

**‘THE REAL WILD WEST’: THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND  
HISTORY OF THE CASA GRANDE**

by

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## **Abstract**

The Casa Grande is an abandoned ranch located on the Bonaparte Plateau, 50 km northeast of the town of Cache Creek, British Columbia, Canada. Local oral historical accounts state that the property was a brothel throughout the 1930s, serving miners from the Vidette Gold Mine 30 km away. Using archival and oral historical research combined with archaeological excavation, this thesis explores the possibility that a brothel existed at the site. Historical archaeologists have traditionally used a “brothel pattern” of artifact distribution to explore this issue, but the Casa Grande excavation demonstrates that the brothel pattern is not a useful tool when applied to remote rural 20<sup>th</sup> century sites. No archaeological evidence conclusively related to the sex trade was uncovered, and privacy laws seal much of the recent archival record. Local community members seem reluctant to talk about individual memories of the site for the first half of the twentieth century, and thus the nature of the site during the time period in question remains open.

**Keywords:** Historical Archaeology; Brothel Research; Artifact Patterns; Community Memory; Mining; Prostitution; 1930s British Columbia

This work is dedicated to Sandy, the greatest field dog ever. Even though she was so scared of everything she spent most of her time in the truck.

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# Chapter 1: The Casa Grande

The frontier period of British Columbia history is filled with stories and legends of fascinating characters and sites. Many residents of the province regard B.C. as ‘the real Wild West’ in terms of its rich history of outlaws, miners, ranchers and, the quintessential ‘Madam with a heart of gold’ running the local house of ill repute. It is with the latter subject that this research is concerned, or, more specifically, the structure from which the Madam would have operated: the historical brothel.

Research regarding the history and archaeology of rural areas of British Columbia within the period following European contact and especially events taking place following the end of the Gold Rush period in the 1800s is greatly underrepresented. During this time while most areas of North America were suffering the effects of the Great Depression, the interior of British Columbia was thriving due to an increase in gold prices leading to a boost in exploration and development. The research presented in this thesis aims to provide a more detailed glimpse, based in the methods of historical archaeology, into an exciting period in the history of the province. It will also provide an evaluation of a method of site identification used in historical archaeology, as well as explore the role that community and individual memory plays in the recent history of areas such as the site researched here; the so-called ‘Casa Grande.’<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The name Casa Grande was discovered through archival research to have been the actual name of the site, and so will be presented in the format of a proper name for the remainder of this thesis.

The local stories of the Casa Grande remember the location alternately as a hunting lodge, a hotel, or, most commonly, a brothel. Throughout this thesis, a

**Figure 1: Map of British Columbia with site area shown in box (Map Adapted by Author)**



combination of archaeological, interview, and archival data collected throughout the course of this research will be discussed. This evidence will be analyzed in order to develop a more complete understanding of what types of activities were taking place at this site and how closely they resemble those activities ‘remembered’ by members of the

local community. The occupation period of interest for the Casa Grande (the period of time local informants state as being when the brothel was in operation) is concurrent with the depression period in British Columbia; that is, approximately 1929 to 1939. This time-period also closely relates to the operation of a gold mine at Vidette Lake, which is located close to the Casa Grande.

### **The Site**

The Casa Grande is located in British Columbia, Canada, on the Bonaparte Plateau, a portion of the larger Interior Plateau. The Bonaparte Plateau is bounded by the Bonaparte River on the north and west and the Thompson River on the south and east (Figure 1). The entire plateau is criss-crossed by several other small rivers and includes a multitude of alpine lakes of different sizes, the largest of which is Bonaparte Lake. The site of the Casa Grande itself is located on Lillooet Land District Lot 3538, equidistant between Fatox Lake to the northwest and Converse Lake to the southeast. The Deadman River bisects the site itself. Both of these lakes and the river contain trout, and are well known in the local area as bountiful fishing lakes (Jon Collins, personal communication 2009); in fact, Fatox Lake was originally named “Fish Lake” (Ross 1914:1).

The median elevation for most of the Plateau is approximately 1125 metres above sea level, with some topographic change throughout the region, but nothing to any extreme. The relative flatness of the Plateau affects the weather in ways that are not seen in the lower valleys. It is very commonly quite windy, with weather systems moving through quickly and large-scale electrical storms common during the summer months. The elevation of the site also makes for short summer seasons, and therefore, short growing seasons, which make farming and cultivation unlikely reasons for initial

settlement of the region.

Rainfall in the area averages around 250 mm each year, with the primary rainy season being from April to June (National Climate Data and Information Archive 2010). Following winter thaw, in mid May, water levels are high in the area and in several sections of the property the Deadman River overflows its banks. The largest flat portion of the property is rendered useless during this time, as it becomes a marshy wetland for approximately one month (Figure 2). The presence of this marsh also allows for the breeding of large populations of mosquitoes and noseems, which are prevalent on the site until the end of July, when temperatures become too high for them to be able to survive. From the end of July and into the middle of August temperatures on the site range from approximately 5 degrees Celsius during the night to over 30 degrees Celsius by mid afternoon. By the end of August, the temperature drops below zero degrees Celsius during the night and only reaches the mid-teens during the day. Though small amounts of snow may fall during late August and into September, the first cumulative snowfall generally occurs near the end of September. These temperature changes combined with the sand/gravel nature of the soil in all but the annually flooded area makes the growing of crops on the site very difficult. Today a local hay farmer uses the lowland portion of the site to grow hay. Throughout lower areas in the region farmers are able to extract two to three crops per year from a producing hay field, while on this site it is only possible to extract one (Anonymous, personal communication 2009).

The initial survey for Lot 3538 (hereafter referred to as the Casa Grande), was carried out from September to November 1913 by British Columbia Department of Lands





**Figure 2: Casa Grande May 2008 Flooded Lower Field (note structure foundation in foreground, barn in background)**

surveyor Joseph E. Ross. He describes the site as being 160 acres in size and heavily treed with jack pine and poplar in the higher elevation areas, and willows in the lower area adjacent to the Deadman River. A combination of logging activities carried out from the 1960s to the 1990s and a current pine beetle infestation have resulted in the loss of most of the jack pine, but during the 1930s to early 1940s, the trees would still have been present. The survey also records a meadow in the lower portion of the lot, containing “good soil” (Ross 1914:11), however this is the same area that floods every spring, a fact the surveyor would have been unaware of, having been on the site in the fall. Though this allows hay to be grown in the area now, it makes a large portion of the lot unusable for several months of the year. The remainder of the site is made up of sandy soil and gravel, which is what was encountered in all of the areas excavated during the current research. The survey also records the presence of a shed and two cabins on the southern side of the Deadman River. Remains of these are still present on the site, but they were not investigated fully during the course of the current research.

Overall, the environment of the site is generally hostile, and it would be unlikely that it would have been chosen initially as any sort of long-term habitation site without an impetus beyond simple survival, as there are far more fertile plots of land nearby.

### **Site History**

In 1898, prospectors in the Deadman Valley, northwest of Kamloops, discovered ore at Vidette Lake (BC Geological Survey [BCGS] 1985:2). With the discovery of these gold and silver deposits the area began to develop and a road was needed from Tranquille (Kamloops, north of the Thompson River) to the mine. The site of the Casa Grande is located approximately 20 kilometres southeast of the historical Vidette Goldmine, which

was in operation from 1931 to 1940 (Mineral Resources Branch 1986). Local stories say that Joseph Simm, a local businessman and first owner of the property that was to become the Casa Grande (The Government of the Province of British Columbia [BC Gov] 1917) assumed that the road from Kamloops to Vidette would follow an existing trail from Tranquille through Criss Creek to Vidette lake. At this time the area would have been even more isolated than today, in fact by 1921, 42 percent of the population of the province lived in the greater Vancouver area, with another 11 percent in Victoria (Johnston 1996:205). This would indicate that in interior regions, such as this, with little access to goods and services, road construction and the opening of new areas was seen as a great economic opportunity to the business minded individual. Therefore, with this in mind Joseph Simm purchased the Casa Grande property from the Crown with the idea of building a stopping house for the miners, travellers and suppliers on their way to the mine (Bodo Jennen personal communication 2008). Unfortunately for him, when the road was built it took a different route than that anticipated by Simm, so he sold the undeveloped property.

After changing hands several times, the Casa Grande property was eventually purchased by Percy Edward Wilson (BC Gov 1921a). It was Wilson who, sometime between 1921 and 1935, built the structures used for the business: most likely around 1927/28 based on loans taken out on the property (BC Gov 1921a). The structures included a hotel building constructed of log on a concrete foundation, a large cattle barn, a tack cabin and a stable with individual paddocks as well as several smaller structures scattered around the property. The isolation of the site and presence of the large barn would have made it likely that cattle were kept and butchered on site to provide fresh

meat for guests.

