonjusan nen hachigatsu. manzana nihonjin konryu*, “Erected by the Manzanar Japanese, August 1943.”

*Chicken Farm, office and processing building, perimeter foundation*

Japanese (*katakana*) inscription transcribed as *chinpo*, a colloquial word for “penis.”

*Chicken Farm, office and processing building, slab*

Japanese writing transcribed as “Empire of Japan / Great victory”

Japanese writing transcribed as “Empire of Japan”

*Chicken Farm, office and processing building, entryways*

OOKA

JR A

Handprint

J.N.

AUG 9, 1943

Two penny impressions

*Chicken Farm, addition to office building*

SHISHI K... ..

1/28/44 / DAVID ...

*Chicken Farm, chicken coop perimeter foundations*

Frank Bakatare (in Japanese *bakatare* is analogous to stupid)

N.Y.K. LINE (*nippon yusen kaisha*, "Japan Mail Shipping Line")

Japanese writing transcribed as *toyo kisen gaisha*, "Oriental Steamship Company."

*Chicken Farm, chicken coop slabs*

Shoe, boot, and dog prints

Okamoto / Venice / Calif. ornia

Oct 15 / Ray O ----

Oct ...4th 1943 / ... YASUI

TOM

Japanese inscriptions transcribed as "Beat the U.S."

Japanese writing transcribed as "Manzanar"

Japanese writing transcribed as "Philippine independence / Showa 18 (1943) / October 14"

Japanese writing transcribed as "US surrender without objection to Japan"

Japanese writing transcribed as "Philippine independence / Showa 18 (1943) / October 14"

*Chicken Farm, retaining wall*

GIMP IZUMI / Dec 22 1943

SHO with two Japanese characters transcribed as *Nakayama* (a family name).

MINORU and an abstract design

GIMP THE ... (with a possible erased Japanese character)

GIMP with possible erased characters

MIN

MIN SHISHIDO

*Chlorination Tank, ditch and retaining walls*

T. YOTS 2-11-43

NOB 2-11-43

2-11-43 TOJO

Japanese writing transcribed as (damaged letters) *hachi nen* (damaged letters) *kigensetsu*, "... eighth year ... National Foundation Day." *Kigensetsu* is an anniversary on February 11, that commemorates the accession of the first emperor in mythical times. It is similar to the concept of National Foundation Day, and was an important national holiday of Japan. Damaged letters in the

first part are probably *showa* 1. With the legible letters, they make “*Showa* 18th year,” which corresponds to 1943. Damaged letters in the second part are probably “February 11.”

*Far South Fields Irrigation System, bridge and diversion dam*

TUCSON

HARVEY NED

TUCSON 3/6/44

COMPLETE... MARC...

Japanese writing transcribed as *senkyuhyaku yonjuyonen sangatsu konryu*, “Built in March 1944.”

Japanese writing transcribed as *senkyuhyaku yonjuyonen sangatsui (?)gumi konryu*, “Built by E Group in March 1944.”

*Far South Fields Irrigation System, diversion box*

NOV 1 43

Japanese writing transcribed as *fujisaki* (a family name) and *kumi* (a given name?).

*Far North Fields Irrigation System, ditches*

SV 1944 MARK

JUN, The LOVER

K.O.+ CH

Timber

Tommy /11/43

Eichi + Michi Timber

I LOVE MICHI SIGNED ...ICHI

COMPLETED 3.26.43

OUTT

RI

JACKSON NAKASHIMA

Y.J.K. 1943

// KJ JY

Japanese writing transcribed as *hichigatsu muika ootsuki(?)*, “July 6 Ootsuki” (a family name).

Japanese writing transcribed as *manzana dainipponkoku*, “Manzanar Great Japan.”

*North Fields Irrigation System, dam cap wall*

KO

TK

*Far South Fields Irrigation System, ditches*

MAR 19 1944

Japanese writing in poor condition transcribed as six possible family names (*mizoguchi* [?] *tamai* [?] ... ..*da*) and *senkyuhyaku yonjuyon konryu*, “Built 1944.”

*Guard Tower 4 Vicinity, ditch*

JAP CAMP  
 M.R.C. 1942  
 FS (overlapped letters)  
 Summers (formed with embedded pebbles)  
 RALPH S...  
 1942

*Hog Farm, loading ramp*

YOSHINAGA

*Hog Farm, weir box*

J L M  
 Tom Fujisaki 9/22/43  
 Mitsuru Morikawa

*Hog Farm, ditch*

194-  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *no*(?) (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *matsu*(?) (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *ita*(?) (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *saura* (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *hirabayashi* (or *hiramatsu*) (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *yoshimura* (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *maeda* (family name)  
 Japanese writing transcribed as *butai bi* (damaged character), "Group or Unit B(?.)"

*Lone Pine Train Station, exterior clapboard siding*

I. SHIGEI 1942 8. ...1  
 Y FUJII

*Manzanar Airport, hangar apron*

SN  
 IG  
 RW  
 6-25-42

*Military Police Compound, small slab*

E.H.  
 W.C.W.  
 W.E.C.

*North Fields Irrigation System, ditches*

2nd 55 44  
 MAKIO TOM  
 NH  
 YOSH K  
 geometric design

*North Wells, pipeline support*

FINISHED BY TOM FUJISAKI CREW / MAR. 23, 1944.

*Reservoir, cap walls*

STONE WALL BY THE EMERGENCY CREW 2/25/43 (made of embedded pebbles).

NS

NOB 3-2-43

E.S. MURAOKA 14-4-1 3-3-43

Japanese writing transcribed as *itaru* (unclear character) *manzana kokugun* (two unclear characters), “To Manzanar National Army” (?). The last two characters are not clear. They might represent a specific place name within Manzanar instead of National Army.

Japanese writing transcribed as *showa juhachinen...*, “18th year ...” (corresponds to 1943). The indistinct second line is likely a month and day or a person’s name.

Japanese writing transcribed as *chukun aikoku*, “loyal to the emperor and love the country.” A motto favored by the Japanese military government.

Two columns of indistinct Japanese text, it includes “18th year”

*Reservoir, settling basin sidewalls*

Japanese writing transcribed as *kougun senryouchi 2/17 /43 itaru(?) manzana ...*, “the army of the emperor occupied territory 2/17/43 to Manzanar ...”

Japanese writing transcribed as *datou eibei*, “beat Great Britain and the USA.”

Japanese writing transcribed as *banbanzai*, “banzai”; *dainippon teikoku*, “The Great Japanese Empire”; *manzana kokuryukai honbu*, “Manzanar Black Dragon Group headquarter.”

An abstract design, possibly of a penis

*Reservoir, settling basin repair*

REPAIRED [sic] MAR 19 46 / BY GEO SHEPHERD / AND / RAY M...EX  
... ENT / THE / ...R... (obscured by repair work)

*Reservoir, sand trap*

CONSTRUCTED BY CHODO & INC. NOV. 9 '43

TOMMY MIYAOKA

TOM M.

TOMMY - NOV. 1943

TOMMY M 1943

Tommy Miyaoka 1943

I LOVE MYSELF / TOMMY MIYAOKA

NOV. 1943 MANZANAR CALIF.

Z. OGAWA

K E - YOSHINAGA

1943 NOV OGAWA

NOV 12 1943 MANZANAR WALL

1943 Y. & T. KOBATA KAI

K. OGAWA

Jiro Matsuyama 11/24/43

K O 11/9/43

M. ITO + Co

HY '45

'42 / HK / '45

Japanese writing transcribed as *senkyuhyaku yonjusannen juichigatsu jurokunichi nakahama*, “November 16, 1943 Nakahama” (a family name).

Two columns of Japanese text. The inscription is too unclear to translate, but is likely a person's name

*Reservoir, anti-siphon pipe apron*

A.J.E.

H L / L L / A C

RS

*Reservoir, large boulder with stacked rock “lantern”*

Japanese writing transcribed as *heiwa*, “peace”

*South Fields Irrigation System, ditches*

SAT

1943.2.28

JOE † 1943

Feb. 26 / FARM CREW 1943

March 10, 1943 M

BANZAI NIPPON

Japanese writing transcribed as *harukaze* (damaged characters) *fuku manzana seikatsu* (unclear character), “Life in Manzanar where there is a spring breeze.”

Japanese writing transcribed as *kuroiwa* (a family name) *gakusan* (a pen name for a male?) *Gakusan* may be a *gagou*, a kind of pen name that poets, writers, and painters use. Many Japanese of this generation wrote traditional Japanese or Chinese poems and had *gagou*. *Gagou* are sometimes taken from old Chinese literature or made by combinations of Chinese characters with elegant meanings. The meanings of the characters in this *gagou* are “study” and “mountain.”

Japanese writing transcribed as *showa juhachinen sangatsu tsuitachihi(?) butai*, “18th year (corresponds to 1943) March 1 E (?) Group (or Unit).

*South Fields Irrigation System, diversion box*

MAKIO

*South Fields Irrigation System, pipeline supports*

kokoroyoku yagate mi(unclear character)zara

karitoran

hokoraba hokore

komeno shuhi

The translation is:

Pleasantly we will soon reap all spikes.  
 If you want to be proud, be proud for now.  
 Ugly rice (despicable Americans).

tawamurewa asaseno watashi  
 samo nitari  
 sawo nigi kawa(ri)  
 atti kotti

The translation is:

This play is like crossing a shallow stream.  
 Holding a stick.  
 (ramble) here and there.

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# Chapter 15

## Japanese-Style Ornamental Community Gardens at Manzanar Relocation Center

Ronald J. Beckwith

**Abstract** Through the centuries, Japanese ornamental gardens have reflected Japanese culture. In the United States, Japanese-style ornamental gardens offered Japanese immigrants and American citizens of Japanese heritage a connection with Japanese culture, giving them a sense of community, while also giving them a sense of place in a country which did not wholly embrace their presence. Analysis of physical remains of Japanese-style ornamental community gardens at Manzanar Relocation Center in Owen's Valley, California, offers testament to how these gardens allowed the internees to express cultural identity and a feeling of community during one of the most trying times in American history.

### Introduction

Being Japanese or of Japanese heritage in pre-World War II America was fraught with discrimination and other hardships, not only on the local community and interpersonal levels, but also at the state and national scale. Indeed, it was not until 1952, and the passage of the Walter-McCarran Act (Niiya 2001:206), that Japanese immigrants were allowed to become American citizens. But before the situation got better it became tragically more difficult. On December 7, 1941 the Imperial Japanese Navy perpetrated, without a formal declaration of war, a sudden and vicious attack on America's Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. The American people were stunned and outraged; they angrily sought retribution. War between the United States and Japan had begun, and an internal struggle for recognition by Japanese Americans that had been developing for years was intensified.

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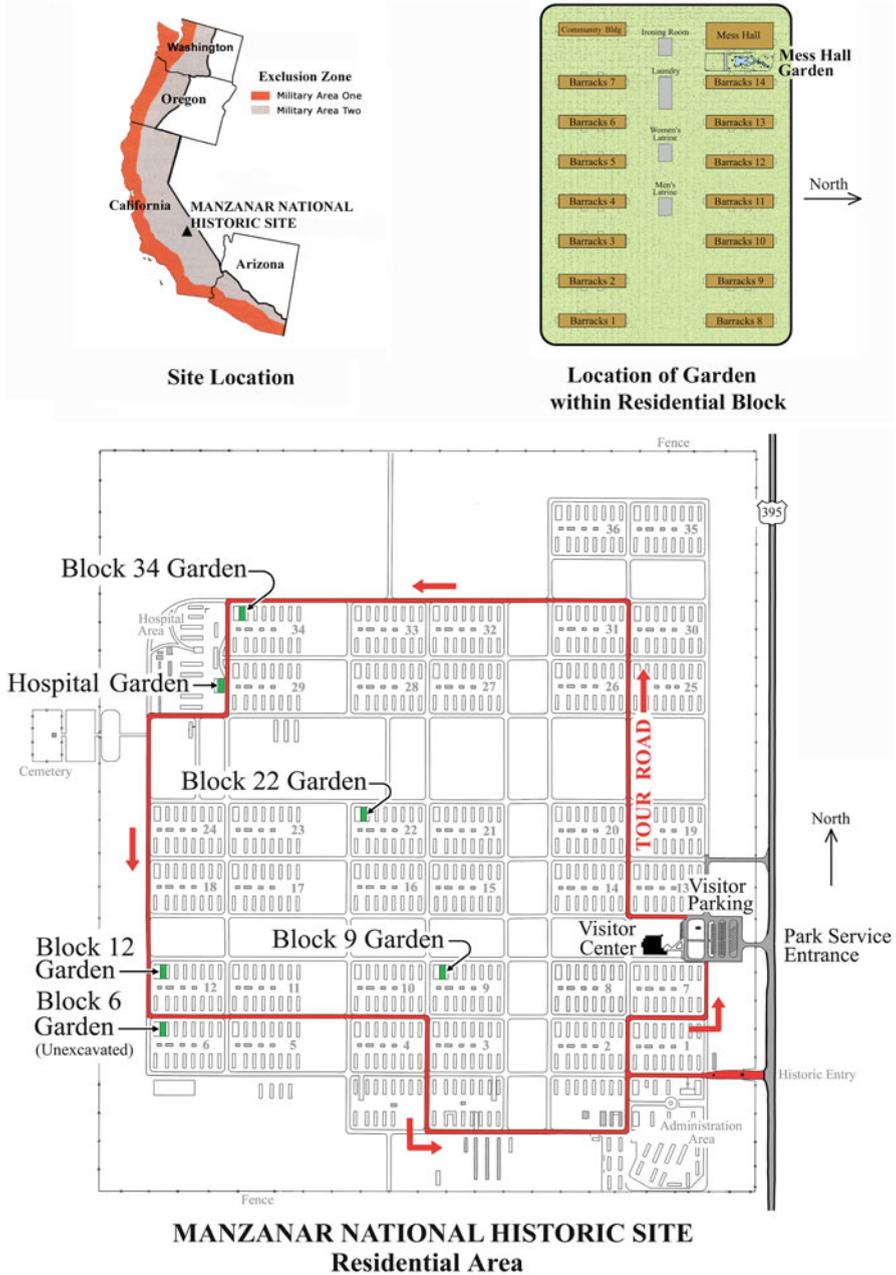
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Anti-Japanese feelings reached their zenith during these early days of World War II; unsubstantiated rumors of saboteurs and possible invasion of the west coast by the Japanese military heightened anti-Japanese feeling. In the spring of 1942, with the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Roosevelt, over 110,000 people, two-thirds of them American citizens of Japanese heritage (Burton 1996:11) were removed from their homes along the West coast and interned (imprisoned) in relocation centers. Over 10,000 of these people, mainly from the Los Angeles, California area, were imprisoned at the Manzanar War Relocation Center in Owen's Valley, East-Central California (Burton et al. 2002:163), which is now Manzanar National Historic Site, a designated unit of the National Park Service.

Uprooted, disoriented, and surrounded by armed military guards, these so-called evacuees were moved into cramped, poorly built military-style barrack buildings in the dusty and windswept valley. The evacuees found themselves in an incredibly unfamiliar and stressful situation. To help cope with the physical as well as the mental stress of imprisonment, some of the evacuees (prisoners) turned to creative activities such as arts and crafts and gardening. Numerous families created personal flower or vegetable gardens next to their barracks, some eventually cultivated larger Victory gardens. Many ornamental gardens were also constructed at Manzanar during the early years of the war. The first report of a garden at Manzanar was in a May 19, 1942 article in the camp newspaper, the *Manzanar Free Press*, entitled: "Daisies Bloom, Radishes Sprout" (Manzanar Free Press 1942a); and later the newspaper announced a best garden contest on October 8, 1942 (Manzanar Free Press 1942b). A handful of gardens were also constructed for community benefit, described here as Japanese-style ornamental community gardens, and these can be subdivided on size. The smaller of the two are called mess hall gardens while the larger gardens are referred to as parks. There are two parks at Manzanar: Cherry Park and Merritt Park. Merritt Park was the largest park at Manzanar at nearly 1.5 acres. The mess hall gardens are so named because they were constructed next to residential block mess halls (Fig. 15.1), and it is these ornamental community gardens built next to the mess halls that are described and interpreted here.