A rise in gold prices in the early 1930s (Barman 1996:272) led to full exploration at the mine at Vidette in 1931. In 1934 the mine went into full operation (BCGS 1985:2). It continued heavy operation until 1939, with male mine workers living in bunkhouses at the mine (MRB, DEMR 1986). According to local stories it was Wilson who decided that as a hotel the Casa Grande was not reaching its full level of profitability, so made a slight change in his business plan. This is where the stories diverge. Some locals say that Wilson turned the site into a rural getaway for wealthy Vancouverites to bring their mistresses (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008). Some say he brought in prostitutes and the site began operation as a brothel (Monica Christian, personal communication 2008). Others say that the initial idea was to operate a brothel, but that it did not pan out and so the building was converted to a destination-hunting lodge (Linda Vernon, personal communication 2008). Still others say that it simply operated as a hotel and stopping house, as Joseph Simm had initially intended (Jon Collins, personal communication 2008). The version of the story involving Vancouverites says that after the stock market crash in 1929 the hotel was forced to shut down due to lack of customers (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008). This is unlikely, as it does not appear that the structures were built until 1927/28, and none of the identifiable artifacts date to any time prior to this period, so this theory will not be discussed in any further detail. The other theories are all plausible based on the information available, and so it will be these that are discussed throughout this thesis.

## **The Wild West**

The idea of a romanticised ‘Wild West’ was continually encountered during the process of carrying out this research. This romantic vision of the past was seen not only in interviews with locals, for whom the idea of historical brothel shared no connection with their modern perceptions of prostitution, but also in the historical and archaeological literature related to the topic of brothels. Researchers have tended to treat the subject as somehow separate from modern problems associated with prostitution. While they provide frank discussions of crime, disease, and many other problems related to prostitution, there is still a romanticized undertone of glamour and an idea that these brothel-bound prostitutes were somehow better off than their modern counterparts. They were thought to have lived in better, safer, cleaner and more profitable conditions than modern prostitutes, even those living in brothel situations (Best 1982; Duncan 1989; Ketz et al. 2005; Meyer et al. 2005; Spude 2005; Yamin 1998, 2005). There also persists an idea that these women were somehow more accepted and respected in their communities than modern prostitutes are, but little evidence is provided to back this up (Butler 1985; Costello 2003; Evans 2002; Eversole 2005; Goldman 1981; Murphy 1997). This idea is likely closely related to the presentation of brothels of this time period within western media. Many western films and television shows contain representations of brothels and prostitutes in generally positive and romanticized situations, some even going so far as to creating musicals based on prostitution (e.g. *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*). This highlights the disconnect that exists between the idea of the old west brothel prostitute and the modern streetwalker. To most people these things are in no way related. This romantic ideal is so prevalent that it is difficult for the individuals interviewed for this

study to compare their ideas of modern prostitutes to the women who may have worked at the Casa Grande, as the two are viewed as mutually exclusive.

### **Objectives**

This research was designed to address archaeological, methodological and historical questions. Archaeological investigations were undertaken on the physical site of the Casa Grande, in an effort to determine presence or absence of a brothel during the 1930s, but also to provide data to test existing methodological ideas for the use of patterns of artifact assemblages for the identification of site function in historical archaeology in general. The historical aspect of this research relates to personal interviews that were carried out with local residents and informants regarding ideas of activities taking place at the Casa Grande. The data collected through these interviews was used to help determine not only what activities were actually taking place at the site, but also what role these ideas of the site play in overall ideas of local history among residents of the area today.

In order to understand the archaeological, methodological and historical goals of this project, a specific set of questions were addressed.

The first of these is: was the Casa Grande operating as a brothel during the late 1920s to early 1940s? In order to address this question archaeological, interview, and historical data are utilized. To better understand the site the question can be broken down into three constituent parts.

The first part of this question is: what do the local people think or remember to have been happening at the site known as the Casa Grande during the late 1920s to early 1940s? In order to address this, interview data from local residents with personal or family connections to the site or area and from local historians was collected. This

information ranges from second hand stories of site usage, to more detailed specific memories of site function and layout. Interview data was collected sporadically, when informants were available, from June 2008 (when approval was gained from the SFU ethics board to begin) until the end of September 2009 (when approval from the ethics board expired). Though it was initially expected that interviews would number in the 30s, in actuality it was only possible to collect relevant data from seven individuals.

The second part of this question is: what information do historical documents related to the Casa Grande provide for the time period of interest? In order to address this question it was necessary to research archival data, historical land records, land survey data, newspaper archives, police records, and mining and logging company records. Due to the recent nature of this site, it was not possible to access personal records of any kind, including police, criminal court or census records, which possibly could have provided very relevant information regarding site function.

The third part of this question is focused on the archaeological remains of the site. What does the archaeological assemblage of the Casa Grande indicate about the types of activities taking place during the time period of interest (late 1920s to early 1940s)? As there had never been any archaeological investigations carried out on this site it was necessary to carry out detailed excavations to obtain relevant data. Excavations were carried out in the Summer/Fall of 2008, with further testing in June of 2009 and excavation in October of 2009. A total of over 2800 artifacts were recovered, and analysis of these artifacts was carried out following the completion of excavations.

A second, larger scale question to be addressed through this research is related to the use of patterns of artifact types as a system of site function identification in historical

archaeology. This will focus specifically on the so-called ‘brothel pattern’ present in the archaeological assemblages recovered from recorded brothels (Kennedy 1989; Milne and Crabtree 2001; Seifert 1991). The question is: can artifact patterns (specifically the brothel pattern) be used to determine the presence or absence of a specific site type? The data from the Casa Grande site will be compared to the patterning of data used by other researchers to define the standard brothel pattern, as well as to expected patterns for the other postulated functions of the site (hunting lodge, hotel/stopping house) to determine if it is possible in this case to determine site function based only on artifact patterning.

The third and final of the large questions to be addressed by this project is: what role does oral history play in the commemoration of the past for this community and why does this data seem to favour the illegal activities that may have taken place at the site? This question will also utilize the interview data collected from local residents, and compare it to the archaeological and historical data collected through the other aspects of the project. It was initially expected that through the collection of interview data it would be possible to track down the origins of the brothel story, but, again, due to the lack of availability of first hand information, that became impossible. It is clear that most of the residents questioned, even those with no personal knowledge of the site, believed it to be a brothel. They seemed very keen to create and keep a relationship with frontier history in general, and specifically with ideas of the ‘Wild West’ and the role that their community may have played in it. Specifics of the formal interviews, as well as the less formal conversations carried out with residents, and how they related to ideas of history in the local community will be discussed later on.



On a camping trip to the Vidette lake area in the mid 1990's I was told a story by a family friend about an old burned out building that we came across, and how this building was a part of 'the Real Wild West'. The story goes that this had been a notorious whorehouse, the Casa Grande, patronized by workers from the Vidette Goldmine. It was due to this story, and many told afterwards that this project was carried out. As a member of one of the modern communities located close to this site, the story of the Casa Grande came up at many fireside gatherings. These tended to trend towards "did you know that the Casa Grande used to be a brothel?" but would also lead to debates between older community members and local historians about other possible functions of the site. When the opportunity to carry out research in the area presented itself, it was clear that a collection of local stories and histories could present a useful compilation of information to help develop a clearer understanding of the site than archaeology alone.

The local stories told regarding this site provided the impetus to carry out this research. Not only did these stories provoke my own interest in developing a better understanding of the Casa Grande, but they also offer an insight into ideas of British Columbia history as they exist in rural communities today. It is hoped that through local involvement in this project interest in more work of this type in British Columbia will be generated in order to maintain a connection to the past and provide a method through which to preserve valuable historical and archaeological knowledge of a neglected piece of Canadian history for coming generations.

## Chapter 2: The Literature of Brothels

**“Whoredom has attracted more folklore than fact” (Noel 2004:x)**

Through the second half of the 20th century prostitution in general and brothels in particular in North America have been a relatively popular literary subject (e.g. Butler 1985; Gilfoyle 1992, 1999; Henriques 1963; Hill 1993; Rosen and Davidson 1997; Rosen 1982; Sanger 1972 [1859]). The majority of this research, however, has focused on sites in urban settings. Much of it has been related to the retelling of stories by brothel customers, madams and sex trade workers, with more of a goal of entertaining the reading public than understanding the processes behind the building, operation and employment at or in brothels. In addition, many works have been based on literature produced by and for members of movements aimed at the abolishment of prostitution, and some memoirs of prostitutes are believed to have been written by reformers in a manner similar to the slave narratives that were written by zealous abolitionists before and during the American Civil War (Rosen 1982:xvi). It has only been since the 1980s that historians have taken a less “sensational and salacious” approach to research regarding this subject (Gilfoyle 1999:117).