This was a time when being of Japanese heritage meant extreme hardships and when some believed that expressing traditional Japanese beliefs, whether it be in writings or other forms of expressions, would lead to further castigation. Yet at Manzanar, with the type of garden features and the overall designs of the mess hall gardens, there is an undeniable public expression of Japanese esthetics and values; expressions of Buddhism, Shinto, and Chinese geomancy are also evident. There are people today who would like to believe that the prisoners, by creating these Japanese-style ornamental community gardens, made a conscious effort to defy the Caucasian demagoguery of the period, to thumb their noses at the Caucasian guards and local residents of Owen's Valley. Were these gardens meant as an outright gesture of defiance, or were the prisoners at Manzanar simply trying to create a place of familiarity and community?

Harry Ueno, a mess hall worker, claims to have come up with the idea of building a garden next to the mess hall (Embry et al. 1986:29). The reason Ueno gave for constructing the first mess hall garden at Manzanar was to break up the monotony of



**Fig. 15.1** Map showing the locations of the Japanese-style ornamental community gardens, also called mess hall gardens, at Manzanar National Historic Site. *Upper left*—schematic showing location of Manzanar in relationship to the west coast of the United States. *Upper right*—schematic of typical residential block layout at Manzanar National Historic Site showing relationships of buildings to the mess hall gardens

imprisoned life. Ueno suggested building the garden in Block 22 to entertain his fellow evacuees who had to stand for long periods in lines outside the mess hall waiting for their meals (Embry et al. 1986:29). However, Ueno never describes their intent to construct a garden as a political gesture. It would seem that the men who built these gardens were simply trying to create a place of familiarity and community, although there may have been more to constructing gardens than Ueno may have been aware of.

As Kenneth Helphan writes in his work *Defiant Gardens*:

In an extreme situation beyond an individual's control ... the manifestation of the human ability to wield power over something is a potent reminder of our ability to withstand emotional despair and the forces of chaos. Gardens domesticate and humanize dehumanized situations. They offer a way to reject suffering, an inherent affirmation and sign of human perseverance. In contrast to war, gardens assert the dignity of life, human and nonhuman, and celebrate it (Helphan 2006:212).

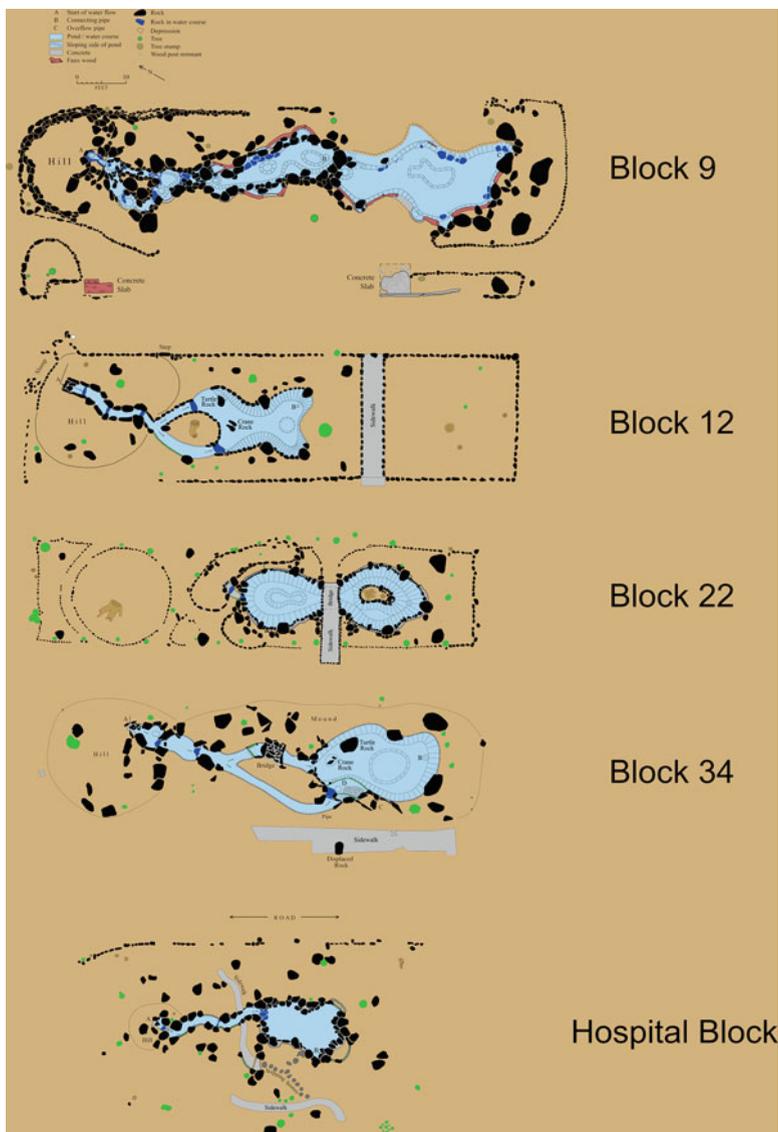
## Relocation Center Layout

Manzanar War Relocation Center was laid out in a grid pattern; the core area contained 36 residential blocks, with each group of four blocks separated by a firebreak. Each block included 20 buildings: 14 barracks, separate men's and women's latrines, a laundry room, an ironing room, a community building, and in the northwest corner of each block, a mess hall (Fig. 15.1). The mess halls, like most of the buildings, were raised off the ground in a "post and pier construction" and consisted of nothing more than a layer of tar paper over a wood frame. Mess halls were constructed in the same fashion as the barracks and were the same length as the barracks but were double the width. The residential area was surrounded by a barbed wire fence.

The mess hall gardens were constructed between the residential mess hall and Barrack 14 in an area that is 100 ft north-south by 40 ft east-west in size, but usually narrower to accommodate sidewalks running alongside the buildings. These gardens were large enough to have water features, distinct rock concentrations, and topographical features. An analysis of the layout of each of these mess hall gardens shows that they were constructed according to age-old Japanese garden principles, in the *Tsukiyama* or "hill," sometimes referred to as hill and pond, style (Fig. 15.3) (Japan National Tourism Organization 2000).

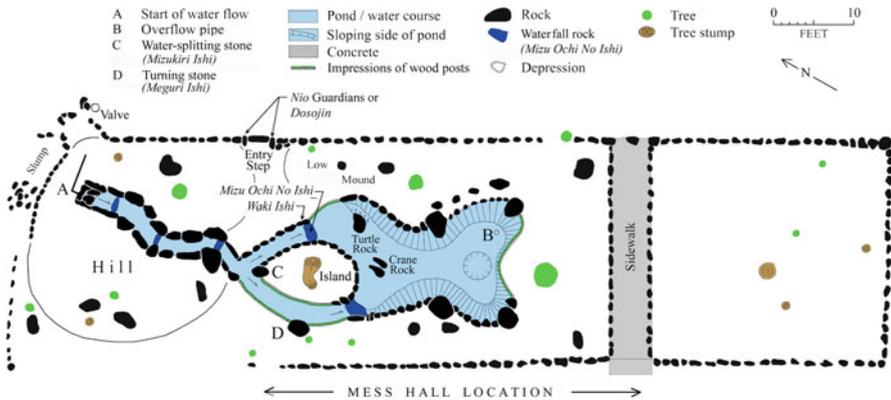
## The Gardens

Six Japanese-style ornamental community gardens have been identified at Manzanar thus far, and five have been exposed by the National Park Service for interpretive purposes (Fig. 15.2). These gardens are located in residential Blocks 6 (to date unexcavated), 9, 12, 22, 34, and at the Hospital Block. The Hospital garden differs slightly from the other gardens in that it was not built next to a mess hall; it was however, a community garden, the purpose of which was similar to that of the mess hall gardens.



**Fig. 15.2** Illustrations of all of the Japanese-style ornamental community gardens at Manzanar National Historic Site. Note: the gardens are to scale. Also note that the absence of rocks around the pond in the garden at Block 9 is due to post-occupation disturbance and does not reflect the original garden design

An astounding amount of effort went into constructing each of these gardens, much of it with the Relocation Center’s administration’s approval. These gardens could not have been constructed without community involvement. The size of the mound and pond vary with the individual garden. Mounds were created from the fill



**Fig. 15.3** Map of the Japanese-style ornamental community garden at Block 12

removed from the excavation of the ponds and range in size from 232 to 700 sq ft in area and a height of between 12 and 33 in. The ponds range in size from 112 to 822 sq ft in area with depths of between 21 and 33 in. The thickness of the concrete used to line the ponds and streams at each garden appears to be very similar, about one-half inch thick. The amount of concrete needed to build the average size pond has not been calculated, but under the circumstances the number of bags of concrete needed for each garden would have been regarded as considerable. The garden designers would have had to requisition the concrete through the Relocation Center’s administration.

In addition to the concrete, each pond also needed approximately 140 ft of water pipe, something that would also have had to have been requisitioned. Water for the garden was acquired by tapping into the water line for Barrack 14’s outside water faucet (the only water supply for the barrack) at the southwest corner of the building. More than 100 ft of water pipe was needed to connect the faucet’s water line with the garden’s water source on top of the hill near the opposite end of the barrack. An overflow/drain pipe is located at the south end of each pond. This pipe was connected to the Relocation Center’s sewer system, requiring roughly 40 ft of pipe. Both sets of pipes were buried below the frost line, a considerable effort of work on its own.

Most of the rocks used in the gardens were local granite. Although these stones were obtained locally, the residential area of the Relocation Center was bladed prior to building construction so the stone must have been obtained from outside of the barbed wire perimeter. Some rocks, such as the dark-colored meta-volcanic rock used at the Block 34 garden, and apparently at the Block 6 garden, were obtained from the Inyo Mountains, along the opposite side of Owen’s Valley some 5 miles to the east. Most of the granite rocks used were about the size of a grapefruit or slightly larger, although the largest rocks are up to 3 ft in diameter and weighing well over 4,000 lb. (granite weighs over 166 lb per cubic foot). A requisitioned vehicle and more than a couple of men would have been needed to move such rocks.

## Traditional Japanese Garden Design

The Japanese people have always had a close relationship with nature, and the garden design reflects this aspect of Japanese culture. The garden layouts and many of the elements found within the mess hall gardens at Manzanar in fact do have their origin in traditional Japanese garden design, examples of which can be found in two ancient Japanese manuscripts. The *Sakuteiki*, called by some the Bible for Japanese garden designers (Sawano 2006:10), is a collection of thoughts on garden design and practical advice on garden construction as well as philosophical discussions of garden design. The *Senzui narabi ni yagyō no zu* or Illustrations for Designing Mountain, Water, and Hillside Field Landscapes dates to the fifteenth century, and also offer advice on garden design. The influence of Buddhism, Chinese geomancy, and Shinto is obvious within these teachings. Shinto was the original, animistic religion of the Japanese people and it enshrines the belief that spirits inhabit certain elements of nature, including rocks, trees, and certain landscapes.

Buddhists believe that spiritual development through meditation can lead to insights into the true nature of life, and that meditation is a way of developing a more positive state of mind characterized by calm, concentration, and awareness. By using the awareness developed in meditation, Buddhists believe it is possible to have a fuller understanding of oneself and of life itself, ultimately culminating in enlightenment (the word Buddhism translates to the “Enlighten One”). Allegorical figures from Buddhism, in the form of rock groupings, for example, became an essential part of garden design.

Geomancy introduced protective elements into the garden. Geomancy is an ancient form of divination that strives to achieve balance between opposing energies or natural forces (better known to most Westerners as Ying and Yang). Geomancy involves the relationships between human beings and the subtle forces of nature, and by identifying those energies that are disruptive to one’s life and balancing them it is possible to create harmonious surroundings that will ensure health, happiness, and prosperity. The placement of rocks, the orientation of a watercourse, and the selection of features could all have an impact on the balance of natural forces. Over time Japanese culture as a whole absorbed elements of both Buddhism and Chinese geomancy.

It is fortunate that rocks are enduring; they were used extensively in the gardens at Manzanar, and most of the gardens were left intact when the Relocation Center was “decommissioned” and dismantled. In *Sakuteiki*, stones are described as one of the most important features in a Japanese garden. Rocks are the scaffold or skeletal matter on which the garden is constructed; those used in the garden should be of a natural shape, unmodified, and should not be used alone but always in groups. Some rocks have symbolic meaning, such as representing a tortoise or a crane, symbols of longevity and happiness, or as Buddha and his attendants. The Buddhist triad, Buddha with his two attendants or Bodhisattvas, is created by using three prominent rocks, where the center rock is much taller than the two accompanying rocks.

Another version of the Buddhist Triad is the waterfall. The esoteric allegory is to the Buddhist deity *F do Myoo* and his two attendants. *F do Myoo* was seen primarily as a protective element in the garden (Takei and Keane 2001:102) and in the form of a waterfall, along with geomantic elements of water flow (direction) or placement of certain stones, was perceived as protecting the household (Takei and Keane 2001:111). In order to create a harmonious balance, water should generally flow from north to south, though the flow of water seems to vary, determined by complex factors. North is associated with water and south with fire; by sending water in a southerly direction, these two opposing forces can be balanced. With all of the preceding in mind, the Japanese garden designers believed that the act of building a garden was an act of celebrating nature; moreover, Japanese garden designers strove to interpret nature and did not try to copy it exactly.

## Garden Analysis

By using the example of the mess hall garden at Block 12 (Fig. 15.3) and concentrating on its layout and analysis, the detailed, repetitious, and somewhat painful description of each of the mess hall gardens at the Manzanar War Relocation Center in their entirety can be avoided. Examples of elements that do not appear in the Block 12 garden, but do appear in other gardens, are described later.

The Block 12 garden was designed in the *Tsukiyama* style and the basic layout of this garden as well as the others includes the expected hill situated on the north end of the garden and a stream flowing from the hill down into a pond at the southern. The overall size of the Block 12 garden is 102 by 28 ft; the pond is roughly a figure eight in plan with a constricted central portion. The width of the pond varies from 8 to 14 ft with a maximum depth of 30 in.; a rough estimate of the volume of water that could be held in the pond is 3,500 gallons. The profile of the pond, with sloping sides, is a traditional shape and is referred to as being in the shape of a druggist's mortar or *yagen* (Slawson 1987:209). The garden, as well as the stream and pond, are bordered by an alignment of small granitic cobbles. The mound at the north end of the garden is roughly 30 by 20 ft in diameter and 3 ft high; it is truncated along the east and northeast sides by the rock retaining wall which is a continuation of the garden's granitic cobble outline. Some of the names of the men who built the Japanese-style ornamental community gardens at Manzanar are known, but the names of the men who created the garden at Block 12 have thus far eluded researchers.

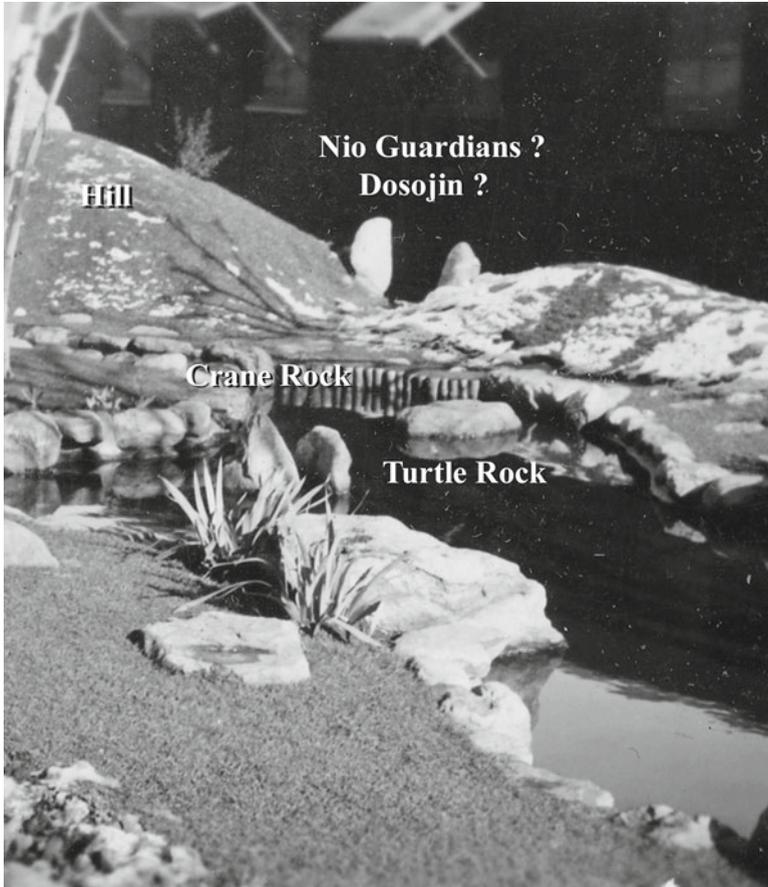
In traditional *Tsukiyama* gardens, the mound represents mountains while the stream represents a river, two balancing forces in Chinese geomancy. The northern two-thirds of the Block 12 garden is occupied by the hill and water features—the streams and pond—while the other one-third, separated from the rest of the garden by a concrete sidewalk, was an open grassy area that originally had a single tree growing in the center. The complexity of the northern two-thirds of the garden is balanced by the openness of the southern one-third.