Early works such as William Sanger’s 1859 study of 2000 prostitutes in New York City approached the subject from the viewpoint of trying to find a solution to what he, and the establishment at the time, saw as a major societal problem (Sanger 1972[1859]). Works written in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> take an

approach more focused on the social and economic aspects of prostitution and its role in society (e.g. Gilfoyle 1992; Butler 1985; Seifert 1991). They look at prostitution and the presence of brothels less as an isolated or marginalized aspect of society and more within the scope of society as a whole. Attitudes toward prostitution act as an important indicator of societal ideas and ideals of the time (Gilfoyle 1999:120). As part of this approach, some more recent historical research regarding brothels and madams has been increasingly broached from a feminist viewpoint in an attempt to relate the stories of the women involved to the larger economic and societal events of the times. This was done in an attempt to demonstrate that many of the women engaged in prostitution actually made a better living than their contemporary counterparts (Hill 1993:100). Ruth Rosen discusses the study of prostitution as a method of understanding:

“...a society’s social structure and cultural values. It can function as a kind of microscopic lens through which we gain a detailed magnification of a society’s organization of class and gender; the power arrangements between men and women; women’s economic and social status; the prevailing sexual ideology; the underlying class relations that govern different groups’ access to political and economic resources; the ways in which female erotic and procreative sexuality are channelled into specific institutional arrangements; and the cross-class alliances and antagonisms between reformers and prostitutes” (Rosen1982:xiv)

Changing perceptions of prostitution through time, which allow insights into the roles and impacts that prostitution had on and within societies, are of great import for this research (e.g. Gilfoyle 1999; Laite 2009). This type of work provides an idea of the

differences in societal perceptions of prostitution, both historically and in modern discussions of the topic matter. These societal biases, whether encountered in historical or archaeological literature, or in interviews with local subjects, afford insights into possible reasons why the history of sites like the Casa Grande are such a draw to local populations, while discussions of modern prostitution are often seen as a distasteful subject.

The relationship between mining and prostitution is also of special relevance to my research, as the Casa Grande is intimately involved with the Vidette Goldmine, and research into this topic has been gaining popularity (e.g. Butler 1985; Duncan 1989; Evans 2002; Gilfoyle 1999; Goldman 1981; Laite 2009; Murphy 1997; Tong 1994). The role of prostitution in the development of mining communities around the world is prevalent, in both historical and modern times. From gold rush communities in the North American West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the corporate mining operations in South America and Africa in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, prostitution has played a very visible role in mining settlements (Laite 1999). Much of this is related to the gender bias present in most mining communities. Mine workers were and are primarily men, and so prostitution would have been and in some cases still is a viable money making opportunity in these situations.

Historical archaeology focused on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century brothel sites in North America has been a rarity. The majority of the work that has been done until now has been carried out on sites historically recorded to have been brothels. They have also mostly been the result of archaeological contract work on sites under development, primarily in large urban centres such as New York City (Crist 2005; Yamin 2005),

Washington, D.C. (O'Brien 2005; Seifert 1991; Seifert and Balicki 2005), St. Paul, Minnesota (Best 1982; Ketz et al. 2005) and Los Angeles, California (Meyer et al. 2005) among others. Work on frontier sites in the West, and in Canada in particular, is lacking, with only a few examples of excavated sites (e.g. Kennedy 1983, 1989; Spude 2005). These also all represent sites at which it was a documented fact that brothels were present at the time period that the excavations were focused on.

Research on prostitution in general is very vulnerable to political uses and so it is important to include not only historical research, but also archaeological information in an attempt to provide a more objective overall view of the topic. This chapter will provide a more in-depth overview of previous work done regarding North American brothels, and how this relates to the research currently under discussion.

### **Classes of Prostitution**

In order to discuss brothels, certain definitions must be made clear.

Throughout this study, the term prostitute is used to refer to any woman who accepts money in return for sexual favours, either within a brothel setting or elsewhere. This differs from those classed as "charity girls" who accepted gifts such as clothing and jewellery, usually only from one suitor, in return for sexual favours (Seifert 1991:87). According to historians and social researchers, there are several different classes of prostitution, primarily delineated by the space in which the transactions between prostitute and client take place. These vary slightly through time, from the lowest class streetwalkers and women carrying out their business in the third tier of theatres through women working out of one-room cribs and the backs of saloons, to the highest class parlour houses run by well respected madams providing guests with all the trappings of

luxury (Goldman 1981:xvii). The specific classes that are most commonly used in the literature were initially laid out in William Sanger's groundbreaking work *The History of Prostitution* first published in 1859. In this work, he describes prostitutes themselves as being divided into three classes: "1<sup>st</sup> those who live in a licensed or "tolerated" brothel. 2<sup>nd</sup> those who live alone in furnished rooms. 3<sup>rd</sup> those who live in rooms which they furnish, and outwardly bear no mark of infamy" (Sanger 1972[1859]:148). These prostitutes often worked out of specific brothels, also divided into types or "grades" by Sanger (1972[1859]:549-565). Though these are commonly used in discussions in historical literature they are useful in archaeological terms as they show that though there would undoubtedly be some similarities there would be a wide range of difference in the material culture expected to be recovered from sites of each grade of brothel.

### **Grades of Brothels**

*The History of Prostitution* sets the standard for terminology used in most research regarding prostitution. Though it provides information on prostitution around the world it was prepared as a report to the Board of Alms-House Governors of the City of New York and was designed to assist the board to strike the first blow "in the Western World at the gigantic vice of Prostitution" (Sanger 1972 [1859]:3). The data for most of the rest of the world comes from sources such as the Christian Bible and Greek mythology. This volume epitomizes the establishment view of prostitution at the time but does not incorporate the opinions of the average citizen, who many historians believe viewed the presence of prostitutes, and in turn brothels, as a necessary vice, especially in frontier towns with low female populations (Duncan 1989:73; Goldman 1981:5). In Victorian urban settings where increasing industrialization was reducing the need for

large families to provide children to the work force, wives and mothers were viewed as somewhat asexual beings as a matter of birth control, and so husbands looked for sexual satisfaction outside of the household (Wall 2005:127). There was also a Victorian attitude that vice was a natural and unavoidable weakness of men and therefore prostitution was a requirement for the maintenance of proper society (Rosen 1982:5). “Prostitution was recognized as a necessary evil: the prostitute’s service saved virtuous wives from excessive demands for sex, as men were not expected to endure fidelity or chastity” (Seifert 2005:1).

Sanger’s data comes from a series of interviews with two thousand active and retired prostitutes in New York City in 1858. He created a standardized interview form and enlisted police in each district to distribute them to women they knew to be or have been involved in prostitution. This therefore represents a very rare contemporary account of the lives of prostitutes at the time, rather than later first and second hand reminiscences as presented by many other historians. His research developed from an interest in understanding the origins of syphilis in the female prison population at Blackwell’s Island, New York, of which he was the resident physician (Sanger 1972[1859]).

As a part of this study Sanger classified several ‘grades’ of brothels which are now generally accepted terms used in any discussions of prostitution in general and brothels in particular (Sanger 1972[1859]:549-565). He discusses brothels in terms of classes, beginning with the first or highest class: those known as “Parlour Houses” (Sanger 1972[1859]:550). The women who lived and worked in these houses rarely left the house except to shop, and when outside the house they would be very careful of their actions so to avoid attracting the attention of police (Sanger 1972[1859]:550). Houses of

this type were generally well furnished, and in New York in 1858 they were commonly home to three to ten prostitutes at a time, each of whom paid weekly board in order to be permitted to carry out their business within the establishment (Sanger 1972[1859]:550). Sanger describes the waiting rooms of these houses as “mostly exhibiting a quantity of magnificent furniture crowded together without taste or judgement for the sake of ostentation” (Sanger 1972[1859]:550). Most of the clients who attended houses of this grade were members of the aristocratic class, and so privacy and confidentiality were an important aspect of the business carried out within. First class brothels did not contain bar rooms as some of the lower class establishments did, but guests were expected to purchase a bottle of champagne to take with them to the room of their chosen consort (Sanger 1972[1859]:551). These houses were often run by madams who had previously been prostitutes themselves. Occasionally they would own the houses and furniture, but often these were owned by an “upstanding member of society” to whom the madam paid rent (Sanger 1972[1859]:551).

The women who made their living in what Sanger classifies as the second class of brothels were often those who were previously members of the first class but downgraded “when their charms began to fade” (Sanger 1972[1859]:557). These women had generally been prostitutes longer than many of those in the first class houses, and had seen their share of rough times. Sanger’s study revealed that venereal diseases, including syphilis, were relatively common in women of this class and in many instances this was the reason for their decline to second-class houses (Sanger 1972[1859]:558). The inhabitants of these houses were not as focused on appearance and manners as their first class counterparts, nor were they as careful with their conduct outside of the brothel.



These houses still did not contain a bar room, but instead of customers being forced to purchase champagne, wine and cheaper types of brandy would be available (Sanger 1972[1859]:557). Women working in these houses also may have wandered to the street if business was slow in attempts to attract customers that were passing by, something that a woman of a first class brothel would never do (Sanger 1972[1859]:550).

Sanger's third class of brothels is perhaps the least applicable outside of New York, aside from Chinese brothels sometimes present in western frontier towns. This class is made up of brothels run by, and largely patronized by, foreign-born individuals. The women living and working in these houses were often young and attractive to rival those of the first class houses, but were recent immigrants, and often had poor English skills (1972[1859]:559). The reception areas of brothels of this grade were bar rooms with direct access from the street. These houses were more or less "public places of prostitution" (Sanger 1972[1859]:559) and if an unaware citizen were to wander in off the street they would likely be unable to distinguish it from any other ethnic drinking parlour save for the crimson and white curtains on the windows. Most houses of this class were run by a man and his wife, rather than a madam as was common in the other grades of brothel (Sanger 1972[1859]:561). Alcohol consumed in these types of brothels was more related to the ethnicity of those running them and did not generally include champagne or wine but more often beer.

The fourth in Sanger's classes of brothels is made up of those houses that he discusses as the very lowest and filthiest on the spectrum. The majority of the women working in them were diseased and had poor personal hygiene. The house itself was usually dirty as well (Sanger 1972[1859]:564). It was common in these houses for the

women to work there but reside elsewhere and pay the proprietor or madam a rate per customer they entertained (Sanger 1972[1859]:565). Fourth-class houses were, in most cases, kept by mature prostitutes who did not have the means or opportunity to run higher-class houses. The prostitutes working in these brothels are described as “the refuse of the other classes who have fallen through the successive graduations on account of disease and drunkenness, or they are some of those children of iniquity who, born in scenes of vice and squalid misery, know nothing of a virtuous or happy course of life” (1972[1859]:564). Houses of this grade were generally in low-cost structures such as cellars and basements of tenement buildings. They generally had a small bar open to the public, which carried only the cheapest liquor. The men who patronized houses of this class were generally also of the lowest classes: petty thieves and drunkards who were often themselves diseased (Sanger 1972[1859]:565).

The fourth class represents the lowest class of brothel in Sanger’s study, but not the lowest class of prostitute. Below this are the women without houses, or what most people today would think of as streetwalkers. At the time that Sanger carried out his study the women in this position were those that were in the worst situations; they were often diseased, alcoholics, drug addicts and generally in a poor state (Sanger 1972[1859]:565). In his discussion of women of this group, Sanger says that they “can scarcely be called prostitutes, for their aspect is so disgustingly hideous that all feminine characteristics are blotted out, and thoroughly sensual and animalized must be he who could accept their favors” (1972[1859]:565). As these women were transient, it is unlikely that they left any evidence of their activities in the archaeological record.

Within these grades of brothels the individual classes are not clearly defined but

exist on a spectrum “characterized by the youth, beauty, and talents of its prostitutes; services offered; and ambiance” (Seifert 2005:1). In modern Western media the type of site classified under this scheme as a parlour house would most closely resemble what the general public thinks of when presented with the term brothel (Yamin 2005:8), while those of the third grade most closely resemble the frontier idea of brothels as presented in ‘Wild West’ movies and television shows. For the purpose of this study the term brothel is used to refer to a structure run by an individual (usually a ‘madam’) “where men went to purchase sexual favors from women” (Spude 2005:90) and prostitutes were permanent residents in the structure, that is, living and conducting business in the same place (Seifert and Balicki 2005:60). This differentiates a brothel from a crib where a woman would pay for the use of a small room containing a bed and a table for business purposes but reside elsewhere (Meyer et al. 2005:109). In this way all classes of brothel can be included, allowing for comparisons of material culture remains between higher-class parlour house-style brothels and lower class brothels operated in places such as low cost tenements and house cellars. Archaeologically these site-types present variations in artifacts expected and/or recovered, primarily in terms of the quality of materials rather than specific types of artifacts.

### **Historical Research on Brothels**

Where archaeological research of brothels primarily focuses on single sites, historical research related to brothels in North America covers a broad range of scales from biographies of individuals through to large-scale surveys and comparisons at the level of cities, regions and countries. Some studies focus on individual life stories or stories of individual brothels and their occupants (e.g. Evans 2002; Eversole 2005; Rosen

and Davidson 1997) while others approach the subject in terms of city-wide studies (e.g. Best 1982; Gilfoyle 1992; Goldman 1981; Hill 1993; Murphy 1997; Tong 1994). Beyond this there are several volumes that provide more general regional or even national and international surveys for specific time periods (e.g. Butler 1985; Henriques 1963; Rosen 1982; Sanger 1972 [1859]). By far, the majority of the historical and archaeological literature relating to prostitution in general and brothels in particular, relates to 19th century New York City (Bonasera and Raymer 2001; Cantwell 2001; Crist 2005; Gilfoyle 1992; Hill 1993; Milne and Crabtree 2001; Rosen and Davidson 1997; Sanger 1972[1859]; Yamin 1998, 2005).

For the purpose of this research, it is most valuable to focus on literature based on rural and frontier brothels, as it will provide the best data for comparison to the Casa Grande. For that reason, I will focus on research related to sites of this type.

There is a great deal of historical literature related to the practice of prostitution in North America over the last 150 years (Best 1982; Butler 1985; Evans 2002; Gilfoyle 1992, 1999; Goldman 1981; Henriques 1963; Hill 1993; Murphy 1997; Rosen 1992; Sanger 1972[1859]; Tandberg 1999; Tong 1994). Though much of this is fascinating literature, little of it is of direct use for this study. Some works, such as Gilfoyle's 1992 book *City of Eros* provide overviews of locations of known red-light districts in New York City during the 19th century. Several other works also provide information, primarily based on census records, on the dates, locations and numbers of prostitutes present at brothels throughout several urban locations, including Butte, Montana (Murphy 1997), St. Paul, Minnesota (Best 1982), San Francisco, California (Tong 1994), and New Orleans, Louisiana (Tandberg1999). Work of this type can be of use to archaeologists as

they can indicate locations for possible future excavations, or help in the identification of already excavated sites. Most other historical literature related to brothels tends to focus on individual histories of women, towns, or structures, with little emphasis on material culture beyond brief mentions of clothing types and household furnishings (e.g. Best 1982; Butler 1985; Evans 2002; Gilfoyle 1999; Goldman 1981; Murphy 1997; Rosen and Davidson 1997; Rosen 1982; Tandberg 1999; Tong 1994).

In terms of historical literature related to brothels in Canada, very little exists beyond brief mentions in works focused on broader historical subjects. There is one volume regarding the operation of a brothel in the city of Victoria in the early 1900s (Eversole 2005), but this is more a compilation of stories collected from the famous madam who ran the site than a reference work. Beyond this, prostitution is mentioned rarely. In his work on the history of British Columbia, *West beyond the West*, Jean Barman mentions that in the interior of British Columbia, especially in gold rush areas such as Barkerville, it was often local indigenous women who acted as prostitutes (1996:93). She also states that brothels were a common occurrence in interior towns such as Merritt and Revelstoke and that rather than becoming a reform issue like prohibition they were often “shushed up” and ignored by local police (Barman 1996:225).

In his autobiography of life as a doctor in the Yukon Territories, Allan Duncan discusses acting as house doctor for several brothels in the red light district in Dawson City, which at the time was referred to as “Lousetown” (1989:59). He states that the prevalence of prostitution in this area was due to the three to one ratio of men to women, and that even though prostitution was illegal at the time, it was ignored by the police so long as it was carried out with discretion (Duncan 1989:73). He provides actual figures,

and states that in 1936 there were approximately 26 women employed in three known brothels in Dawson City. At this time, Duncan was employed by both the madams and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to examine the women regularly to restrict the spread of venereal disease in the area. He was to provide certificates to clean women, so they could reassure any concerned clientele, and to blacklist any diseased women to ensure they would not be employed in any of the brothels (Duncan 1989:74). This work is interesting as it dates to the same general time period as the Casa Grande, but is lacking in specific detail regarding the brothels themselves and the material that existed therein.

In general, the historical literature related to brothels and prostitution in North America was written in order to support the societal opinions of prostitution at the time. For older works, such as Sanger's 1859 study, the goal of the work was to provide an impetus for the abolition of prostitution. More recent works aim to either provide entertaining parables or enhance the idea of the "madam with the heart of gold" (Best 1982; Evans 2002; Murphy 1997) or, conversely, to provide dark and detailed accounts of lives of vice and disease (Gilfoyle 1992; Goldman 1981; Tong 1994). Many more current works also focus on the role of and opinion towards women in general at the time period of interest, and how the actions of prostitutes and brothel patrons influenced these views (Butler 1985; Hill 1993; Rosen and Davidson 1997; Rosen 1982).