The flow of water begins at the top of the mound and continues down a meandering, narrow course formed by stones set in concrete. This upper stream is narrow and lined with large vertical rocks that create a feeling of water flowing through a deep valley or gorge. A portion of this upper stream is hidden from view by a large stone, a technique that is used to engage the imagination of the viewer. As the water flows down the upper stream, it cascades over three waterfalls. At the base of the hill, the stream splits into two lower streams, each with a different length and character. The eastern stream is short and runs straight into the pond, while the western stream curves out to the southwest then turns to the southeast and enters the pond. Both streams end with a waterfall over which the water empties into the pond. The diverging streams create a teardrop-shaped island, which was originally grassed with a single tree planted at its center.

This garden is an excellent example of the effectiveness of placing stones so that they appear, as in nature, to influence the water flow as well as the horizontal extent of the pond. The stone set on the north tip of the island gives the impression of acting upon the upper stream by forcing it aside to create two separate channels. This stone is called *mizukiri ishi*, the “Water-Splitting Stone” or the “Diverging Stone” (Fig. 15.3). The only stone along the west stream is along the outside curve of the bend in the stream. This well-placed stone, like the water-splitting or diverging stone, also acts to give the impression of exerting itself on the flow of water and is referred to as the “Turning Stone” or *meguri ishi*. Large rocks placed at the “waist” of the pond give the impression of restricting the size and influencing the shape of the pond as do the two large rocks at the ends of each of the two lobes forming the southern end of the pond.

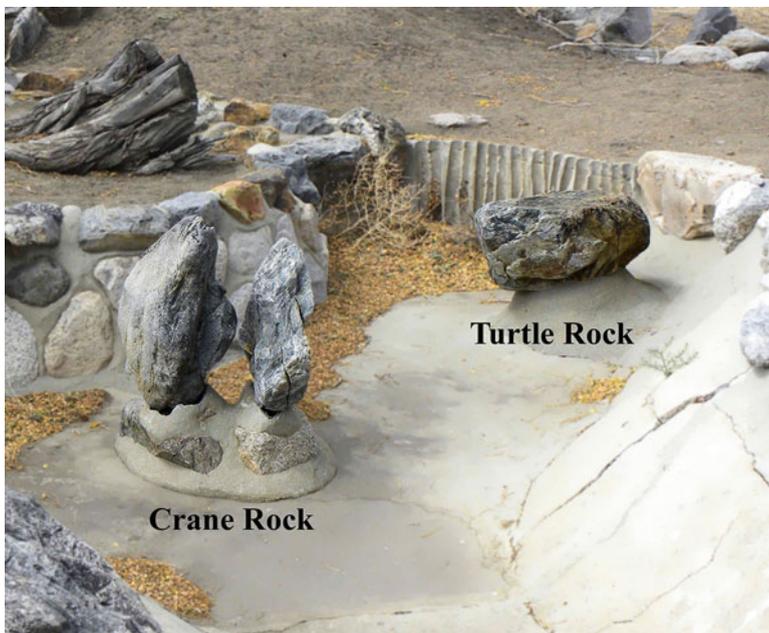
The necessity of placing stones properly to affect a natural feeling cannot be more apparent than when it is used improperly or not used at all. Although this use of rocks can also be seen around the pond at Block 34 garden, the designers of this garden seem to have left out a few rocks. When the visitor views the garden at Block 34, their eye is drawn to the area where the stream splits into two. The visitor will note something odd or unsettling about this area, and it is not until it is realized that the stream splits for no apparent reason does the observer realize why. A single stone, or better still a group of stones, placed at this junction would have created the illusion of a wild stream battering against an unmovable outcrop of rock that forces the stream to split and flow around either side of the outcrop, as with the garden at Block 12. The lack of stones along the outside curve of the western stream also creates a problem. Again, there does not seem to be a reason for the stream to diverge from its path and sharply curve back to the pond. This use of rocks to give the impression of restricting size and influencing the shape of the pond can also be seen at the gardens at Block 22 and, although a little more difficult to discern, at the garden at the Hospital Block.

Waterfalls along the upper stream of the Block 12 garden each consist of three stones set in traditional fashion, with a central “Waterfall Stone” (*mizu ochi no ishi*) and two “Bracketing Stones” (*waki ishi*). This arrangement of stones is an expression of a Buddhist Trinity, with the Buddhist deity *F do Myoo* flanked by his Bodhisattvas or attendants.



**Fig. 15.4** Edited historical photograph of the Block 12 garden. Note the two vertical stones forming the Crane Rock as well as the stones representing *Nio* Guardians or *Dosojin*. The features can be seen under their labels. Turtle Rock can be seen above its label. The garden hill is also labeled. (Photograph courtesy of Yoshiko Hosoi photographic collection, Manzanar National Historic Site)

The pond has both a tortoise rock and a crane rock (Fig. 15.4), both of which are traditional features in a Japanese-style garden and both represent longevity. The crane rock is in the middle of the pond near the south end of the island, the tortoise rock lays just to the northeast of the crane rock near the eastern edge of the pond. The crane rock is made up of two vertical stones set on the end, reminiscent of bird wings, and is oriented so as to be viewed from the southwestern end of the garden (Fig. 15.5). Viewed from any other direction, except from the northeast (the reciprocal angle), the two individual stones would appear as a single stone and the desired effect would be lost on the viewer. This orientation would allow those people standing in line at the mess hall, at the southwestern end of the garden, to see this group



**Fig. 15.5** Recent photograph of the Crane Rock and Turtle Rock at the Block 12 garden. Looking northeast from the southwest end of the garden. (Photograph courtesy of Jeffery F. Burton, Manzanar National Historic Site)

of stones as the crane rock. The tortoise rock is a large, well-worn, rounded stone representing the shell of a turtle. This shape gives the impression

of very old mountains worn down by erosion. Its companion, the crane island [rock], on the other hand, resembles the Never Aging Rock . . . in its use of sharp-edged rocks in the vertical position—may be likened to the wings of the crane—to convey the impression of steep, jagged mountains . . . It is this contrast, between towering newly formed peaks and the well-eroded old mountains, that so effectively triggers the aesthetic experience of ageless vitality (Slawson 1987:128).

It is also from this vantage point, at the southwestern corner of the garden, that the large rock at the end of the upper stream obscures the stream's path, allowing for the imagination of the viewer to take over and fill in the missing elements. Both of these elements also can be found at the garden in Block 34.

Photographic evidence reveals that the Block 12 garden had a fence around its perimeter at one point during the occupation of the camp. An entrance to the garden was through the low rock wall bordering its eastern side of the garden, created by using three stones in a way similar to that by which waterfalls are created. Here a single flat-laying stone created the threshold and two vertical stones as jambs along the sides of the threshold, supported the ends of the low retaining walls. These two stones extend well beyond the height of the wall and may represent a pair of stone guardians (Fig. 15.4). These stones may represent either *Nio guardians* or Shinto

*Dosojin*. *Nio* guardians are a pair of protectors who stand guard outside of Buddhist temples, one on either side of the entrance, and are usually portrayed as fierce-looking figures. They ward off evil spirits and keep the temple grounds free of demons (Schumacher 2011a). Perhaps more familiar to Westerners are the *Shishi* Lion-Dogs that serve a similar purpose. *Dosojin* are Shinto deities of roads and borders that reside in stone markers that are placed at street corners, near bridges, at village boundaries, and along roadways. Similar to *Nio* guardians, *Dosojin* protect travelers and villages from evil spirits. As the deity of the village border, the *Dosojin* protect villages from evil outside influences and catastrophes; as the deity of the road, the *Dosojin* protect pilgrims and travelers from harm (Schumacher 2011b).

Not all of the elements of traditional Japanese garden design at Manzanar are found at the Block 12 garden. Some elements, such as the principles of geologic zones, the presence of a bridge or stepping stones, as well as the concept of *Wabi-Sabi* can be found, however, at other mess hall gardens.

## Other Traditional Design Elements

Garden 34 is a good example of what is known as the principles of geologic zones. As the visitor views the garden, it is evident that the stones set on the hill have a more angular shape than those set along the stream, and those rocks set near the pond are even more rounded. The use of rocks in this manner mimics nature and the natural processes of erosion. The garden at Block 9 is another good example of the principles of geologic zones. Slawson rewrites a passage from *Illustrations* to help convey the reason for this technique:

In the setting of rocks, you make their geologic zones your model. You will not go astray so long as you bear in mind the principles of setting rocks from deep mountains in the deep mountains of the garden, rocks from hills and fields in the hill and fields, rocks from freshwater shores on the freshwater shores, and rocks from the seashore on the seashore (Slawson 1987:68).

Drum bridges occur at the gardens in Block 22 and Block 34 (Fig. 15.2). Although these are very modest examples, both bridges have a gentle curve that is typical of the Japanese style Drum Bridge, or *taikobashi* (Missouri Botanical Gardens n.d.)

To the west of the pond at the Hospital garden are 11 stepping stones (*Tobi-ishi*). These stones are set in a curved path with the rocks slightly offset from the midline of the curve. The way these rocks are offset from the midline is a traditional Japanese technique (Sawano 2006:64). Three other stepping stones lead from this path to the pond (Fig. 15.2).

The garden in Block 22 is the only Japanese-style ornamental community garden at Manzanar that obviously incorporated the concept of *wabi-sabi* in its design. *Wabi-sabi* is “an intuitive appreciation of a transient beauty in the physical world that reflects the irreversible flow of life in the spiritual world. It is an understated beauty that exists in the modest, rustic, imperfect, or even decayed, an aesthetic sensibility that finds a melancholic beauty in the impermanence of all things” (Juniper 2003:51). Although it is impossible to see this today because most of the

elements are now missing, there are luckily several historic photographs that show the garden as it appeared during the occupation of Manzanar. What can be seen in the photographs are a rustic wishing well, from which the flow of water to the garden begins, several large tree stumps, an old wagon wheel, and rustic handrails used along the bridge that spans the pond made from large tree branches. The many tree stumps, the rustic wishing well, and the railings for the bridge would have imparted to the garden visitor a sense of age. The remains of the stumps, although in poor condition, were still in place in 1993 when the garden was formally recorded by the National Park Service.

## Conclusions

Today's visitor to Manzanar National Historic Site should be struck by the effort and attention to detail that was put into constructing these gardens. Concrete was in short supply because of the war effort, but yet enough was found to satisfy the needs of the garden designers. Some of the material had to be brought into camp from far away, with rocks for the garden at Block 9 coming from across the valley, a distance of more than 5 miles. The effort to move rocks, some 3 ft or more across, meant the use of trucks and the physical labor of many people, as well as military or civilian guards to accompany them when they went outside of the Relocation Center to obtain materials for their gardens.

What, if any, underlying reason may have been in the hearts and minds of the prisoners who designed and built the Japanese-style ornamental community gardens will probably be never known, but the remains of these gardens suggest that building them was a labor of love. The amount of time, effort, and materials (and probable cajoling of the Center's administration to allow all this to happen) was immense. This was an activity that brought a community together and gave some of the people at the Relocation Center a sense of purpose. These activities brought about an interaction between two disparate groups, the prisoners who were building the gardens and the administrators of the Relocation Center who had to approve their activities; as well as allowing the prisoners to make a connection with the military guards and civilians who worked at the Relocation Center. Working with people is the first step to getting to know and understand them.

The Japanese Americans who were imprisoned at Manzanar and created these gardens embraced their heritage, the results of which are lasting monuments to Man's spirit of perseverance and optimism. They are also lasting monuments to Man's inhumanity to his fellow man.

**Acknowledgments** The principles behind traditional Japanese garden design can be very complicated and may incorporate dozens (if not more) traditional elements that not even a well-schooled garden designer may know. These features described in this chapter were those recognized by the author, who is only modestly versed in the subject. Many more traditional Japanese garden design elements probably exist in the gardens at Manzanar than were discussed in this paper. I would like to thank Jeffery Burton for his inspiration and guidance and to Ross Hopkins for giving me the opportunity to work for so many years at Manzanar. The maps are the product of the author.

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# Chapter 16

## An Archaeological and Ethnographic Examination of the Acquisition, Presence, and Consumption of *Saké* at Camp Amache, a World War II Japanese Internment Camp

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**Abstract** This chapter examines who was drinking saké at Camp Amache, when, why, and considers how it was acquired. Internees were not allowed to consume alcoholic beverages while living at the camps, but material culture from archaeological survey of Camp Amache suggests that the internees broke that camp rule. Explaining saké consumption reveals complex issues of ethnicity, identity, subtle rebellion, and cultural preservation. To address saké-related questions, an ethnographic approach was used in conjunction with the archaeological one; more than a dozen former internees were interviewed. Their responses revealed a considerable amount about camp life and attitudes of both the camp staff and the internees.

### Introduction

Individually, the past is memory—collectively it is history (Meskell 2002:293).

During the summer of 2003, the first archaeological survey ever conducted at Camp Amache took place. Through archaeology and ethnographic interviews, the project was able to examine ethnic identity and cultural preservation, how resistance can be intricately connected with both, and how resistance can become more than simply an act of rebellion. Rebellion and resistance would not exist if there were not circumstances that create unequal access to power. When President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor—the order that sent Japanese and Japanese-Americans from the west coast to the internment camps—thousands of people lost the way of life they had worked hard to create. Those affected must have been appalled and horrified that their own government could treat them as enemies and take away almost everything they had. There was little

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opportunity or ability to openly resist the interment or protest their treatment, but they did have the ability to resist on subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) levels once confined (see Chaps. 14, 16).

## Why *Saké*?

The importance of *saké* within the Japanese (and by extension, Japanese–American) culture goes back centuries, if not millennia. Wet-rice agriculture dates back to 400 BC (Ohnuki-Tierney 1995:228) and *saké* is thought to have been produced since at least the third century (Gauntner 2000:11–12). *Saké* has ties with Japan’s indigenous religion (*Shinto*) and is mentioned in association with religious figures in ancient histories and myths (Gauntner 2000:15). Rice takes on deity status in “myth-histories” that are almost 1,300 years old (Ohnuki-Tierney 1995:228). *Saké*’s popularity continued to grow as the centuries passed and by 1900 there were approximately 8,000 *saké* brewers in Japan. Today, *saké* continues to be a key part of religious events, celebrations, and holidays, and *Shinto* priests still perform ceremonies at the beginning of the *saké* brewing season in order to assure a profitable season (Gauntner 2000:15–16). Rice and rice products have a central role within Japanese culture, and rice is viewed as “the most important food for commensality between humans and deities ... and among humans” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1995:229). Given the tradition and value placed on *saké* within the Japanese culture, *saké*-related artifacts can be seen to have more complex meanings and have more relevance to internee values than other artifacts such as soda bottles or tin cans.

*Saké* is a beverage that historically played an important role in the social and spiritual lives of the Japanese people, yet by having it in the camp, the internees were willingly and knowingly breaking camp rules which prohibited the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The roles of *saké* within the Amache community are assumed to have been social, ritual, and a means of cultural preservation, but *saké* may have even been a subtle form of resistance to the dominant culture’s rules. *Saké* may have played a role beyond that of intoxicating beverage, since there were other types of alcohol more readily available, as evidenced through the beer and whiskey bottles found throughout the camp.