### **Archaeological Research on Brothels**

The published literature relating to archaeological research on brothels is quite limited. What research has been carried out has primarily been done as part of contract archaeological projects for developments in large cities. In terms of frontier brothels, work has been carried out in Alberta, Canada (Kennedy 1983, 1989) and a few small sites

in the western United States (Simmons 1982, 1989; Spude 2005). Primarily, these sites are located in densely populated, generally lower class, urban neighbourhoods, and date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup>. The frontier sites, though more closely related environmentally and in terms of populations, all date to an earlier time period than that of the Casa Grande. These sites relate more closely though as they are primarily connected to the development of mining camps and towns, just as the Casa Grande is thought to relate to the opening of the Vidette goldmine. This all being said, the most important difference between all of the previously mentioned sites and that of the Casa Grande is that the sites that have been archaeologically investigated and published as being brothels were mostly known to have been brothels through documentary records prior to excavations taking place. Records of this type are not available for the Casa Grande.

As with the historical research, the archaeological research regarding brothels is highly biased towards New York City, primarily the Five Points District (Bonasera and Raymer 2001; Crist 2005; Milne and Crabtree 2001; Yamin 1998, 2005). This is related to the over-population of the area in the late 1800s and the prevalence of recorded accounts; primarily census and police or court records, which show conclusively the presence of several brothels in the area. This information, when combined with extensive levels of contract archaeology being carried out due to the development and redevelopment of all available real estate, allows for easier identification of sites. These sites provide useful baseline data as they were recorded to be brothels prior to excavations, so the assemblages they provide are representative of a brothel, but only really representative in a context similar to the one encountered, that is, an urban 19<sup>th</sup> century context. They should however provide basic information on the types of objects,

if not the specific styles, that might be expected in a brothel deposit in general.

Literature related to archaeological excavations carried out in frontier areas of western North American, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the mid 20<sup>th</sup>, is the most valuable for comparisons to my current research. More specifically, excavations based on sites associated with mines and mining. Alexy Simmons' work in the western United States is a good example of this. She examines the role of prostitution in mining communities and the types of prostitution that should be associated with stages of community development in rapidly expanding areas. She then uses this data to develop a set of models of what archaeological assemblages from certain types of brothels should look like (Simmons 1989). Her work focuses on archaeological and historical records of Jacksonville Oregon, Silver City Idaho, and Virginia City Nevada. Her model states, "the frontier community ... is considered a dynamic composition of economic, demographic, social, and political elements. The interaction of these factors affects the settlement pattern, material culture, and lifeway of prostitutes; and ... should be documentable historically and archaeologically within a mining community" (Simmons 1989:42). She bases many of her assumptions on the presence of prostitutes in these cities on census records, and this can be tricky as it is very rare that "prostitute" is recorded as occupation. Simmons uses the listing of women as head of household as an identifier of a brothel when no other records exist, which is a bit presumptuous. Another identifier that is used by Simmons and others to identify brothels is the listing of 'female boarding house' in census records and city maps (Simmons 1989; Seifert 1991). I find this somewhat problematic as it makes an assumption that is impossible to prove or disprove without more evidence.



It is Simmons' model of archaeological patterning that is of most interest for this project. She discusses a basic version of her model initially in a 1981 article, where she talks about the role of prostitutes in mining communities as being part of the service economy (Simmons 1981:107). Of importance to the development of her model, and to comparisons made between assemblages in urban and rural settings is her idea that there was a vast contrast between the urban prostitute and those present in frontier communities. This is based on the lack of women present in these situations in general, "on the mining frontier prostitutes were welcome companions. They brought a civilizing influence and provided entertainment that was in high demand" (Simmons 1981: 107). It is not until her 1989 work that Simmons lays out the details of the expected patterns of artifact types that should be present in brothel assemblages. She states, "the material culture of prostitutes varied according to their economic status" (Simmons 1989:10). This status was based on a set of variables including the behaviour of the woman in public; whether she was flagrant or clandestine; the level of subtlety involved in the extraction of payment; whether the woman possessed attributes beyond sex (charm and intellect); overall volume of customers; and the level of wealth of their customers (Simmons 1989:23). She believes that prostitutes leave an identifiable archaeological signature in frontier mining communities. Simmons breaks mining towns into types, and discusses the forms of prostitution that should be apparent with each. As the Casa Grande is not associated with a town but with an individual mine, it would most closely resemble what Simmons defines as a 'corporate town', that is, a town where the mines are controlled and owned by companies who also supply a stable labour force (Simmons 1989:48). Most often these labourers were not residents of the local area, but were brought in from other,

likely exhausted, corporate mining facilities. This influx of male workers created a steady demand for women.

### **The Brothel Pattern**

Since the 1980s several researchers have discussed what has come to be called 'the brothel pattern' (Costello 2003; Kennedy 1983, 1989; Seifert 1991; Simmons 1981, 1989). This is a set of artifact types and styles that they believe to be representative of a brothel deposit. As few identified brothels had been excavated at the time of Simmons' writing, she bases these models on historical data recovered from known late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century brothel sites in mining towns in the American West.

Simmons' models for expected types of material culture are separated by type of brothel. She expects that in high class brothels and parlour houses archaeologists would encounter an abundance of female personal items such as perfume bottles and cosmetic containers, medical and health materials, and birth control devices. Also included would be footwear, clothing, jewellery, opium bottles, condom tins, expensive alcohols, pocket tools and accessories such as purses and pen knives, brass checks (a sort of token for a set period of time with a prostitute, they were commonly used up until the end of the Second World War), alcohol glasses and bottles, board and card games and musical instruments (Simmons 1989:63). There would be evidence for domestic items and decorative furnishings, and house wares and appliances, as houses of this type usually had kitchen facilities. Structurally, houses of this type were commonly one and a half storey or two storey buildings with one or more parlours on the main floor and individual bedrooms upstairs (Simmons 1989:63).

In a mid status brothel the pattern will differ slightly. There was less likely to be a

kitchen in the structure itself, so there would be few to no kitchen related artifacts. The furnishings would be of lower quality and there would be fewer decorative items. In mid status brothels in cities it was more common for the women to reside in lodgings separate from the brothel, and so there would be a much lower frequency of personal items. There should be grooming items and birth control devices, but not much more (Simmons 1989:65).

Low status brothels should have a very low frequency of personal items, as well as an overall reduction of quality in all recovered items (Simmons 1989:65). There should be a prevalence of alcohol related materials, and any items related to men should be things like fasteners, pocket tools, cigar fragments and hip flasks; things that would be easily lost in a brief sexual encounter (Simmons 1989:65).

These models of artifact assemblages are useful, but untested. They do not closely relate to the Casa Grande because of the isolated nature of the site. Regardless of the class of brothel this may have been, it would be necessary for it to have kitchen facilities, and it would be unlikely that any women employed there lived off-site, as it would have been a trip of several hours in any direction to get anywhere other than the mine site itself during the 1930s. As an aside to this, Simmons also states “identification of prostitutes in hotels would be difficult or impossible in the archaeological record” (1989:66). This is interesting as there is a possibility that this is what was happening at the Casa Grande; prostitutes were operating within the arena of a legitimate hotel.

It is with Margaret Kennedy’s report on excavations in the Crowsnest Pass area of Alberta that the ‘brothel pattern’ is fleshed out a little more. It is based on excavations of a known brothel site, so provides physical evidence of archaeological assemblages from

brothels. These excavations were carried out as a part of a larger Archaeological Survey of Alberta project related to a highway realignment in the Crowsnest Pass. Investigations were carried out in the area known as “Hill 60”, on a site called the “Red Brick House”, in the historic red light district of Blairmore, Alberta (Kennedy 1983:56). Later, she added to this assemblage by investigating two further brothel sites in Lethbridge and Drumheller, Alberta as well, though these were not fully excavated (Kennedy 1989:93). All three of these sites date to the early 1900s (approximately 1910 to the late 1920s) and were associated with coal mining communities (Kennedy 1983:69). In all of these cases the brothels were located in segregated areas of town, or “red light districts” which isolated them from the general population. Architecturally the brothels represent the residences of corporate groups; “they were large, multi-roomed or composite structures that were distinctly different from other residential dwellings in the community” (Kennedy 1989:99). Assemblages from these sites were dominated by alcohol related items, including liquor and beer bottles as well as glasses for service (Kennedy 1989:95). There were also a high number of female related artifacts in comparison to non-brothel sites, and lighting glass including burnt out light bulbs (as a result of the high levels of nocturnal activities) (Kennedy 1989:96). In addition, due to the isolation from the town proper that existed in these sites there was an abundance of canned foods and storable goods such as condensed milk. In cases where there is a possibility of multi-ethnic prostitutes being present, it would be likely to uncover ethnically identifiable artifacts related to their presence (Kennedy 1989:99).