*Saké* consumption is highly conspicuous in the material record, more so than many other types of Japanese material culture. For instance, during the 2003 archaeology survey 20 *saké* jugs or fragments were positively identified. Eighteen were located in the internee housing area, and two were in the camp dump. Two porcelain *saké* bottle fragments (*tokkuri*) and one *saké* cup (*o-choko*) fragment have been found at Amache, but only one *geta* (wooden Japanese sandal), one concrete basin used for *mochi* making, and less than two-dozen porcelain fragments featuring Japanese designs which represent far fewer ceramic vessels were noted at Amache.

*Saké* acquisition and consumption were against camp rules but it is also representative of a small part of a cultural and traditional lifestyle that could have been radically transformed by the forced interment. From an official point of view, *saké* probably denoted a deliberate, albeit subtle, revolt against established and known

rules set by the camp administration. Moreover, inebriation was a potential problem for administrators as drunkenness in such an environment could have easily escalated from disturbance into outright rebellion and violence. The other larger camps, such as Manzanar which housed over 10,000 people at its peak (several thousand more than Amache), has revealed little archaeological evidence of *sake* consumption, even after extensive surveys and excavations. So the presence of *saké* at Amache suggests that its camp traditions and cultural practices were distinctive, and how the internees dealt with the drastic changes which they were forced to endure may have been unique.

The archaeological studies at the camps testify not only to the national political environment but also to the 'small things forgotten' of everyday life. It is the small things that show how the internees maintained their ethnicity, in the face of adversity (Ferrell and Burton 2004:22).

The presence of *saké* at the camp may seem like small thing, but in reality it is not, for the reason Farrell and Burton mention, and for many others revealed through archaeology and ethnography.

## History of the Internment and Camp Amache

In 1942 on the barren plains of southeastern Colorado, a facility was built to house thousands of forcibly displaced Japanese-Americans. This camp was not unique, and nine other camps were established across the western United States and in Arkansas (Fig. 16.1). After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, hundreds of thousands of Japanese and Japanese-Americans who were US citizens were forced to take up residence in these camps and to live behind barbed wire like criminals or refugees. Though some of these individuals were not yet American citizens, two-thirds were.

Feelings of resentment towards Asian-Americans stemmed initially from the earliest Chinese immigration to the United States, which coincided with the California Gold Rush in 1849 (Burton et al. 1996a:11). Chinese immigrants were a source of cheap labor at mining camps and during construction of railroads in the west in the late 1800s. Prejudice abounded and bitter feelings towards the Chinese immigrants grew because they were willing to work for little and because they were outsiders and obviously different (Burton et al. 1996a:13). Anti-Asian sentiment led to a series of laws starting in the late 1800s and continuing into the early twentieth century. These laws prevented easy assimilation for anyone of Asian descent into mainstream American culture.

Many Japanese immigrants were educated farmers originally from the Japanese countryside, and those who did not take up manual labor in the United States became farmers or started as manual laborers but eventually turned to farming. On the west coast, outraged Anglos were fearful for their jobs and worried that the available farmland would continue to be purchased by Asian immigrants, most of whom were Japanese. Asian prejudice, which had initially focused on the Chinese in the mid- to late 1800s, had shifted to the Japanese by the early twentieth century. The Japanese were easy targets who looked and probably seemed enough like their Chinese counterparts to evoke prejudice based primarily on their perceived commonalities.



Fig. 16.1 Internment camp locations (Map by Eric Weisbender)

## Prejudice, Fear, and Hysteria: The War's Effect on Japanese in the United States

On December 7, 1941, the bombing of Pearl Harbor changed Americans' lives forever. The Japanese and Japanese-Americans living on the west coast of the United States would pay dearly for the bombing. An immediate response to the bombing was to freeze the bank accounts of "enemy aliens" (those of Japanese, Italian, or German descent) living in the United States, and to freeze access to all accounts in American branches of Japanese banks (Burton et al. 1996a:14). In addition, over 1,500 Japanese-American community leaders who were deemed security threats were immediately taken away by the authorities (Simmons and Simmons 1994:Section 8:10). These people were never charged with crimes, but nonetheless were taken into custody and placed in internment camps. Tom Shigekuni, a young person at the time of the war, commented, "you would have thought that we bombed them ourselves by the way everyone acted towards us" (Shigekuni in Harvey 2004:18). Even though many were opposed to the idea of a mass evacuation, including FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and the US Attorney General Francis Biddle, politicians and the general public, especially on the west coast (and more specifically those in California), pushed for the mass removal of all people of Japanese heritage. General John L. DeWitt, the commander of the Western Defense Command, stated to a congressional committee, "A Jap's a Jap. They are a dangerous element ... [and] there is no possible way to determine their loyalty" (DeWitt in Simmons and Simmons 1994:11). President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942,

which made it legal to remove all Japanese and Japanese–Americans from their homes and send them to internment camps for the duration of the war.

### *Mobilizing for Internment*

Once the decision was made to relocate all those of Japanese descent to internment camps, public hostility often forced Japanese–Americans to move from their homes whether they were prepared to or not. The majority who were not forced out by unsympathetic community members and neighbors had only 6 days to get their affairs in order (Burton et al. 1996a:19). People were then sent to 15 different assembly centers in the West where they waited to be rerouted to their new homes for the rest of the war. The camps were constructed in the most barren places imaginable: near Granada in southeastern Colorado; Manzanar and Tule Lake in California; Minidoka in Idaho; Topaz in Central Utah; Heart Mountain in Wyoming; Gila River and Poston in Arizona; and Jerome and Rowher in Arkansas (Fig. 16.1). People were ill prepared to deal with the sudden and total upheaval, and many lost most of their worldly possessions, including their homes and businesses. Few had sufficient time to get their affairs in order, and were forced to sell their possessions for whatever price they could get. The collective material and economic loss for internees was staggering. Estimates of property losses range from \$41 to \$206 million (in 1943 dollars) for those forced into the camps (Harvey 2004:208).

People were very limited in what they could take with them to the camps. The phrase “only what they could carry” is well-known and often used in stories about the internment camps. Former internee Howard Taniguchi remembers being told that they could only have one suitcase of possessions per person (Howard Taniguchi, personal communication 2004). George “Knobby” Watanabe said that it was common for people to bring sentimental and “impractical” items because these items were family “treasures” often originally brought over from Japan and passed down through the years (George Watanabe, personal communication 2004). These treasured traditional items were needed for special occasions, and the archaeological record supports Mr. Watanabe’s statements, since many nonessential items were found amongst the material culture on the ground at Amache.

Transport to the camps from the assembly centers occurred by train, an experience that was uncomfortable and frightening for most. At the end of August 1942, the Amache internees started their exodus from California to Colorado. Often, trainloads of people were told to pull down the blinds and keep them down for the duration of the trip, further contributing to the state of confusion and uneasiness for the internees (Harvey 2004). Howard Taniguchi remembers the first time the train he was on stopped in the desert so that people could get off and stretch. At the time, the passengers did not know why the train had stopped in the middle of nowhere or why they were asked to get off (Howard Taniguchi, personal communication 2004). Many feared that they were being forced off the train to be shot and left for dead in the desert.

## Life at Camp Amache

Camp Amache, also known as the Granada Relocation Camp, is located in southeast Colorado on the plains of Prowers County, a mile southwest of the town of Granada, and 15 miles west of the Kansas border. As with the other nine camps, the location for Amache was chosen for its utter remoteness (Fig. 16.1). The site was a barren expanse of dirt, with intensely hot summers and bitterly cold winters. The first internees arrived at Amache on August 27, 1942 (Harvey 2004:74). Precise population numbers vary, but by Fall of 1942 Camp Amache was the tenth largest “city” in the state of Colorado (Simmons and Simmons 1994:19). Though Amache was the smallest camp of the ten, at its most crowded, 7,318 evacuees lived there. Amache was planned to be a self contained, largely self-sufficient community, surrounded by agricultural fields that further separated people from the outside world (Simmons and Simmons 1994: Section 7:7). The camp covered almost 10,500 acres including the adjacent vacant fields (Burton et al. 1996a:33), but the actual living area where the buildings and structures were located was just over 300 acres in size and the internee living area comprised the southern three-quarters of the site (Simmons and Simmons 1994). The northern portion of the camp was divided into an administrative area where the Caucasian camp staff lived and worked. The main entrance was located at the north central portion of the camp and had a gatehouse where anyone coming into or leaving the camp had to check in or out (Harvey 2004).

The internee area consisted of 34 blocks, 29 of which were for internee housing (Harvey 2004:83; Simmons and Simmons 1994: Sect. 7:3) with the others set aside for school buildings, athletic fields, and the internee business area which featured a Co-Op. Each residential block had a mess hall, recreation building, an H-shaped bath/laundry facility, and twelve 20×120 foot military style housing barracks with five or six single-room apartments within each barrack (Harvey 2004:84; Simmons and Simmons 1994: Sect. 7:4). Living conditions at the camps were crowded and humble. Families of up to seven people were forced to live in the cramped one-room apartments. Cots were the only furniture in the apartments, and the only other features in each unit were one half-finished closet, one window, a single bare light bulb, and a small coal stove to provide warmth in the drafty, hastily constructed living quarters. The barracks had no cooking facilities or running water. Meals were served communally in the block mess hall, and laundry facilities and bathrooms were shared. Privacy was nonexistent and people unaccustomed to public nudity or displays of the most basic human functions found the situation nearly unbearable.

As the war was coming to an end, thousands of displaced people were faced with the very serious consideration of what to do next. In December of 1944, the exclusion orders were lifted and evacuees were free to leave the camps (Simmons and Simmons 1994: Sect. 8:28). For many, the \$25 plus train fare given to each person, and free meals if the individual had less than \$500 cash, was hardly enough to make a new start (Burton et al. 1996a:43). At 3:15, on October 15, 1945, the last individuals left the Granada train station (Harvey 2004:199; Simmons and Simmons 1994: Sect. 8:29). Over 10,000 internees passed through the camp during the 1,146 days of its existence; 415 babies were born at the camp, and 107 people died at Amache (Harvey 2004:200).

## Project Methodology

Research at Amache involved two distinct phases. First was the archaeological survey in 2003, funded by the Colorado State Historical Fund and generous contributions from the Denver Optimists Club, and conducted by archaeologists Richard F. Carrillo, David Killam, Wade Broadhead, and myself. Artifacts found ranged from architectural elements to items associated with day-to-day life including lipstick tubes, marbles, bowling pins, large tin cans modified into sieves, and hundreds of other artifact types. The artifacts on the ground at Amache are known to be limited almost exclusively to the internment period, since the site is on private property and has not been used for anything other than cattle grazing since the internment. However, two events occurred after the closure of the camp that greatly affected the integrity of the surface cultural remains at the site. First, it was known prior to the archaeology survey that almost all standing structures had been removed or demolished at Camp Amache (Burton et al. 2002:115; Simmons and Simmons 1994). Second, the camp was entirely bulldozed after it was deserted, compromising the original proveniences for the surviving material culture. Nevertheless, numerous discreet post-occupation refuse heaps still exist, as well as occupation-period dumps. The artifacts at Amache comprise a typical 1940s assemblage but with some notable differences, particularly the high number of government-issued items such as dishware.

The second phase of the project was the ethnographic one, facilitated by an invitation to the Amache High School and Junior High School reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2004. Hundreds of former internees who were teens and preteens during the war attended the event, and many were gracious enough to discuss their experiences. Besides numerous informal, unrecorded conversations, 15 formal interviews were made. Some people did not want to speak on tape or have their names used, and some simply felt like talking anonymously. There were times when interviewees requested that the tape be stopped, and they would continue especially difficult or delicate stories with me off the record. At times, the stories became emotional as the speaker recalled painful or fond moments from so long ago. Together, the two phases of research could be combined with surviving documentation to provide multiple perspectives on the role of *saké* at the camp.

## Saké

The October 31, 1942 issue of the camp newspaper, *The Granada Pioneer* (1942), featured an article that specifically addressed the prohibition of drinking at Amache. The basic risk involved in getting *saké* into the camp (for the internees as well as their accomplices on the outside) and the penalties for getting caught should have been a deterrent, but obviously was not as strong as expected.

Since the internees were in the camp because of their national origin, it was possible that the artifact assemblage would illustrate the preservation of ethnic traditions and habits. The strain between wanting to maintain traditional Japanese practices while at the same time still being good Americans must have been felt by

many people. It is a challenge to interpret the use of largely government-issued artifacts to recognize culture-specific habits. *Saké* in contrast is something that is distinctly Japanese and can be attributed with reasonable certainty to the internees specifically, rather than the Caucasian camp staff.

While wine, beer, and whisky bottles were found in the administrative blocks, *saké*-related artifacts were recovered only in the internee housing blocks and in the dumps. Despite the bulldozing, the provenience in the administrative area is quite clear and the location of these artifacts clearly demonstrates what the alcoholic beverages of choice were for the camp staff. Conversely, there was an extraordinarily high number of liquor bottles, steel beverage cans, and several wine bottles in the internee housing area too, but given the rules regarding alcohol for the internees, it is unlikely that internees consumed all of this. Interviews with former internees suggested that alcohol consumption among the internees was fairly low, and limited for the most part to special occasions or socializing, and that *saké* was the preferred beverage for these occasions. If these were true, then the most likely explanation is that these other alcohol-related vessels were deposited in the internee housing areas when the site was bulldozed, and of course this is a possibility for at least some of the *saké* jugs too. We may not be able to interpret specifically where people were drinking *saké* based on the deposition of material culture alone, but we can determine with some certainty where they were not drinking it, and that it was most likely consumed exclusively by the internee population in the internee housing area. Despite relations between camp staff and the internees being quite good (all things considered) none of the internee interviews suggested or implied that the Caucasian staff drank or fraternized with the internee population. Socializing between the adults of the two groups apparently did not occur often or at all within the camp.

### ***Saké* Consumption: Who Was Consuming it and when**

There were various occasions at which *saké* was consumed. Howard Taniguchi remembers tasting *saké* at Amache when he was 15, but the context was a controlled one (Howard Taniguchi, personal communication 2004). The *Issei* (Japanese born individuals who were more traditionally Japanese than the generations that would follow), a group generally known for being hard working, law abiding, and traditional were actually the rebellious ones who found ways to get contraband *saké* into the camp, or to make it themselves. Even so, “as a whole the Japanese people of yester-year did not drink much. *Saké* was the drink of choice and was usually imbibed on special occasions or celebrations” (Mas Sugimoto, personal communication 2004). Tom Nakashima mentioned that typically *saké* was a celebratory beverage, not consumed with the intent of getting drunk (Tom Nakashima, personal communication 2004). Eugene “Eumo” Moritani said that for the most part, people drank *saké* like wine. It is a courtesy beverage served when people come to visit, and is offered like tea is offered (Eugene Moritani, personal communication 2004). Prior to the internment, Mr. Sugimoto’s family lived in Los Angeles. He said that the Japanese community there usually gathered for socializing

at the Buddhist Temple or at a Chinese restaurant in the Little Tokyo neighborhood. Functions at the restaurant “always included *saké*. They were fun and festive events and the women tried to maintain their docile image.” Conversely, he stated that the Japanese communities in rural areas whose livelihoods were dependant on agriculture seldom had time for socializing and that *saké* was reserved for “very special occasions” only (Mas Sugimoto, personal communication 2005). Mr. Watanabe also emphasized the social nature of *saké* consumption using his parents and their friends as an example, “they’d drink ... I don’t know how many ... but once you drink they pour for you, you drink it and they pour for you, and they’d keep it up for hours!” (George Watanabe, personal communication 2004). The social ritual of pouring for one another is the traditional method for consuming *saké* as Mr. Watanabe’s anecdote implies.

*Saké* is generally served from a small bottle (*tokkuri*) and poured into small cups called *o-choko*, which are also known as *sakazuki* or *guinomi* (Gauntner 2000:51; Kondō 1984:90). Both *tokkuri* and *o-choko* fragments were found onsite at Amache. The formalized act of sharing *saké* is referred to as *o-shaku*, and represents the cultural attitude that drinking *saké* should be “an act of communication and sharing” (Kondō 1984:91). This tradition is so deeply embedded within the culture as an act of bonding that drinking alone (*hitorizake*) is considered to be a terribly lonely undertaking and one who has to pour his or her own *saké* is, “on the verge of becoming a non-person” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1995:229).

Many of the internees interviewed mentioned New Year’s Eve (in Japanese *shogatsu* or *oshōgatsu*) as the big celebratory holiday of the year, and the New Year was apparently celebrated with some gusto in camp. Another holiday that many at Amache celebrated was *Obon*, a Buddhist holiday celebrated in July or August. It is believed that on *Obon* the spirits of the deceased return to the world of the living, so graves are visited and tidied, and special foods are prepared and given as offerings to the dead (Takada and Lampkin 1997:30). Community dances (*bon odori*) and “dancing in the streets” are a large part of *Obon* Japanese celebrations, as was dressing in traditional Japanese *kimonos* (Mas Takano and Howard Taniguchi, personal communications 2004). According to Mas Takano, “*Saké* flowed” on holidays such as New Year and Buddhist holy days.

*Saké* consumption at Amache is substantiated through archival research and interviews, but the material evidence on the ground is considerable. Excluding what may lie within the main dump, a total of 308 fragments or whole bottles/jars were tallied in three categories: all “bottle and jar glass” categories (that is, all colors except milk glass, since milk glass was not likely to have been beverage related), the “alcohol and drinking” category, and the “food storage” category. At Amache, the artifact tallies did not separate bottles and jar glass into a distinct “beverage” category. Of the 308, at least 18 positively identified whole glass *saké* jugs or fragments were recorded in the internee housing blocks (two additional fragments were found in a cursory examination of the main dump to the west of the housing area) (Carrillo et al. 2004a, b). Ten of these were embossed with brewery names. This means that 6 % of all bottle and jar glass recorded in the internee housing area (not the main dump) was *saké* related. That percentage would be much higher if one were able to pare down the number 308 to exclude canning jars and other non-beverage-related glass.



**Fig. 16.2** “Honolulu Sake Brewery and ice Company” *saké* jug base from Amache. (Courtesy of author)

The glass *saké* vessels were typically large, heavy, one-gallon jugs, many with small round handles at the tops of the jugs near the shoulder on the neck. A number of different maker’s marks were present. These embossed logos were: Honolulu Sake Brewing and Ice House; Hilo Brewing Ltd, Hilo, Hawaii; “Shuzo” or a variation of it; and Fuji Sake Brewing Co. Hawaii (Figs. 16.2 and 16.3). At least five jug base fragments (28 % of the positively identified *saké* vessels and fragments located in the internee housing area) had the word “Shuzo,” and two (11 %) had all or part of the following: “NICHIBEI SHUZO KABUS...” At one time, there was a brewery by the name of “Nichibei Shuzu Kabushiki Kaisha” in Hilo, Hawaii (Victorian Beer Label Collectors Society 2003). Many dozens ( $n=69$ ) of other possible *saké* bottle fragments were found throughout the site. The heavy glass gallon jugs, some with handles and some without, are ubiquitous at Amache. *Saké* is not the only thing that was sold in such containers, however. Informants stated that they also had seen soy sauce in similar jugs.



**Fig. 16.3** “Fuji Sake Brewing Co Ltd, Honolulu Hawaii” *saké* jug base from Amache. (Courtesy of author)

In addition to the large jugs that the *saké* came in, there was other evidence of *saké* consumption at Amache. Japanese porcelain was not uncommon in the archaeological record at Amache. Fragments of porcelain *tokkuri* and *o-choko* were found at Amache, in addition to porcelain tea service fragments. Although certainly a minority in the final tally of porcelain artifacts, the *tokkuri* and *o-choko* fragments found on site are notable for being there at all. At least 33 % of all porcelain found at Amache was Japanese, and 5 % of all Japanese porcelain artifacts was *saké* related.

### ***Saké* Acquisition at Amache**

How did people get large jugs of *saké* into the camp? Cooking and meal consumption in the barracks were forbidden, and more importantly there were rules against internee alcohol consumption. With ethnographic interviews and physical evidence of at least 18 confirmed *saké* bottles and fragments of bottles in the internee housing area, it was obviously arriving in some quantity by unspecific means. When questioned, former internees had many theories about how they thought *saké* was acquired, but no direct evidence. Most suggestions were independently confirmed by other internees, as well as by ethnographic information from other camps. These theories are individually presented and evaluated below.

## *The Hawaiians*

Butte Camp in Arizona had a number of Japanese internees from Hawaii, so it was speculated that they might have been the source of *saké* at their camp (Tamir et al. 1993:121). According to an interview with Alice (Makita) Okazaki, there were internees from Hawaii in her block at Amache and in the neighboring block, and she speculated that perhaps they had access to *saké* (Alice Okazaki, personal communication 2004). She continued, “There were certain ones [Hawaiian Japanese-Americans] they shipped over [to the mainland internment camps] and I don’t know why. I was too young to know why” (Alice Okazaki, personal communication 2004). Because they were coming from where *saké* was brewed, she felt that they might have had the ability and resources to smuggle some over to the mainland. Mas Sugimoto also recalls a “sizable contingent of Hawaiian-Japanese who were interned at Amache” (Mas Sugimoto, personal communication 2004). Mr. Sugimoto thought that getting *saké* mailed into the camp might have been fairly easy for the Hawaiian internees who could have had more direct links to the Hawaii breweries (Lorna Uno and Mas Sugimoto, personal communications, 2004). All of the *saké* jugs found during the 2003 survey at Camp Amache that had identifying maker’s marks were from Hawaii, though until the late twentieth century *saké* was only produced in Japan and Hawaii.

## *Home Brewing*

The most common view among interviewees was that *saké* was being brewed at Amache. Technically, there are less than half a dozen steps involved in brewing *saké*, and only four necessary ingredients: water, rice, *kōji* (rice which has been cultivated with a mold called *aspergillus oryzae*), and a special type of yeast (Gauntner 2000:24–29). The brewing process is quite complex and controlled, but technically could have been undertaken with modest success at the camp.

To make *saké*, rice is washed and polished, then steamed, mixed with the yeast and *koji* blend, and then set aside in a large container to ferment for 2 weeks (Gauntner 2000:43; Kondō 1984:42). Traditionally, additional rice, water, and *koji* are added over a period of 4 days (Gauntner 2000:43). This becomes the main *saké* mash that then ferments for 18–32 days, before being “pressed” in a process that separates the liquid from the solids (Gauntner 2000:43). At this point, most, although not all, *saké* is pasteurized and then aged for approximately 6 months (Gauntner 2000:43–44). This simplified account of how *saké* is made shows that these basic, essential steps could have been modified and accomplished at Camp Amache, and therefore home brewing not only could but almost certainly did occur at Amache.

It is clear that to some extent *saké* was being purchased and brought in, as evidenced through the archaeological record and oral histories, but 8 out of 15 people interviewed thought that it was being made on-site as well. Robert “Bob” Uragami said that his family did not have *saké* at the camp because his father never drank (Robert Uragami, personal communication 2004). Therefore, he was not sure how *saké* was acquired, but he speculated that perhaps it was being made in Block 9L.

Apparently, block 9L housed a considerable number of “restaurant people” who might have had the knowledge and ability to brew *saké* themselves. Alice Okazaki said that she could not imagine how anyone was able to get enough rice to home-brew, “because everything was rationed at that time” (Alice Okazaki, personal communication 2004).

Min Tonai recalls that people had to be making unfiltered (*nigori*) “moonshine *saké*” at the camp (Min Tonai, personal communication 2004). Mr. Tonai recalled,

My father received it as a gift [while at camp]. One of his friends gave it to him. He was so happy. He brought it home and showed it to my mother and she got all upset ... therefore, she dumped it out! He was so upset! He said ‘oh no, no, no!’ It was too dangerous. She poured it out (Min Tonai, personal communication 2004).

Masaku Nakae said that although her parents did not drink while living at the camp, her father used to brew *saké* prior to the war, so certainly people had the knowledge necessary to make it during the internment (Masaku Nakae, personal communication 2004). One internee mentioned that he was sure that his grandfather and his grandfather’s friends were brewing it, perhaps by smuggling rice out of the mess hall. He said,

He used to embarrass us. You know, we all ate in one big dining room ... he used to call my name out ... because he was ‘happy’ ... we used to eat as fast as we could so we could leave the dining area before he comes in. But, I know they did [home brew]. They were drinking every day so I am sure they were making it somewhere, but it wasn’t in our room (anonymous personal communication 2004).

### *Smuggling Saké into the Camp*

Former internee George Watanabe said, “there was no way that anyone could have brought it in ... somebody had to export [sic] it in” (George Watanabe, personal communication 2004). He added wryly, “whoever did that was doing a big favor to the community!” One person mentioned that they had heard that the *saké* was smuggled in coal trucks from Granada, which would not have been inconceivable since the internees heated their apartments and each block’s bath and laundry facility water heaters with coal (Tom Nakashima, personal communication 2004). Dozens of coal pile remains litter the camp to this day, so coal trucks were making regular trips in and out of the camp. If coal truck drivers were covertly bringing *saké* in, they had to be obtaining it from somewhere nearby, possibly in Granada.

Several people, both former internees and non-internees, mentioned the drug-store and soda fountain in Granada as a source for *saké*. In the summer of 2003, I had a conversation with Bruce Newman, the son of the man who had owned the Granada general store and soda fountain during the war, and this topic came up in the conversation. Author Robert Harvey had a similar conversation with Mr. Newman on May 18, 2000 when he recalled that his father had “managed to obtain the last truckload of *saké* from the West Coast” (Newman in Harvey 2004:68). The elder Mr. Newman, having realized the financial opportunity the internment would provide, purchased all the *saké* that he could from a supplier in

Washington state, and stored the contraband in a warehouse behind his store; hence the numerous references from internees that this “back door business” was being conducted out of the drugstore in Granada.

Another possibility mentioned by Min Tonai was the fish market established by internee Frank Tsuchiya in Granada near the aforementioned drugstore (Min Tonai, personal communication 2004). Apparently, if an internee had the financial means they were freer to leave the camp, and Mr. Tsuchiya seemed to have had the resources to start a small business. Mr. Tonai said it was pure speculation on his part, but he thought it possible that Mr. Tsuchiya might have had access to *saké*. As a youth, Bruce Newman worked at his father’s store in the afternoons, and then rode on the fish market delivery truck to the camp to help deliver the internees’ orders placed earlier in the day. If Mr. Tsuchiya had been able to obtain *saké*, it is possible that it could have been smuggled on the delivery truck with minimal effort. Restrictions seemed to have eased at Camp Amache as the war progressed, and Alice Okazaki stated, “towards the end of camp we didn’t have to get a pass [to come and go] I think” (Alice Okazaki, personal communication 2004). Smuggling contraband into the camp was probably fairly easy by that time.

One internee suggested that some of the large one-gallon *saké* bottles may have been used to bring soy sauce into the camp when internment started since soy sauce is a beloved staple ingredient and condiment in Japanese cooking, and people feared that it would be unavailable at the camp (Mas Takano, personal communication 2004). Perhaps the guards, being unfamiliar with various Japanese foods and beverages, had no idea what *saké* or even soy sauce was. For the Caucasian camp guards unfamiliar with Japanese cuisine or beverages, this is an entirely plausible explanation, as would be the explanation to the guards that *saké* was a nonalcoholic beverage.

Mas Sugimoto postulated that perhaps the internee who ran the Camp Amache Co-Op had special access to commodities that others might not (Mas Sugimoto, personal communication 2004). The man who operated the Co-Op owned a department store prior to the war which had catered to the Japanese community in the Little Tokyo neighborhood in Los Angeles. After the internment started, he continued to have connections for goods available only in the outside world. After all, Mr. Sugimoto pointed out, even though they were not allowed, and “were confiscated as contraband” at the camp entrance, the man who ran the Co-Op “was one of the first [in camp] to acquire a camera. Soon everyone had a camera” (Mas Sugimoto, personal communication 2004).

Finally, it was fairly common for internees to have items mailed to them by people outside the camps. Lorna Uno knew of internees with Caucasian friends who sent them Japanese food and delicacies, so *saké* may have been sent as well. The First Methodist Church in southern California sent 5,000 Christmas gifts to internees at the Gila River camps in Arizona (Tamir et al. 1993:78). The same person responsible for this kindness made frequent visits to several camps, especially the Poston and Gila River camps in Arizona, and to Manzanar in California. During these visits, the individual would bring items otherwise unavailable to the internees. This person was eventually banned from Manzanar for 6 months, however, when he was caught bringing in what he said was vinegar but in actuality was contraband *saké*!

## The Presence of *Saké* and Comparisons at Other Camps

While most camps show some evidence for *saké* consumption, even larger camps such as Manzanar do not display anywhere near the volume found at Amache, and some such as Minidoka show no such evidence at all (Burton and Farrell 2001). Manzanar was the largest of the ten camps but interestingly, the presence of alcohol or at least the consumption of *saké*, seemed to have been low. Manzanar had 10,767 internees, while Amache had only 7,318 occupants at its most crowded (Simmons and Simmons 1994:19). Only 7 % ( $n=103$ ) of the identifiable glass artifacts found at Manzanar are alcohol related (Burton et al. 1996b:686), and is even lower when one considers that only 19 positively identified alcohol-related glass artifacts came from war contexts and the majority came from pre- and postwar contexts. Only 2 of the 19 alcohol-related jugs were positively identified as *saké* bottle fragments, so only 9.5 % of the internment period alcohol-related artifacts were *saké* related, and a scant .012 % of the 156 identifiable glass beverage bottles from the internment period were *saké* jugs. In other words, only 2 of 156 glass beverage bottles were *saké* related at Manzanar. At Amache, a camp considerably smaller in acreage and internee numbers than Manzanar, there were at least 18 *saké* jugs or *saké* bottle fragments recorded. An examination of photographs of Japanese porcelain dish-ware found at Manzanar shows two small Japanese handleless cups that may be *o-choko*, although they also resemble the traditional Japanese teacups that do not have handles (Burton et al. 1996b:855).

At Minidoka there was no evidence for *saké* consumption at the camp during the war (Burton and Farrell 2001), but at Butte Camp evidence was clear, if infrequent. The Butte Camp report mentions Japanese porcelain fragments; although artifact counts were not provided, Japanese porcelain was the “second most common artifact in the kitchen category” [Tamir et al. 1993:115]. There was no direct reference to *saké* jugs, but there are three possible explanations for this: there were none to be found; they were seen on site during the archaeology survey but were not recognized; or that artifact descriptions in the report were not sufficiently fine grained to make specific notation of *saké* jugs or bottle fragments. Moreover, no research on the makers’ marks was undertaken, and thus *saké*-specific marks were not identified as such.

At Butte Camp, as with most other camps, liquor, beer, and wine bottles and bottle fragments are the predominant alcohol-related artifacts (Tamir et al. 1993:121); four shot glasses were also found. At least three artifact loci recorded at Butte Camp featured probable *saké* jugs and/or bottle fragments, though were not identified as such at the time. Locus 39 produced “several emerald green fragments of an extensively embossed bottle” with the words “Brewery/Hilo Hawaii,” and “additional fragments of the same or similar bottles were found at Loci 20 and 21” (Tamir et al. 1993:121). Although specific quantities and additional locational information were not mentioned, the authors note that former internees identified bottle fragments with the embossed words “NIPPON” and “DAINIPPON” as *saké* jug fragments. *Dainippon* is Japanese for the term “grade Japan” (Tamir et al. 1993:125). It is also possible that these bottles originally contained the highly coveted commodity soy

sauce. A third type of possible *saké* jug was found but not recognized on the Butte Camp project. This was the base of a gallon jug which featured embossed letters that read "...Y & ICE COMPNAY LTD/HONOLULU/S.../HONOLULU/HAWAII." Research conducted for the Amache survey indicated that this type of bottle was probably from the Honolulu *Saké* Brewery and Ice Company.