The work of Simmons and Kennedy represents the only discussions I found of the assemblage types for brothels in rural frontier areas of Western North America. This

pattern is discussed elsewhere, but in relation to brothels in urban areas. Donna Seifert discusses it in relation to Washington, D.C. She uses a comparison of artifacts recovered from a working class household and an identified brothel to show the similarities and differences that might be expected. She discusses brothels as a unique type of household populated by a group of women who lived and worked together but were most commonly not genetically related (Seifert 1991:83). She states that brothels contain high frequencies of lighting glass, clothing and personal items, higher quality food items such as more expensive cuts of meat and higher percentages of imported foods (Seifert 1991:104). This is somewhat similar to Kennedy's model except in relation to food items. Where the sites Kennedy discussed were isolated and so had low quality foods, Seifert's site is within an urban setting, and in a high-class establishment.

In a 2003 article, Julia Costello discusses the assemblage recovered from a high-class parlour house in Los Angeles. In this collection two-thirds of the tablewares recovered were high quality porcelains, the food remains were made up of moderately priced cuts of beef and mutton as well as a large variety of fish and shellfish remains (Costello 2003:186). In contrast to the high quality of tablewares and food remains, Costello also uncovered many bottles which would have contained cures for venereal disease, birth control, and syringes and other medicine bottles (Costello 2003:187).

There are other authors who discuss what types of artifacts should typify brothel assemblages, such as infant/foetal remains in privy deposits (Crist 2005), or remains of glass female urinals (Yamin 2005), but overall the pattern as thought to be representative is made up of high levels of female related items, alcohol and medicinal items, and food refuse. If not for the documented fact that these sites were brothels before excavations

began, it could be very difficult to differentiate any site type based on these identifying factors. In fact, in 2005 Donna Seifert stated, in contrast to her earlier works, “brothels are hard to definitively identify from their material culture alone, as there is no single artifact signature for a brothel” (Seifert 2005:2).

## Chapter 3: The History of the Casa Grande

**“Many a wannabe historian and tour guide, if short of local color and confronted by an antique hotel, saloon, or even a house turned to commercial uses, will brand it an old whorehouse, a carelessly used term that tends to stick” (Noel 2004:x).**

This research was initially carried out as a response to local interest and stories regarding the Casa Grande. It seemed that everyone in the local area had some idea about the sordid history of the structures. With this in mind, it was deemed necessary to carry out interviews with local residents and historians in order to better understand the local perceptions of the site and of the regional history in general to create an image of the Casa Grande to allow for the evaluation of the possible theories of its use with recovered archaeological and archival data.

### **Interview Research**

In order to carry out interviews with human subjects it was first necessary to gain permission from the Simon Fraser University Ethics Board. Once permission was obtained in June of 2008 a system of recruitment was undertaken. This included word of mouth among local people, advertisements in busy places such as post offices, banks, bars, restaurants, and museums in the villages of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Savona, as well as the *Skeetchestn* community centre/school on the *Skeetchestn* First Nations Reserve, which is the closest reserve to the Casa Grande. Advertisements were also placed in local newspapers and newsletters. Initial interest levels were high, but as it turned out the majority of people who responded were more interested to hear what I had

found out about the site than to provide any detailed information. There were four people who answered the ads just to say, “ya, it was a warehouse” in response to the question “what have you heard/do you think the Casa Grande was?” Beyond this they had no information, and when asked “where did you hear this?” they would generally answer “I dunno, people just say it was”. This created some serious limitations in terms of information available. I had hoped that I would be able to collect up to 30 appropriate interviews, in actuality only seven of the interviews provided useful data regarding the site. The lack of response in itself is useful data however, as it demonstrates a reluctance among relevant parties to share personal information, which contradicts with the common desire of other local residents to hear stories regarding this aspect of local history. It seems as though the people most interested in the history of this site are those without any personal physical connection to it.

These seven interviews were carried out from the Spring of 2008 until the Fall of 2009. All but two of these were carried out in person. Of the remaining two, one was over the phone, and the second was through a series of emails. The in-person interviews began with the standardized interview form, and moved into a more informal chat-type stage. The interviewees included an elderly member of the community (84 years old at the time of interview), two separate local historians/collectors, two residents who had hunted and fished in the area as children, a local hay farmer who harvests hay on the Casa Grande property, and the granddaughter of the first man to purchase the property after it was used as a hotel. It was this woman, Linda Vernon, who provided the most valuable first hand information regarding site layout as she had spent most of her summers there during her early years, helping her grandfather bring in the hay and tend the cattle. Each of them



provided baseline information on whether they had heard of the site, what they had heard, and from what source. They were also asked when they thought it was in operation, whether or not they had personally visited the site (in the past or more recently), whether they knew of anyone who might have had personal experience with the site, and if they knew of anyone else who might have more information regarding the site. Interview subjects were given the option of providing their names or remaining anonymous.

Overall, the interviews provided interesting insights into the things that people tend to remember, if not actual detailed information regarding the Casa Grande. The theory that the site was a brothel is the most prevalent, and is the common thread in all conversations regarding the site, whether formal or informal. Even the property manager for Weyerhaeuser Canada, from whom I obtained permission to excavate, had visited the site and heard that “it was a brothel” and so gave permission because he “wanted to know more about it” (Charles Smith, Personal Communication 2008). As well, two local employees of the BC Forestry Service both said they had heard the Casa Grande was a brothel. The interesting thing is that no one seems to know where he or she heard this. It seems to be an aspect of a larger social memory, where most of the community shares a memory that they cannot provide an origin for. “Social groups construct their own images of the world by establishing an agreed version of the past, and to emphasize that these versions are established by communication, not by private remembrance” (Fentress and Wickham 1992:x). It is through this memory of the Casa Grande that the current members of the community create their own ideal of the history of the area. They perceive the presence of a brothel nearby as a positive historical occurrence, linking them to a romantic notion of the past that is in no way related to their perceptions of modern

prostitution.

Throughout the course of this aspect of the research, several problems were encountered. The largest of these was the lack of valid interview subjects. After initial advertisement, interest was very high. Over 30 interview forms were handed out to people willing to provide information but not having the time to sit down in person, or to people who knew people they thought were interested and so were going to pass the forms on. Of these, none were returned and no further efforts to contact the people were successful. Of the four names that were given to me by other informants as people I should speak to, none returned my calls or emails. One problem with the initial recruitment phase was a mistake made by a local newspaper editor when placing the advertisement, where instead of Fatox Lake she wrote the name of another lake that is well known by the locals but is very far from the Casa Grande and so people responded to say they had “heard of the Casa Grande but it was by Fatox Lake”. A correction was printed in the following issue but was placed at the back in a small column amongst advertisements for local businesses (Ashcroft Journal [AJ], 30 September 2008). There were also problems related to privacy, health, and age as I was told by many residents that they knew of people who had patronized the Casa Grande but were now in their 80s and not willing to talk about it. Whether or not this is actually true or was just a method of supporting the idea of the brothel cannot be determined.

### **Archival Research**

In combination with the interview and archaeological data recovered, archival information regarding the Casa Grande was also sought. This information was obtained through local archives, newspaper archives, provincial, mining and land title records, as

well as land survey data. Throughout the course of 2008 and 2009 these avenues of information were explored. This began with searches government and local archives in Victoria, Kamloops, Ashcroft and Savona, BC.

The primary difficulty with researching the Casa Grande was the near total lack of information related to the site itself. Beyond the survey and land title records, there was very little information available regarding the operation of the business. This made it necessary to try to extract as much information as possible by researching the people involved. This was also difficult due to the recent date of the occupation and the limits this puts on access to information. No police or census records were available, and it is possible that these could have provided conclusive data regarding activities taking place at the Casa Grande during the 1930s. Under a bill passed by the Canadian Senate in 2005, census data are not available until 92 years have passed from the time the information was collected (Senate of Canada 2005). Court transcripts for this time period are not restricted, but it is standard routine for records to be destroyed after 15 years. Even if by chance records are not destroyed, without knowing specific case numbers it would mean hundreds of hours of searching through notes and indexes for mentions of the site or people involved, as these records are not digitally indexed. It does seem that the archival data available supports the interview data that the operation of the Casa Grande was intimately linked with the existence of the Vidette Mine. Unfortunately the records that are available provide no information that would allow conclusive identification of the function of the site. In order to better address the question of what sort of business was operating out of the Casa Grande, the archaeological materials must also be considered.