## Conclusions

Amache was not like other camps. Life at Amache was different and even though *saké* consumption had many roles and served many purposes within the camp, and may or may not have been a conscious act of rebellion, it still was an act of resistance simply because it defied the rules. As Scott points out, "the success of *de facto* resistance is often directly proportional to the symbolic conformity with which it is masked" (Scott 1985:33). At Amache, the internees' conformity, symbolic or actual, was sufficient enough to result in relationships with the camp staff that allowed the internees freedoms and a greater sense of harmony than that was found at a number of other camps. For a variety of reasons, the staff at Amache were more compassionate and thus more permissive than elsewhere. This in turn made the internees less likely to rebel and lash out, causing a cyclical relationship that made Amache a more relaxed camp. This probably set the stage for *saké* acquisition and consumption being less of a risk at Amache than elsewhere. None of the informants indicated that any internee was ever caught or punished for this act of rebellion, nor do any of the written records. In fact, *saké* seemed to have been a covert way for the internees to preserve not only cultural tradition, but also a sense of normalcy.

The lesson from Amache seems to be that in an environment where people were penalized simply for being who they were—that is, of Japanese descent—the desire to preserve tradition was stronger for many than the prohibitions and possible repercussions. The people interviewed for this project were children and teenagers during the internment, and were not the ones primarily enjoying *saké*, but apparently *saké* was enough of a part of their family's traditions and lives that its presence is recalled even 60 years later.

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## Chapter 17

# Perseverance and Prejudice: Maintaining Community in Amache, Colorado's World War II Japanese Internment Camp

Dana Ogo Shew and April Elizabeth Kamp-Whittaker

**Abstract** The Granada Relocation Center, otherwise known as Amache, located in southeastern Colorado, was one of ten camps in which those of Japanese ancestry were interned from 1942 to 1945. The analysis of archaeological material, archival documents, and oral histories from Amache demonstrates the effects of internment on community and family structure. Regulations imposed by the War Relocation Authority had the potential to greatly disrupt family and community dynamics. Nevertheless, Japanese families developed multiple ways to mitigate these effects and ultimately create successful communities within the camp.

### Introduction

The 2008 University of Denver field school in archaeology and museum studies, directed by Bonnie Clark, incorporated research designed by the authors to collect data about the lives of children and women at Amache, site of Colorado's World War II Japanese internment camp. Survey transects over the dry landscape of the camp recovered numerous artifacts that paint a picture of a thriving 1940s family community. Fragments of Vick's Vapo Rub bottles, Ponds cold cream jars, ceramic plates, cups and bowls, marbles, and rubber shoe heels dotted the surface of the camp's residential blocks. Amongst the artifacts still visible on the surface, only the fragments of large tin cans and heavy Quartermaster dishes indicated that the residents of this community were internees living in confinement.

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Oral histories collected to broaden the data available for analysis proved an invaluable complement to the archaeology, as many memories linked community family experiences to the material remains. The combined archaeological data, archival documents, and oral histories show that when the US government removed the internees from their homes on the West Coast to the harsh and unfamiliar internment camps in the interior of the United States, they found ways to mitigate adversity and maintain family structure and traditional life styles, ultimately triumphing over the hardships and obstacles of confinement (Kamp-Whittaker 2010; Shew 2010).

## **Internment History**

The resentment and prejudice aimed at the Japanese American population in the years leading up to World War II fueled the hysteria that followed the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Though no person of Japanese ancestry was ever convicted of spying for Japan, it was widely assumed that fifth column activity in Hawaii and several West Coast states would occur (Uyeda 1987). On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which gave the Secretary of War the right to declare military areas. The entrance, inhabitation, or exit of any person from these military areas was regulated by the Secretary of War or a Military Commander appointed to a specific area (CWRIC 1997). This order ultimately allowed for the removal of individuals of Japanese descent from the areas of the West Coast of the United States. Approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, were removed to ten different relocation centers located in isolated parts of the country's interior.

All of the relocation centers were similarly surrounded by barbed wire with guard towers stationed around their perimeters. Each contained living barracks, bath houses, laundry rooms, schools, hospitals, mess halls, and post offices (CWRIC 1997). The internment camps were mostly located in isolated, desert areas that experienced harsh weather conditions ranging from freezing cold to scorching hot. The internees, largely used to the temperate weather of the West Coast, were unfamiliar with the extreme climates of their new homes. Not only did the internees have to deal with a new geographic environment, but they also had to adjust to a new way of life governed by regulations, restrictions, and schedules set by the camp's administrative body, the War Relocation Authority (WRA). The internees had to get used to scheduled meal times, waiting in lines, cramped living quarters, and a lack of privacy, as well as many other changes and challenges brought by the imposed living conditions.

Commonly referred to as Amache, the Granada Relocation Center was located in southeastern Colorado, only 15 miles west of the Kansas border. The camp opened in August 1942 and at its peak in 1943 it housed 7,318 internees making it the tenth largest city in Colorado at that time (CWRIC 1997). During its 3 years of operation a total of 10,331 internees lived at Amache. It officially closed on October 15, 1945

(Harvey 2004; Simmons and Simmons 1994). Although the camp was abandoned and physically dismantled shortly thereafter, the memories and effects of internment still strongly resonate in the lives of former internees, their descendants, and those who continue to work on the preservation and conservation of the site.

Though it is important to remember that internment was an unquestionably unjust denial of civil rights that detrimentally affected the lives of thousands of people of Japanese descent, it is also important to acknowledge the ability of the Japanese internees to overcome adversity. The internees' response to confinement reflects a common theme noted by Eleanor Casella in her volume on institutional confinement, "the power of the asylum to transform its occupants and the power of those inmates to cope within this arduous environment" (2007:143). At Amache the transformations to daily life were abundant, yet the internees coped and ultimately triumphed over the restrictions of the WRA through the development and maintenance of strong community and family structure.

## Family Structure

The *Issei*, or the first-generation Japanese who immigrated to America, brought with them many of the traditional values and beliefs of their homeland. These immigrants were raised in, and influenced by, a Japan that stressed a rigid family system that had been in place for centuries. The Meiji government was explicit in promoting correct roles for each member of the family. Men were the heads of households and held all authority and responsibility over the other members. Women held no political rights or power, yet were expected to contribute to society by adhering to concepts of *ryosai kenbo*, "Good Wife, Good Mother" (Nolte and Hastings 1991). Children were expected to be loyal and obedient to their parents and to support the family when they reached adulthood, as payment for the care and guidance they received while being raised (Hendry 1996). Traditional family ideals focused on the continuity of the household and deemphasized the importance of the individual (Hendry 1996). Within this family model there existed a strong sense of unity with an emphasis placed on the responsibilities of parents for their children (LaViolette 1945:20). Traditional family structure highlighted both parental authority and personal responsibility, which led to an emphasis on behavior, manners, and a cultivation of respect for parental authority and discipline.

The traditional family system that existed amongst the Japanese in America prior to World War II shared many fundamental similarities with 1940s American family ideals. The role of women in both cultures was primarily limited to the domestic sphere with responsibilities that focused on cooking, cleaning, and care of children. American family ideals, like traditional Japanese beliefs, stressed the importance of children's education, proper manners, and discipline. In American culture, adults were expected to provide the materials and environment that would foster proper child development through educational toys, the creation of playgrounds, organized sports, and educational classes and clubs. There were, however, differences between

American and Japanese family structure ideals that created tensions. The sacrifice of the individual for the good of the family unit, emphasized in Japanese family structure, was almost directly opposed to the individualism that was encouraged in American culture.

Surrounded by the sometimes conflicting ideals of 1940s American society, the traditional Japanese family structure unsurprisingly changed and the intermixing of two cultural models created a distinct Japanese American family structure. This was often characterized by a generational division between *Nisei*, the second-generation Japanese born in America and their *Issei*, first generation, parents born in Japan. The combination of these generations created a Japanese American family structure that infused American ideals adopted by the *Nisei* with aspects of traditional foodways, celebrations, and religious activities often facilitated by the existence of cohesive Japanese communities established by the *Isseis*. The rules and conditions that governed the lives of internees in confinement had the potential to disrupt the ideal Japanese American family structure, especially where it differed from the expectations of the larger American society.

## Life in Confinement

Living conditions at Amache were cramped, uncomfortable, and largely lacking in privacy. All of the blocks followed a standard layout consisting of 12 residential barracks measuring 20 by 120 ft. The barracks were each divided into six individual apartments; two apartments measured 16 by 20 ft, two measured 20 by 20 ft., and two measured 24 by 20 ft. (Simmons and Simmons 1994). Couples without children or families with only one child were given the smallest of these apartments while larger families occupied the 24 by 20 ft. end units. Each unit came only with a coal burning pot belly stove, cots, a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling, and one electrical outlet (Harvey 2004). Not only was there no escape from hearing and being heard by neighbors, but there was also a lack of physical privacy within family apartments. Many former internees remember using curtains as a substitute for walls, separating small living and sleeping areas within the barracks. These cramped living conditions often had divisive effects on family unity. Yoshiko Uchida, in her memoir about life at Topaz, the Central Utah Relocation Center, describes the effects of living in close quarters similar to those at Amache, “For other families, however, one-room living proved more destructive. Many children drifted away from their parents, rarely bothering to spend time in their own barracks ...” (Uchida 1982:123). The barracks became a place used primarily for sleeping and families spent little time together in them (Matsumoto 1984). Activities that traditionally occurred within the home were instead often moved to more public spaces.

The structure of daily life in Amache also drastically changed the spaces in which domestic activities took place. Many activities that were conventionally performed within the privacy of the household such as laundry, bathing, and dining were now moved into the public arena at camp. Meals were served in block mess halls and the



**Fig. 17.1** The creation of family tables was one way in which internees resisted disruption to family structures caused by internment (Courtesy of the McClelland Collection held by the Amache Museum, Granada, Colorado)

forced communal dining is often cited as a major factor in the war time breakdown of Japanese family unity. In the mess halls, diners were free to choose their own seats and many young adults, teenagers, and older children began using mealtime as yet another avenue of socialization and chose to sit with their friends and peers rather than their families (Fig. 17.1). The divergence of seating arrangements in the mess hall from those traditionally expected within the family exacerbated the growing tensions within families that life in confinement had initiated.

In traditional Japanese culture mealtime is spent with family; the dynamics of the traditional meal reinforced the image of parents as providers. Fathers were supposed to supply the food, while mothers were typically responsible for the preparation of food. Jere Takahashi argues that in camp, the WRA became the “provider” and it was evident to children that their meals were not earned or prepared by their parents (1997). Meals also provided a time for adults to debrief their children, learning about their daily activities and providing disciplinary action and adult monitoring of these activities. Without the “family table” children were not exposed to the reinforcement of parental authority, leading to a lack of discipline and respect while the bonds within peer groups were strengthened at the expense of family ties (Kitagawa 1967; Tong 2004:90). The increased influence of peer groups amongst the youth in Amache also exacerbated the existing divide between generations.

Familial roles were further affected by the absence of many men from the camp. A number of prominent community leaders or businessmen with ties to Japan were initially arrested after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and many were not reunited with their families until after the war. Men at Amache also often left the camp for extended periods of time on work leave, primarily on agricultural projects in the

surrounding area. Additionally, many young men from Amache volunteered for military service overseas. The decreased number of male figures in camp intensified the lack of authority within the family because men were traditionally the family's main disciplinarians. The absence of the primary authority figure, combined with the relative safety provided by the controlled environment of camp, allowed children an increased level of freedom and altered children's perceptions of their parents' roles.

### *Mitigating Confinement*

At Amache, the internees found ways in which to combat some of the divisive effects of their living situation. Some blocks reacted to communal dining by establishing assigned seating arrangements, forcing families to sit together helping to reestablish the family table (Matsumoto 1984; Takeshita 2008). These blocks attempted to limit the detrimental effects of a forced public mealtime by proactively controlling one aspect of the situation.

Another way in which internees attempted to regain control of parental authority was through cooking in the barracks. The mess hall food, often unpleasant or unfamiliar, and the adverse experiences most internees had with mess hall dining, served as strong motivations for some women to remedy the situation. By finding ways to prepare more familiar foods women mitigated one of the most drastic changes that their families had to deal with and recreated an environment that more closely resembled home. In oral histories and memoirs about Amache and other internment camps, countless internees remember their mothers cooking in the barracks. Internees would often either save food from mess hall meals or sneak food out of the kitchens to bring back to their barracks. Former Amache internee Bob Uragami explains that the whole idea was to "take stuff home and make it better" (Uragami 2008). These scraps and leftovers from the mess hall were often improved by turning them into traditional Japanese dishes or comfort foods which helped supplement meals provided by the mess halls. Internees often cooked on their barracks' standard issued pot belly stoves or used illicit hot plates, which seemed to have been as common in barrack apartments as the stoves (Uragami 2008). A 1943 article in *The Granada Pioneer* asks internees to return mess hall dishes and silverware in order to help remedy the mess hall utensil shortage, clearly illustrating how widespread the practice of preparing meals in the barracks had become (The Granada Pioneer 1942).

The archaeological evidence from Amache also shows that cooking in the barracks was very common, with many glass and ceramic artifacts that are strongly associated with domestic activities recovered (Fig. 17.2). Cooking and food related activities were the most visible activities recorded by our surface surveys. Statistically, the materials recorded during survey of the nonresidential elementary school differ significantly from those noted in the residential blocks. A chi squared test compared artifact counts from the residential blocks and the elementary school to counts that would be expected if the distribution of artifacts at Amache were



**Fig. 17.2** Amache tableware artifacts recovered during the 2008 University of Denver field school. 1 Stoneware jug, 2 Japanese porcelain bowl, 3 milk glass cup, 4 Japanese porcelain bowl, 5 Japanese porcelain flatware, 6 possible green pressed glass plate, 7 Asian porcelain cup/bowl, 8 Japanese porcelain serving bowl, 9 unidentified porcelain bowl, 10 unidentified earthenware hollowware, 11 Asian stoneware bowl/cup, 12 Asian stoneware cup/bowl, 13 unidentified earthenware, 14 unidentified earthenware, 15 Japanese porcelain bowl, 16 Japanese stoneware teapot/hollowware (Courtesy of author)

random. The chi squared value of 16.76 with a  $p$  value of 0.005 is highly significant and indicates that the artifact distributions in the residential blocks and the elementary school are different from the expected counts for a random distribution of artifacts. This results from the absence of ceramics and lower than expected counts of glass artifacts in the elementary school block. If the communal services established by the WRA had eliminated domestic activities including cooking and eating in the barracks, artifact counts similar to those in the nonresidential elementary school block should have been widespread. Instead, artifacts related to food production and other domestic activities are found throughout the residential blocks, of which 41 % were ceramic table wares including plates, bowls, cups, and saucers.

The ceramic artifacts at Amache reveal a great deal of information about the multidimensional meanings associated with cooking in the barracks. Several of the food-related artifacts were hotelware ceramics and were probably government-issued dishware for the mess halls. These military issue ceramics provided by the WRA for use in the mess halls, in conjunction with the communal structure of camp life, further institutionalized the internment experience. As Stephanie Skiles asserts in her

study of culinary practices at Amache, the plain, mass produced mess hall dishware was a reflection of the government's perception of the Japanese internees; "they were all the same and did not deserve the comforts of home" (Skiles 2008:69).

In contrast to the communal mess hall dishes, the Japanese and Asian ceramics found at Amache can easily be associated with expressions of cultural identity (see also Chap. 16). The Japanese ceramics that the internees brought with them reveal several additional motivations that drove women to cook within their barracks. Japanese ceramics evoked familiarity and even stability in the midst of upheaval and change, and they also helped perpetuate traditional ideals and practices: "Japanese ceramics played a key role in making over, in the image of home, the dismal environment of the camp" (Skiles and Clark 2010:189). Parents, especially mothers, were driven to replicate familiar surroundings in order to create a sense of normalcy for their children and shield them from this "dismal environment." The traditional foods served in the Japanese ceramics were also a comforting reminder of the familiar. Cooking Japanese foods and serving them on Japanese ceramics kept tradition alive and even helped solidify bonds and establish unity. It encouraged resistance and helped the internees reassert their cultural identities (Skiles 2008).

The incorporation of American consumer identities can also be found at Amache, as demonstrated by the bright and colorful Fiesta Ware bowls and decorated ironstone plates recovered at the site. The durability, low cost, and ready availability of Fiesta Ware and ironstone made these specific types of dishware a natural choice for many of the internees at Amache, both before and during internment. The presence of Fiesta Ware and ironstone is not only additional evidence of cooking within the barracks but it is also illuminates the internees' prudent consumer choices. This economical mindset was typical of both the *Issei* and wartime America and emphasized the importance of frugality as a way to support the American war effort. These ceramics represent the inclusion of American cultural objects and ideals in Japanese households through the consumption of American material culture.