## **The History of the Casa Grande**

My own relationship with the Casa Grande dates back to the mid 1990s, to a time when my family was on holiday in the area and my uncle took us all up to see the remains of the site. Following a harrowing drive along a steep and treacherous logging road, the truck finally came to a stop. We hiked through the sparse jack pine and poplar trees; “logging...time was you couldn’t see ten feet through this forest it was so thick” (Chris Berkey, personal communication 1995). We crested a small rise and were presented with a stunning view: a wide-open plateau with several large log buildings: a stable, barn, and cabin. The Deadman River snaked across the flat land, and on the other side of the river, a concrete foundation was just visible on the hillside. “That” he said, pointing at the crumbling, decaying concrete, “that...was the Casa Grande”.

The Casa Grande, all you need to do is mention the name, and the debate starts: “it was a brothel, you know, for the miners” (Monica Christian, personal communication 2008); “no, that’s just a story, it was only ever a hotel” (Jon Collins, personal communication 2008). “Hotel? Well, sort of. It’s where those wealthy Vancouverites brought their mistresses to hide away...until the market crash of course, then it shut down” (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008); “you guys are all wrong, they were going to make a brothel for the miners but there weren’t enough of them, so they made it a hunting lodge” (Linda Vernon, personal communication 2009).

The story of the Casa Grande begins long before the hotel structure existed. In fact, it could be said that its history begins with the first discoveries of gold in British Columbia, as the story of the Casa Grande, in almost all its iterations, is inextricably linked to that of the Vidette Goldmine. “They even called it the Casa Grande to create images of Spanish Gold” (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008). By the late

1800s the lure of gold was well rooted within the psyche of the people of Western North America. Following on the rushes of San Francisco and Barkerville, and with gold fever still raging in the Klondike, everyone was searching for the next big strike. It was not only the discovery of gold that could lead to riches however, it was often the entrepreneurs outside of the mines who gained the most from discoveries; the shopkeepers, the hoteliers, the barmen, and in most mining towns, the Madam. It was this search for wealth that lead prospectors to Vidette Lake, in the Deadman Valley, and in 1898, they discovered large subsurface deposits of gold and silver (BC Geological Survey [BCGS] 1985). This discovery led to increased exploration in the area. The deposits seemed to be quite substantial, so it was expected that a vast amount of development would take place in the area. The problem with the deposits at Vidette was that a large amount of the ore was located underneath the lake, so in order to extract it there would be very high initial costs, so development stalled (BCGS 1985). Exploration continued in the area and the mine worked toward viability.

In 1917 Joseph Simm legally purchased the land that would become the Casa Grande from the Crown for 160 dollars (Government of the Province of British Columbia [BC GOV] 1917). He believed at the time that the mine was nearing full development, and that the location of Lot 3538 would be directly along what he expected to be the primary route from Tranquille (Kamloops) to Vidette Lake (Ray Cretien, personal communication 2008). His intention was to construct a stopping house so miners and others en route to Vidette could rest for the night. The road he envisioned was never completed however, and the current road up the Deadman Valley was constructed instead. His intentions may also have been tied to the introduction of prohibition in

British Columbia. In 1917 the government of British Columbia chose to outlaw all alcoholic beverages (Hiebert 1969:73). With the location of the lot as isolated as it was, it provided the perfect hideaway for the illegal service of alcohol (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008). It also provided the opportunity for wealthy out-of-towners to bring their mistresses along for an adventure (Chris Berkey, personal communication 2008). There is no evidence that Simm constructed any large structures on the site, but he did likely utilize the existing cabins, and possibly construct two more, which are now present only as collapsed remnants. His tenure as landowner ended in 1921, when he sold the property to Gilbert Bagley (BC GOV 1921a). This timing coincides with the end of prohibition in British Columbia (Hiebert 1969:133), so it is possible that with the mine still not operating Simm saw his only potential income dry up. Why would anyone travel the distance to his property when they could easily acquire liquor much closer to home?

Whatever motivated Gilbert Bagley to purchase the lot cannot be determined, as he was only owner for 22 days. As quickly as the deed was in his hands he passed it on to Percy Edward Wilson (BC GOV 1921b). Regardless of Joseph Simm's activities on the site, it is Percy Wilson who is widely credited as being the mind behind the Casa Grande. A total of 4800 dollars worth of loans was taken out against the property between 1926 and 1934, including a 1600-dollar Canada Farm Loan (BC GOV 1921b). This makes it likely that it was during this period that the majority of the construction on the site took place. The Farm Loan indicates that regardless of whatever else was happening at the site, at some point it was also home to a legitimate farming operation. The stock market crash of 1929 likely affected the finances of Percy Wilson, along with anyone else involved in the Casa Grande. If it was the intention of the site to act as a hideaway for

wealthy guests, the market crash put an end to that. A side effect of the market crash however, was a massive rise in gold prices, as most investors shifted their money from equity markets into hard asset investments. The price of gold would continue to rise throughout the Great Depression. This increase in prices finally made extraction of the deposits at Vidette Lake financially viable; in 1931 it began development and was in full production by 1933; it remained in operation until 1939 (BCGS 1985).

Percy Edward Wilson is an ephemeral character in the history of British Columbia. His existence is proved through very few stories and documents. Aside from his obvious involvement with the purchase and operation of the Casa Grande, he only appears occasionally in the available records of the Province. In October of 1936, during the likely operational period of the Casa Grande, a mercy flight from Kamloops had to fly in and land on Fish (now Fatox) Lake to pick up Percy Wilson's daughter, Mrs. F.T. Gately, who was visiting from California. The plane took her to the Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops as she was near death as a result of gangrene. She was brought to the plane from the Wilson Ranch, "the old Fred Dexheimer homestead" (Kamloops Sentinel, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1936). The Wilson Ranch was located on lot 3679, adjacent to lot 3538, the location of the Casa Grande (BC GOV 1921c). It appears Wilson and at least some members of his family were in residence near to the hotel, but not on-site. Fred Dexheimer exists in the archives only as a brief mention in the records of the Kamloops Provincial Home (a provincially funded care home for elderly men). He resided there from January 16<sup>th</sup> 1948 until his death on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1954, at the age of 85 (British Columbia Provincial Archives [BC P A] 1954a, 1954b).

In 1946 and then in 1947 Percy Wilson was involved in a case at the Ashcroft

Civil Court as plaintiff against trustees for the estate of Robert Fraser (BC P A 1946, 1947). This is two years after he had sold all of his property in the Casa Grande area, so it is unlikely to be related to the hotel. No information regarding Robert Fraser or his estate was available. Other information regarding Percy Wilson comes from the self-published autobiography of local resident Dave Stewart. When discussing the location of Fish (now Fatox) Lake he states “it was located above the Vidette Mine, northwest of Savona, fairly close to Percy Wilson’s Casa Grande Ranch” (Stewart1996:29). This clearly shows that whether or not Wilson was present on the site of the Casa Grande, local residents were aware of his involvement with it.

With the opening of the Vidette Goldmine in 1931 an influx of workers arrived in the area, prompting the establishment of venues for them to spend their off hours. This is when the Casa Grande fully enters the community memory. “Heard it was a brothel when there were mines running up Deadman Creek, when there were no more mines, I heard it closed, from what I heard it was used by the workers at the mines” “I think it was built in the 1930 time” (Monica Christian, personal communication 2008). “When my Dad used to take me up Fatox Lake to cut ice in the ‘60s we’d stay over in the old Casa Grande...it was abandoned then. He’d tell me stories about how in the ‘30s the miners used to go up there for a good time, he said it was a brothel, but also a bar, I heard that around ’42 they sold their liquor license to the old Savona Hotel. It was just a ranch after that, ‘till the ranch shut down. Then it was empty, ‘till ’66, when the hippies burned it down” (Bodo Jennen, personal communication 2008). The date of 1942 makes sense for sale of the liquor license, as it was in 1944 that Percy Wilson sold the property to Olive Sleeth (BC GOV 1944), whose husband, a veterinarian from Vancouver, operated it as a cattle ranch



until the late 1950s (Linda Vernon, personal communication 2008). Title officially passed to Trevelyn Sleeth (Olive's husband) in 1951 (BC GOV 1951). By the time Olive Sleeth purchased the property Percy Wilson had managed to repay all of the loans and liens taken against the property, except for the Canada Farm Loan. Whatever activities were taking place on the site, they appear to have been profitable.

In 1936 the manager of the Casa Grande, James Alexander McAdam, legally applied for a liquor license. "Notice is hereby given that on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1937, the undersigned intends to apply to the liquor control board for a license in respect of premises known as the Casa Grande Hotel situated on Lot 3538, Group 1 in the Lillooet District in the Province of British Columbia, in the Kamloops Land Registration District, for the sale of beer by the glass or bottle for consumption on the premises or elsewhere (article in the private collection of Rob Bobrowich, Savona BC). With the final opening of the mine in 1931, and possible construction of the site taking place much earlier than this, it is possible that the Casa Grande was serving alcohol illegally and was at some point raided and/or fined, and then had to apply for a legal license. McAdam exists within the historical record only as a brief mention in a civil court case in Ashcroft from 1914, well before any possible involvement with the Casa Grande (BC P A 1914).