World War II era mail order catalogs can also assist in exploring the social meanings behind the material objects associated with the site. The internees at Amache had few options when it came to procuring goods. Though the internee-run cooperative store sold a range of items from toiletries to vegetable seeds, internees also turned to mail order catalogs from companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Company, Montgomery Ward, and Spiegel's to procure items from outside of camp. The mail order catalogs served as a link to the rest of American society and allowed internees to participate in broader American consumer practices. Internees today still remember the important role that mail order catalogs played at Amache and even remember their preferred catalog brand. Mail order catalogs allowed internees to purchase familiar brands and goods that would not otherwise have been available, helping the internees to maintain certain aspects of their pre-internment lifestyles. The information provided by mail order catalogs, including item prices, descriptions, pictures, and associated marketing allow for a socioeconomic as well as a cultural examination of the internees' consumer choices.

The examination of toys and other children's items purchased through mail order catalogs is one way to analyze the consumer choices of the internees. Adults in

Amache viewed the toys they provided for their children as indicators of cultural status and a means of fulfilling societal perceptions of a normal childhood. The material culture used by children would have been important to adults since, in the 1940s, toys were seen as directly affecting the development of children. "Play may seem frivolous to grownups, but to a child it is very serious business, and it should be. The materials which a child uses in play—his toys—should be carefully and thoughtfully chosen to help in this important business. It is by play that the child experiments to learn his own abilities and to develop them" (Anonymous 1937:61). The toys offered in mail order catalogues give a clear perspective on what was considered proper for different genders and ages, and the types of toys which were most popular. The toys recovered from Amache reflect the consumer decisions of both adults and children and further demonstrate the inclusion of mainstream American society into life at Amache.

A majority of toys for girls in the 1944 Sears and Roebuck Christmas Catalogue relate to household activities, signifying the importance of such toys for training young girls in societal norms through their play activities. In contrast, the toys which are targeted at young boys are either vehicles like trains and trucks, relate heavily to World War II, or would be considered educational toys designed to teach skill sets. The remaining non-gendered toys fall into educational or other categories and include a range of art supplies and toys like wagons. The toys recovered from Amache match those available in toy catalogues at the time and demonstrate that adults were utilizing these catalogues to purchase toys.

The material culture of children recorded during the Amache field school reveals insights into parental views on common societal norms regarding appropriate behaviors, gendered ideas, and the importance of toys even during economic hardship. While the largest category of toys recovered from Amache was marbles, both gendered and military toys were also common categories. The two most common toys from Amache were Depression glass tea sets made by the Akro Agate Company and glass candy containers molded into the shape of various military vehicles. These toys, like a majority of the toys recovered from Amache, were relatively inexpensive and sold in sets. Most families in Amache had a limited income and many had had their assets seized by the government. While jobs were available in the camps they paid a greatly reduced wage of 12, 16, or \$19 a month (CWRIC 1997). Nonessential items like toys were a luxury. The presence of a number of toys which were definitely purchased during the occupation of Amache indicates the perceived importance of toys. Adults clearly felt that toys were an essential part of childhood and children's activities. They worked to provide access to playthings for their children in Amache through the purchase of inexpensive toys and sometimes through community organizations which distributed toys during holidays. The presence of familiar and popular playthings helped children adapt to the environment of camp and allowed them to engage in the same types of social and play activities they participated in prior to internment (Fig. 17.3).

The spaces in which children's play activities occurred were also similar to those prior to internment in Amache. With approximately 7,000 people confined to 1 sq mile, the residential section of Amache resembled a city. Urban children traditionally



**Fig. 17.3** A group of young boys playing marbles in the sand at Amache (Courtesy of the McClelland Collection held by the Amache Museum, Granada, Colorado)

play in streets, on sidewalks, in playgrounds, and in yards where they can be monitored, and in vacant spaces where they can escape adult supervision (Chudacoff 2007). The locations of children's play areas around Amache are revealed by the distribution of the most common archaeologically recovered toy—marbles. These are small, easily lost, of low monetary value, and those who played marbles would have possessed a large number of them. For these reasons they should frequently be recovered close to where they were used and lost. Marbles were recovered most commonly in low traffic areas, especially along the edges of blocks and in or around landscape features. The location of marbles indicates that children were playing in both supervised and unsupervised spaces. They played in adult designated areas where they could be monitored such as areas around the home and places like the Boy Scouts headquarters and elementary school. They also played in areas at the edges of blocks where they had more freedom and were less observed. The location of marbles in Amache reveals that internee children were playing in locations similar to those of their prewar urban settings.

When studying landscapes, it is important to consider how space is organized by the community (Jackson 1997:309). Using marbles as an indicator of children's movement and space use reveals that the camp was viewed by both adults and children as a city landscape and that it was being utilized accordingly. It is evident that children were using the edges of blocks as play areas when they were allowed to wander, and using landscape features such as gardens when they were expected to remain closer to their barracks. The edges of the barracks were considered less structured areas than either the gardens or playgrounds, and children used them in the same way as vacant lots were used in cities. Internee views of children's play

areas and activities within Amache reflect both their lives prior to internment and the norms of American society. The relative safety of the camp and its cramped living conditions also created a situation which encouraged children to use play spaces, such as gardens and playgrounds, which were located outside the home. This is reflected in the extensive development of social activities within Amache.

## Community at Amache

Internees could choose to join a wide variety of different organizations and groups at Amache. These organizations strengthened community solidarity and helped foster a sense of normalcy. The events and activities that internees organized at Amache were often continuations of activities in which they had participated before internment. Many internees came to Amache from Japanese communities which valued and emphasized social organization and involvement. At Amache, the internees put great effort into recreating these social groups, and thereby were able to reestablish and reinvent aspects of their identity (Hayashi 1983). Social organizations also facilitated the development of new social networks and were designed to unify internees from different parts of California (Tong 2004).

The groups and organizations that internees could join at Amache helped bond them to others with similar beliefs and interests. Involvement in religious organizations, political groups, clubs, youth groups, and sports teams created particular communities or groups, each with its own goals and purposes. Despite the individual goals of each organization, the desire for normalcy is an underlying impetus common to many of the groups that existed in camp. Activities, groups, and classes were also seen as important in the rearing of children. Parents were told that children needed structured play and guided activities for their proper development. Enrolment in organizations and classes was seen as providing educational activities which would foster an environment where children could acquire necessary social and life skills. The *Nisei* largely found this social guidance in groups that promoted American ideals and beliefs. *Issei* and older *Nisei* parents established branches of national youth organizations such as the Girl and Boy Scouts, the YMCA, the YWCA, and the Red Cross (Fig. 17.4).

Youth groups not only helped parents fulfill their child rearing obligations, they also connected internees to the world beyond confinement, as many national organizations distributed newsletters which internees could obtain. Being a Boy Scout at Amache was expressing a normal, American identity, even a patriotic one. This can be seen in the activities organized by young teenagers as well. Throughout the camp, young girls and teenagers belonged to official social groups whose membership was often determined by the cities or areas where they had lived before Amache, the blocks they lived in at the camp, and their age. The activities that these groups organized often reflected the membership's struggle for normalcy and identification with mainstream American ideals. Teenage *Niseis* kept up with the nation's top ten songs by listening to "Hit Parade" on the radio on Saturdays and then ordering records



**Fig. 17.4** The Boy Scouts were one of the most popular organizations in Amache and had special duties including raising the flag daily and honoring soldiers leaving Amache (Courtesy of the McClelland Collection held by the Amache Museum, Granada, Colorado)

from mail order catalogs (Tanaka 2008). They held dances featuring popular songs played on record players or by one of Amache's teenage bands, attempting to create social environments similar to those of teenagers across the country. Even within the confines of internment, *Nisei* teenagers were thus able to continue aspects of their earlier lives. Many oral history accounts and archival materials such as membership cards, dance invitations, church programs, theater programs, and carnival souvenirs that have been preserved in former internee scrapbooks paint a picture of active, busy young Americans.

Adults also constructed community identities at Amache through participation in many clubs and groups of their own. The Women's Federation was created in order to "be the mouthpiece of women in camp and make demands and dissatisfactions known to the administration. It is an organization that attempts to better camp conditions and present points men councilmen think superfluous" (Women's Federation 1942). The women in the Federation identified themselves as valuable, effective members of Amache society. Women at Amache also actively promoted American patriotism, and those with sons serving in the war organized a branch of the Blue Star Mothers at camp. As part of the war effort they sponsored raffles and drives to sell war bonds and hosted luncheons for visiting servicemen. Men at Amache were less involved in organized groups than women but were instead very involved in camp government and served as block managers and law enforcement officers.

Religious organizations also provided foundations around which communities were developed. Both Buddhist and Catholic churches had multiple locations



**Fig. 17.5** Community events, like this *Obon* festival dance, became a way for internees to socialize while expressing their cultural identity (Courtesy of the McClelland Collection held by the Amache Museum, Granada, Colorado)

throughout the camp. These religious organizations were active and influential groups within Amache providing families with both spiritual and social support. Many internees came from communities in which the church was an influential center of social activity and community unity. Involvement in the Christian church was another outlet in which young people could socialize with each other. Church membership sometimes even provided the opportunity to attend church camps outside Amache, and interact with people beyond the camp (Kimoto 2008; Morimoto 2008). Youth organizations associated with churches such as the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) were involved in a variety of activities within the camp such as the *obon* and *mochitsuki* festivals, and these activities served as an avenue through which the *Issei* could instill traditional beliefs and teach cultural practices to the *Nisei*. The young members of the YBA balanced an identity associated with a traditionally Japanese religion with an American identity. Participation in events like the summer carnival which featured sports such as softball alongside sumo wrestling illustrates this straddling of cultures. The establishment of multiple churches at Amache illustrates the internees' determination to not let the constraints of confinement stop them from maintaining their cultural identity and familiar community structure (Fig. 17.5).

The internees were also faced with aspects of camp life that did not fit into the familiar community structure of prewar life; their ability to adapt to these changes contributed to the creation of a successful, unified community. In the camp many

internees, especially women, found themselves with more leisure time than they had ever experienced before. The communal structure of internment life relieved women of many domestic responsibilities such as cooking, freeing up much of their time. Also for the first time many women did not have to work outside of the home in order to help support their families financially. While most members of the *Issei* and *Nisei* generations had been small business owners or worked in agriculture before the war, in Amache the available jobs were limited and most basic needs were met by the WRA. With free time to explore other aspects of their individuality many internees discovered talents and passions that had previously been unrealized. An article in an October 1942 issue of *The Granada Pioneer* lists 23 adult classes in the camp, including cooking, sewing shop, knitting and crocheting, fine needlework and embroidery, clothing line and design, piano, shorthand, and bookkeeping (*The Granada Pioneer* 1942). The diverse classes offered within the camp let women discover capabilities beyond the domestic sphere which allowed for exploration and self-redefinition. Men also developed skills and discovered unknown talents in classes such as wood carving, art, beginning English, Spanish, and algebra. Classes offered at the camp allowed both men and women to counteract the authority of the WRA by demonstrating the validity of their own skills and knowledge. Adult internees played an important role in establishing a successful community within the confines of internment by staying active and engaged in self-improvement and creative activities.

## Conclusions

The archaeological, documentary, and oral history data from Amache give testimony to the success of internees in reconstructing a working community within the confines of the camp. The data from Amache shows some of the ways in which internees strove for normalcy and familiarity. Through the efforts of internees, Amache became a functional society sheltering internees from the worst of the potential negative effects of internment. The documentary record and oral histories reveal internees at Amache who were active, contributing members of a thriving society. This exploration of family life within Amache highlights the indispensable value of multidisciplinary approaches for developing a well-rounded understanding of daily life. The archaeological record documents some of the casual activities of children and women that are less visible from historical sources. Historical archaeology has the advantage of using written records and oral histories alongside the material evidence. Those researching Japanese American internment are especially fortunate to still have a living population who can share first-hand information and emotions about life in internment, and this has certainly been the case at Amache. Oral histories are more than just a way to confirm theories about the past developed from material objects and documents. They are the emotional and personal components of research that help remind us that the archaeologists' theories and results are actually the stories of the people that lived them.

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**Part VI**  
**Postscript**

# Chapter 18

## Prisoner of War Archaeology in an Interdisciplinary Context

Harold Mytum

**Abstract** The archaeology of PoWs offers valuable insights that can be valued not only within archaeology and anthropology but also more widely across cultural and military history, many of the creative arts, and memory and heritage studies. The archaeologists' experience of studying and interpreting material culture gives a unique perspective on the built environments and products of internment. This is illustrated here under three broad thematic headings of confinement and embodiment, ethnicity and identity, and heritage and the commodification of the past, as examples of the ways in which PoW archaeology can contribute to broader themes.

### Introduction

The chapters in this volume have provided a wide range of case studies that demonstrate the many and varied ways in which archaeologists can approach the evidence from PoWs, and the diverse research directions that lie open in the future. This concluding chapter offers some comments not just on the archaeological potential of continued research, but its relevance to a wide range of disciplines including anthropology and other social sciences, history and art history, folk life and memory studies, heritage management and “dark” tourism.

Archaeologists of the recent past may undertake excavations, but those researching PoWs often use other evidence in addition or instead, applying our expertise in analyzing material culture of all kinds from the intensive study of one artifact

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through to whole assemblages, from a single structure to sites or landscapes. We as archaeologists perceive, interrogate, and interpret material evidence in ways that other disciplines do not, and indeed treat texts not only as documentary sources but physical items with a materiality that also gives them value and significance. We thus have a vital part to play in the interdisciplinary approach to PoW studies, particularly as the materiality of confinement is such a prominent part of the physical and mental experience of imprisonment, and where restrictions in access to material goods and physical places dominates the internees' thoughts and lives, even in the most benign of camps.

Material remains of many kinds form vital parts of the evidence base for understanding PoW camps and their inmates, not only because often the documentary sources have been destroyed and archaeology can "fill some of the gaps" but more importantly because it offers a distinctive and highly valuable lens on the times, places, and experiences under consideration (Carr and Mytum 2012a). People could act and make when they could not talk or write; camps were managed and used beyond the plans and rules set out by authorities; people remember through and with things as well as through stories and written words. Three examples of arenas of multidisciplinary concern are used here to illustrate the potential for PoW archaeology to contribute within the wider intellectual landscape.

## **Prisoner of War Camps as Confinement, and Embodying the Prisoner of War**

Many disciplines study confinement within its historical and social contexts (Evans 1982; Foucault 1977; Harding 1985; Johnston 2000; Rhodes 2001; Taylor 1991). Moreover, the concept of embodiment has become a central postmodern theme, often inspired by the writings of Merleau-Ponty (1962). These themes are central to the understanding of the PoW experience, and artifacts and settlements provide the evidence for the methods of confinement and the physical, bodily experiences of both those so held and their captors. Archaeologists have become increasingly interested in the ways in which various groups have been confined (Casella 2007), and research in examining the nature of the institutions in which such confinement takes place is now an important theme in historical archaeology (Beisaw and Gibb 2009; Spencer-Wood and Baugher 2001). There is no doubt that PoW archaeology can provide an important perspective on this subject, frequently sitting between the punitive conditions of prisons and outside the apparently benevolent but highly ordered structuring principles of work houses, asylums, boarding schools, and orphanages. Thus far the only comparative study has been between a Scottish PoW camp and a logging work camp, both in Scotland (Banks 2011), the latter being voluntarily attended by those working in an isolated location. Some PoW treatment was more like those of prison work camps, as in World War II Norway (Chap. 9), whilst for others it was more relaxed. Nevertheless, all saw confinement and control of bodily movement, both within and beyond the camp.

From the symbolic and esthetically pleasing Japanese American ponds (Chap. 15) to the temporary subdivisions of space by Channel Islander internees within barracks in Germany (Chap. 11), archaeologists can recognize the ways in which the physical world was utilized by and for PoWs, to create embodied spaces full of meaning. The mixture of material culture and people within the photographs commissioned by internees at Cunningham Camp, Douglas, reveal the interlinked roles of objects and bodies in creating and recreating active social agents in circumscribed conditions (Chap. 6). The ways in which people sat and ate, socialized and interacted created tensions and new understandings of self and community in Japanese American camps (Chap. 17), and all camps created unfamiliar and usually unwelcome proximity to others' bodies in the cramped sleeping and living arrangements. The frequent representation of barbed wire in the twentieth-century PoW art reflects the obsession with control of bodily access to the wider world (Carr and Mytum 2012b), and many written and graphic sources record the tensions, embarrassment and loss of dignity imposed by communal washing and the high-density sleeping and eating, with little prospect of privacy. While the activities of those who gambled even their clothes away in Napoleonic camps might create a lifestyle almost free of material culture (Chap. 5), these unfortunate souls unable to cope with the effects of confinement were still subject to their bodily movements within the palisaded compounds and barracks.

Bodily comfort was managed by the authorities with greater or lesser concern and efficiency, but internees could be highly ingenious in their use of limited resources to improve their physical circumstances. While this might be focused on escape (Chap. 8), it was more frequently concerned with comforts created by the actions of internees using what materials they could find. Dwellings were constructed or improved (Chaps. 2, 4, and 6), furniture created (Chap. 11), and many decorative items produced to domesticate the institutionally designed living spaces and to make the living conditions more physically as well as psychologically bearable. In contrast, bodily discomfort, torture, and even execution could be the fate of the interned (Chaps. 2 and 9), and many camps have associated burial areas where those who died from mistreatment or disease were interred, and it has been possible in some cases to locate and commemorate executed PoWs (Fig. 18.1).

Connerton (1989, 2008) has argued strongly that social memory is highly dependent on physical actions and that, while first-hand memories of the actual events end as those involved die, the continued enactment and re-enactment of commemorative events, both public and private, perpetuate and create the social memory. The commemorative events associated with wars, including religious services where many gather together, the marching to military bands, and the laying of wreaths at communal memorials, all employ clear bodily presence and movement. The physical appearance of even very aged survivors helps to legitimate and reinforce these commemorative acts, and indeed as all surviving combatants of World War I have now all died this has been seen as a significant break with the past, though in practice all the events continue as before. Interestingly, not all cultures require this form of bodily involvement, as Muzzaini (2006) has noted in the case of Singapore. In many societies, however, continued activities by descendants, as well as any survivors,



**Fig. 18.1** Burials of executed PoWs are marked with small pyramids on a woodland walk, Falstad, Norway

remains a vital part of the PoW heritage (Chap. 12). Indeed the increasing academic and wider heritage interest in this subject might be seen in part as a reaction to the “loss” of the memory of past events and experiences as survivors become unable to directly participate in commemorative acts. The perceived value of the physical resource may increase as the living resource is extinguished (see below for a discussion of the heritage implications). Moreover, as the structures of PoW camps often outlast the evidence of the confining boundaries, so it is archaeology that can confirm and reveal the nature of those technologies of imprisonment—palisades, walls, barbed wire—that contained and controlled bodily movement within proscribed spaces.

## Ethnicity and Identity

Issues of ethnicity and identity have now become established issues with which archaeologists engage (Jones 1997), and in the process are participating in debates with other social scientists and historians. Both ethnicity and identity are highly significant in the case of PoW camps, whether military or civilian. Internees were held because of their identity with another regime, those at the time considered enemies of the state. In the case of military PoWs they had been captured and were held to prevent their continued participation in conflict and could be treated with respect, as a source of labor, or as an inconvenience. The identification of PoWs as “other” has often led to degrading and horrific treatment. While how deliberate this was in the American Civil War is debated (Hesseltine 1962), there is no doubt of the intention

under the Nazi regime (Soleim 2010), and the cruel effects of the policies are archaeologically attested at Andersonville and Fort Pulaski (Chap. 2) and in the Norwegian Romsdal peninsula (Chap. 9), respectively. This volume does not consider concentration camps where the extermination of the inmates was a primary goal, though these have received some archaeological research (Myers 2008, 2011).

Historians have become interested in the process of increasing internment during the twentieth century (Bird 1986; Cesarani and Kushner 1993; Panayi 1991; Soleim 2010), but have not closely considered the material aspects of this experience except the obvious one that the PoWs were incarcerated in cramped and sometimes inhuman conditions. They have, however, drawn attention to the ways in which xenophobia evolved in wartime situations, both creating popular demand for internment and easing political desire to control aliens.

Ethnicity and national identity is central to the construction and ordering of most PoW camps. These are places where those that are being demonized as the enemy alien can be contained. The camps both help to divide nationalities, and also represent and reinforce those differences in their physical presence in the landscape. Where there had previously been toleration if not outright friendship, these institutions formed part of the governmental framework that encouraged national unity in the face of a common foe. The archaeology of PoWs investigates the ways in which the camps themselves, and what the authorities and the inmates did within them, reinforced and physically represented these divisions. Likewise, within the camps there could be increased awareness of national identities that had been downplayed or even ignored in less confrontational times. In some situations, these divisions and identities were also based upon or also reflected religion, and the single-sex camps also led to questions of gender identity being raised that had often been previously suppressed. Archaeologists are only just beginning to address some of these issues in relation to PoWs, but other disciplines are also only just becoming aware of some of the implications (Kewley Draskau 2012; Rachamimiov 2012).

Those wars that were between those of the same nation created different challenges to identity, as seen in the American Civil War. Here, ideological values were given such a high priority that large-scale inhumanity could be shown on both sides (Chaps. 2, 3, 4). The ways in which “otherness” could be created to justify this in the minds of those involved still continues to shape the cognitive, cultural, political, and economic geography of North America. Archaeology can highlight the similarities in mistreatment and the high degree of shared culture, yet divisions were still recognizable, important, and maintained. Archaeological sites are important even now in the process of mutual understanding and reconciliation (Chap. 2).

## **Prisoner of War Heritage and the Commodification of the Past**

The heritage from even recent conflicts is now being recognized as requiring management by heritage professionals, and it is noteworthy that organizations from as far afield as North America (Burton et al. 2002), Australia (Cowra Shire Council n.d.),

and England (Thomas 2003) now include PoW sites within their remit. While still at an early stage across the world, there are increasing moves to survey, assess, and then selectively manage this fragile resource. Parallel with this management concern has grown the academic appreciation of the potential offered by PoW sites, as this volume and others (Carr and Mytum 2012b, Myers and Moshenska 2011) demonstrate. While government agencies may now be considering the role of PoW camps within a wider heritage landscape, there is also a move for a more public use of such sites to exploit their associations culturally and commercially. Whether this is to replace living survivors of this phase of family and national history as they inevitably succumb to old age, or whether it is a result of globalization, new senses of identity and history, and the limited and indirect experience of war that most of the population now have experienced, is uncertain. What is clear is that PoW experience now forms part of the wider heritage.

The place of PoW camps within the tourist industry is an ambivalent one. They certainly sit within the recently coined term dark tourism (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005; Lennon and Foley 2000; Sharpley and Stone 2009; Wilson 2008), but their place there, as in military and cultural history, is hard to classify. They are neither places of conflict, like battlefields, nor are most locations of genocide (Beech 2000), though in many camps some PoWs died. Stone (2006) has attempted to categorize the types of dark tourism sites, and PoW camps are probably most closely aligned to his Dark Dungeons category (Stone 2006, 154) as the emphasis is on incarceration. PoW camps were sites of varying degrees of brutality, and so they sit at various points on the spectrum of darkness as discussed by Miles (2002), with those Nazi camps in Norway being significantly darker, for example, than those for Japanese Americans in North America. Researchers of dark tourism also consider the role of demand in the development of such sites (Cole 1999, Sharpley 2005, Seaton 1996), and this may come not only from survivors and their families but also now a much broader spectrum of society. Underlying political and cultural factors operate on both supply and demand, as discussed by Lennon and Smith (2004) where the Jewish concentration camp at Terezin is remembered and interpreted for the public, but in contrast the Roma camp of Lety is forgotten. Both sites lie in the present state of the Czech Republic, but their current place in social memory is clearly different, and this is reflected in their heritage roles. Likewise, the considerable tourist interest in the Normandy battlefield sites is not matched by any remembrance of the PoW camps or what those inmates achieved after the war (Chaps. 6 and 7). Moreover, the role of PoW labor in the construction of military infrastructure is often ignored in any interpretation (Carr 2010; Chap. 9).

The recognition of PoW sites and material culture as heritage to be managed and, on occasion, exploited can be associated in part with the growth of interest in memory and the relationship between past and present. Memory studies have become increasingly significant in many disciplines (Radstone 2008), and the role of ruins is widely recognized as a powerful physical trigger (Trigg 2009); archaeologists have also recognized the way in which various forms of painful heritage may be termed haunted archaeology (Jonker and Till 2009). Archaeologists of the PoW experience both remember this part of the heritage themselves and for a scholarly purpose, but also in the process bring it back into a wider social existence from which it may have



**Fig. 18.2** Eden Camp Modern History Museum, North Yorkshire, UK, using a World War II PoW camp

disappeared. Archaeology can often be a major stimulus to the process of recovering and remembering that can then be associated with other sources buried previously unnoticed in public and private archives and in the heads of survivors.

Many camps have been largely erased from the landscape, either deliberately to remove an uncomfortable reminder, or as part of ongoing postwar regeneration and return to normal life. The massive World War I Isle of Man camp of Knockaloe, with over 20,000 inmates, was rapidly dismantled and the landscape returned to farmland, while the other camp at Douglas rapidly reverted to a holiday camp (Mytum 2011). A similar process of demolition or reuse can be seen in across Europe in France (Chaps. 6 and 7), Poland (Chap. 8), Norway (Chap. 9), and Germany (Chap. 12). In North America, where sites were generally placed in isolated locations and where space is less of a premium, they have been abandoned though often after deliberate demolition (Chaps. 14, 15, 16, and 17). While these actions reflect practical functional decisions, they also signaled part of a widespread process of forgetting, in contrast to the institutionalized remembering of the war dead in the same conflict (Mytum 2013). However, traces can often survive apparent erasure, and archaeological investigations allow location and identification of such heritage sites. Many locations had buildings which have been reused for agricultural and light industrial uses, and in this way still survive in the landscape to this day (Thomas 2003). It is even possible for these to be turned directly into a heritage resource (Fig. 18.2). The Eden Camp Modern History Museum is formed from the surviving structures of a World War II PoW camp in North Yorkshire, England. It displays many aspects of World War II, with only one building focusing on the role of PoWs and only part of that on the aliens for whom the camp was originally constructed, with the rest devoted to British PoWs held elsewhere. Nevertheless, this is

an example from the gray end of the dark tourism spectrum, as many positive as well as negative aspects of the war and internment are revealed, as well as the tragedy and suffering. This commercially successful model is reflected in the large numbers who visit, of all ages, indicating that dark tourism satisfies a demand, even if the very publicity of the museum may in part create it.

War was traumatic for those directly involved, and for those on the margins waiting for news of loved ones and managing within the constraints of rationing and shortages. Research through archaeology, documentary research, or oral history can find out much about such challenging times. The question for archaeologists, heritage agencies, and the communities is how to react to this actual or potential knowledge. Should it be brought out from its hidden location, reviving memories and potentially opening wounds, or should it be revealed, confronted, understood, and used to assist in dealing with old divisions but also acting as lessons for the future? Moshenska has noted how evocative excavated material remains can be in memory works (2008, 2010), but others have noted the power of the photograph (Kunimoto 2004), artwork, or the written or printed text in creating a link with the past. The question often for those involved in the study of the past is whether this prompting should be undertaken, and for what end. Memory is fluid and not a simple matter of accurate recall; it is culturally and contextually constructed (Connerton 2008) and memories now may or may not easily relate to past events and places as revealed and understood by archaeologists. Conflict and enmity from the past can be revived, but also new conflicts in understanding of the past can arise between those who experienced it and those studying it now. This in itself can be the subject of research, but there is a danger of self-indulgence or opportunism at the expense of some of the participants. The power relations here between young and intelligent researchers and aging and potentially vulnerable witnesses need to be fully considered within any research or interpretation framework.

In some cases, it is clear that nationalistic or racial motivations affect preservation, commemoration, and display. This can be seen most clearly in South Africa, where the Boer War camps have been used by both the white regime to define separation from Britain, and then postapartheid governments with a concern to highlight the multiracial nature of the internment and reduce the Boer emphasis (Hasian 2003; Nasson 2000; Stanley and Dampier 2005). The political significance of the Japanese American camps is recognized by the US National Parks Service, but the implications for preservation and interpretation in Britain and Europe is as yet undeveloped, though it is being recognized in some places such as Germany and the Channel Islands (Chap. 12) and Norway (Chap. 9).

## **The Future of Prisoner of War Archaeology in its Wider Intellectual Context**

This book and other recent publications (Carr and Mytum 2012b; Myers and Moshenska 2011) demonstrate the vitality of PoW research where material culture plays a central role. Whilst some scholars approach from cultural anthropology

(Dusselier 2008), folk life (Cresswell 2005), art history (Behr and Malet 2004), or history (Dove 2005), there is little doubt that archaeology can take a central role in examining a wide range of evidence and addressing themes that are not set only within the one discipline.

Contested heritage is cross-disciplinary and reaches out to the community. Archaeologists are often both experienced at public interaction and interpretation, and are willing to communicate their findings. Increasingly, however, archaeologists do more than this and work with and for communities to serve their interests in understanding local, ethnic, or religious heritages. Archaeologists now frequently engage with other stakeholders in the past as experts but not controllers, as facilitators not judges. Many examples of PoW archaeology contain elements of tension, unresolved guilt and injustice, of different views on the same events. These opinions may be uncontested, but they often are hotly disputed, and archaeologists have become increasingly accustomed to parallel and conflicting world views and understandings of heritage. These skills and experiences can be brought to interdisciplinary research where many, though not all, of the other academic participants are less aware of public reaction, ownership, and strong identity with the past.

Archaeologists can bring a strong sense of place to interdisciplinary research. Although there has been a little interest from cultural and historical geographers (Clout 2006), places of confinement and confinement within landscapes have not been a popular field of study. The time depth awareness of place is important as so many camps were constructed from ephemeral remains, and even where the ubiquitous twentieth century concrete survives, this is often only a fraction of the total infrastructure and built prisonscape that was experienced by the PoWs. Archaeological survey and excavation can provide a far richer and contextualized understanding of spaces and places within the PoW landscape, both within the compounds and beyond if allowed out on work parties.

An unusual aspect of archaeological interpretation is the way in which it easily shifts in both spatial and temporal scale, a dimension seen in anthropology but less often in other social sciences and the humanities. Archaeologists work in highly detailed and contextualized case studies, as with the chapters in this book, but many also see their research as part of a larger, comparative process by which experiences can be understood over time and space. The PoW experience in general can be better understood by awareness of the diversity of the particular, yet throughout this book it is notable how many common strands emerge, even though they are not directly copied one to another. The similarities of mind sets in creating PoW camps by the military (Mytum 2011) and the strategies employed to provide effective logistics and security have a wider comparative interest. Problems of site organization, control of access, care of the sick, management of large numbers of fit and in some camps underemployed people, and provisioning and waste management of densely settled yet relatively isolated camps can be observed across time and space. From the Napoleonic camps of Britain (Chap. 5), through the camps of the American Civil war, both successful (Chap. 4) and failing (Chaps. 2 and 3), to both civilian and military for World War II (Chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17), archaeological investigation reveals the ways in which authorities planned and managed camps.

A similar pattern emerges when we examine PoW reactions to time and limited resources, and their ingenuity in the use and creation of material culture. The internees adapted the imposed arrangements and worked within them to create opportunities for resistance, survival, and self-expression. The PoW's coping strategies frequently made heavy use of material items (Chap. 6), and worked to resist in both apparently decorative and more clearly functional items not only in European (Chaps. 7 and 8) but also in Japanese American contexts (Chaps. 14, 15, 16 and 17).

In both understanding the past, and the role of that past in the present and future, archaeology can make a major contribution. It is essential that archaeological researchers of the PoW experience disseminate their work not only within the archaeological community, but also that they reach out to other disciplines across the academy and beyond the heritage professions that manage and interpret this resource. Only then can the potential demonstrated in this volume be placed in its wider interdisciplinary context, and PoW studies generally be enriched by archaeological perspectives.

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