The property was under the ownership of Trevelyn Sleeth until 1968, but had not been operating as a ranch for some period before that, as the site was not legally occupied when it burned in 1966 (Linda Vernon, personal communication 2009). The land of the Casa Grande was purchased by a timber company in 1968, and has since been shuffled from one logging company to another; it is currently owned by Weyerhaeuser (BC GOV 1968a, 1968b, 1969, 1980a, 1980b, 1989, 2000).

From 1933 until 1939, when the Vidette Goldmine was under heavy operation, Vi Stayner and her sister operated a laundry at the camp where the mineworkers lived. In 1994 she drew a map of “The Vidette I knew” (Stayner 1994). This map shows the general layout of the area. Though it does not show a large enough area to include the Casa Grande property, one road is labelled as “road to Percey [sic] Wilsons 10 miles”. There is also a small square drawn at the south end of Vidette Lake that is labelled “House of Ill Repute”. “Ya, that was the old cabin at the end of little Vidette, it was there when my Dad bought the property in the ‘70s, but he moved it across the road, it was only one or two rooms, and it was falling apart, we burned it down about five years ago” (Jon Collins, personal communication 2009). The road from the mine site to the south end of Vidette Lake was not a road at this time, but a carved trail, as indicated on Mrs. Stayner’s map. “Vidette Mine was an easy horse ride away from this small cabin, the miners would say ‘we’re going to the whore house’. There’s no real evidence it’s true, though there was a big game guide in residence, card playing, and alcohol. The miners worked 12 – 14 hours a day and a rare day off would be met with great glee” (Ray Cretien, personal communication 2010). The presence of this small cabin does not negate the possibility that the Casa Grande was also a brothel, though if both were in operation at the same time it would be likely that they represented two different classes of brothels (see Chapter 2). This information could also indicate a confusion of local memory however, in that residents knew there was a brothel nearby, and assumed it was the large hotel structure rather than a small cabin. In all likelihood there were several brothels in operation at any one time throughout the region, and it is possible that the Casa Grande is used as a generic representation of these as it remains both on the landscape and as a

named entity in community memory.

Different opinions do still exist however. “It was only ever a legitimate hotel. My Dad and his Dad used to go up there fishing and hunting up at Fatox Lake, before the War (meaning World War II). They would sometimes get stuck out too late to make it down, so they’d go stay at Percy Wilson’s place, the Casa Grande. Dad said those were all just rumours, it was only ever a hotel” (Jon Collins, personal communication 2008). Jon Collins’ father, Jon Collins’ Senior, would have been under 18 at the time he is discussing, as he was 18 when the Second World War began (Jon Collins, personal communication 2008). There is the possibility that he was concerned with giving his family the wrong impression, even if the Casa Grande were merely a drinking establishment at the time.

There is also the theory that the Casa Grande was intended to be a brothel, but because of the constant delays with the opening of the Vidette Mine, and with the numbers of workers on site when the mine did open being smaller than expected, Percy Wilson changed tactics and turned the site into a destination hunting lodge (Linda Vernon personal communication 2008). “I have no way of knowing if what I was told is true or just rumour but will share what I was told” (Linda Vernon personal communication 2008). She believes this undated photo shows evidence of use of the site as a hunting lodge (Figure 3). The photo shows the front (south facing) entrance of the hotel, with what appear to be the antlers and several other parts of a moose hanging from the porch railings along with various other hides and animals. However, the car parked beneath the deck appears to be either a 1945 or ’46 Chevrolet Fleetline (Wyatt McMurray personal communication 2010) or a 1946 to 1950 Hillman Minx (Dennis Peters personal

communication 2010), either would indicate that the photo was taken some time after 1945, which puts it beyond the time that Percy Wilson was operating the Casa Grande. It is difficult to identify the car however, as what appears to be a large animal hide is blocking the view of the rear of the car, which is a diagnostic feature for cars of this era. It could range in date from the 1930s through to the early 1950s.

Based strictly on the available archival and personal information, any of these theories could be taken to be the truth. No concrete evidence is available to prove or disprove any of them. It is possible that as more archival evidence becomes available in the future there will be some conclusive document that states the exact role of the Casa Grande, but as of now, it is necessary to turn to the archaeological evidence to attempt to add more to this story.

**Figure 3: Undated Photo of the Casa Grande with multiple animal carcasses hanging from the railing (Photo courtesy of L. Vernon)**



## **Chapter 4: The Archaeology of the Casa Grande**

### **Archaeological Research**

In order to understand the activities taking place at the site of the Casa Grande archaeological materials related to the period of interest were required. As no previous archaeological research had been done on this site, excavations were planned and implemented in order to collect materials for analysis.

### **Field Methods**

Initial examination was carried out to record surviving surface architecture on the site. As can be seen in Figure 4, several structures are still present on the landscape. The Deadman River runs across the plain in the eastern portion of the photo. To the west of the river are the remains of the primary structure, the Casa Grande; present now only as a burned out foundation (Figure 4, number 1). There is also a privy structure still present on the landscape, but not visible in this photo due to tree cover. It is a small (1.5m by 1.5m) structure located approximately 15 metres west of the main foundation. Northeast of this, down-slope from the main structure and on the bank of the Deadman River is a small log structure (approx. 3m by 2m) that appears to have acted as a pump house (Figure 4, number 2). This structure was likely built at a different (probably more recent) time than the others, as the corners of the structure are joined using dovetail joints, while all other surviving structures use notched joints for the corners. Southwest of the pump house is another log structure (Figure 4, number 3). The function of this is difficult to determine as the roof has collapsed and exploration of it was unsafe. There is a large crane-type metal

arm projecting from the roof area, so it is possible that the structure was used to store and move large bales of hay in more recent history. Also on the west side of the river is another small log structure. This entire structure has collapsed and the roof has fallen flat in on itself, so no information could be obtained (Figure 4, number 4). It is possible that this is the cabin referred to by Linda Vernon as being the oldest on the site, likely one of the original three observed as being present by Joseph Ross during his original survey (see Chapter 3) (Ross 1914). East of the river are the remains of three structures. The first also has a collapsed roof, but the single door and the absence of windows indicate it may have been a chicken coop or possibly a tack cabin (Figure 4, number 5). The next structure dominates the landscape. It is a large barn (13m by 9.5m), and is still structurally sound (Figure 4, number 6). The structure to the east of that is a stable with individual paddocks (10.5m by 8.5m) (Figure 4, number 7). The roof of this structure has collapsed, but it is still possible to enter. The individual paddocks appear strongly built and quite large. The distance from the stable, barn and chicken coop would allow for relative quiet and would prevent any offensive odours from reaching the Casa Grande structure. Modern prevailing winds come from the northwest, moving the smells away from the Casa Grande. Remains of a bridge were also located along the banks of the river on the lower plain between numbers 4 and 5.

Following the recording of existing architecture, a systematic ground surface survey was performed over a large portion of the site area (Figure 5). This was done in order to determine if any cultural materials (both historic and pre-historic) were evident on the ground surface throughout the site area. Materials sought included worked lithic materials, debitage scatters, fire altered rock, bone, ceramics, glass, metal materials, as

well as any structural remains and refuse dumps. Also recorded was evidence for trail segments and wagon roads. Both sides of the river were surveyed in detail where vegetation permitted, but the presence of large jack pine and willow trees in narrow areas near the river made several areas inaccessible. No surface evidence for cultural materials from any period were recovered outside of what has been designated the primary site area (Figure 5), and within the primary site area only historical (1900s) materials were recovered. This survey served to identify three main areas of interest: Area 1, in and around the remains of the foundation of the primary structure (the hotel); Area 2, the historical midden area to the northeast of the primary structure around the crest and slope of a steep bank which descends toward the Deadman River; and Area 3, an extant privy structure located on a gentle slope to the west of the primary structure foundation.

Following surface survey a system of shovel tests were carried out throughout the three primary areas of interest within the site. This was done in order to establish the extent, nature and integrity of any subsurface cultural deposits. Results of these tests were used to determine areas for more in-depth excavation. Tests were laid out using a combination systematic/judgemental sampling system. All recovered matrices were screened through ¼" (6mm) mesh for recovery of all cultural materials. Throughout Area 1 a series of 12, 40cm by 40cm shovel tests were excavated. These were laid out at two metre intervals running west to east along the north wall of the structure foundation. They were slightly scattered north to south for maximum coverage, and one was excavated within the remains of the foundation on a mound of soil that appeared to have been deposited following the structure fire. They were all excavated to sterile soil, which in this site consists of a densely packed, gravel filled sandy soil, generally 25-35 cm below

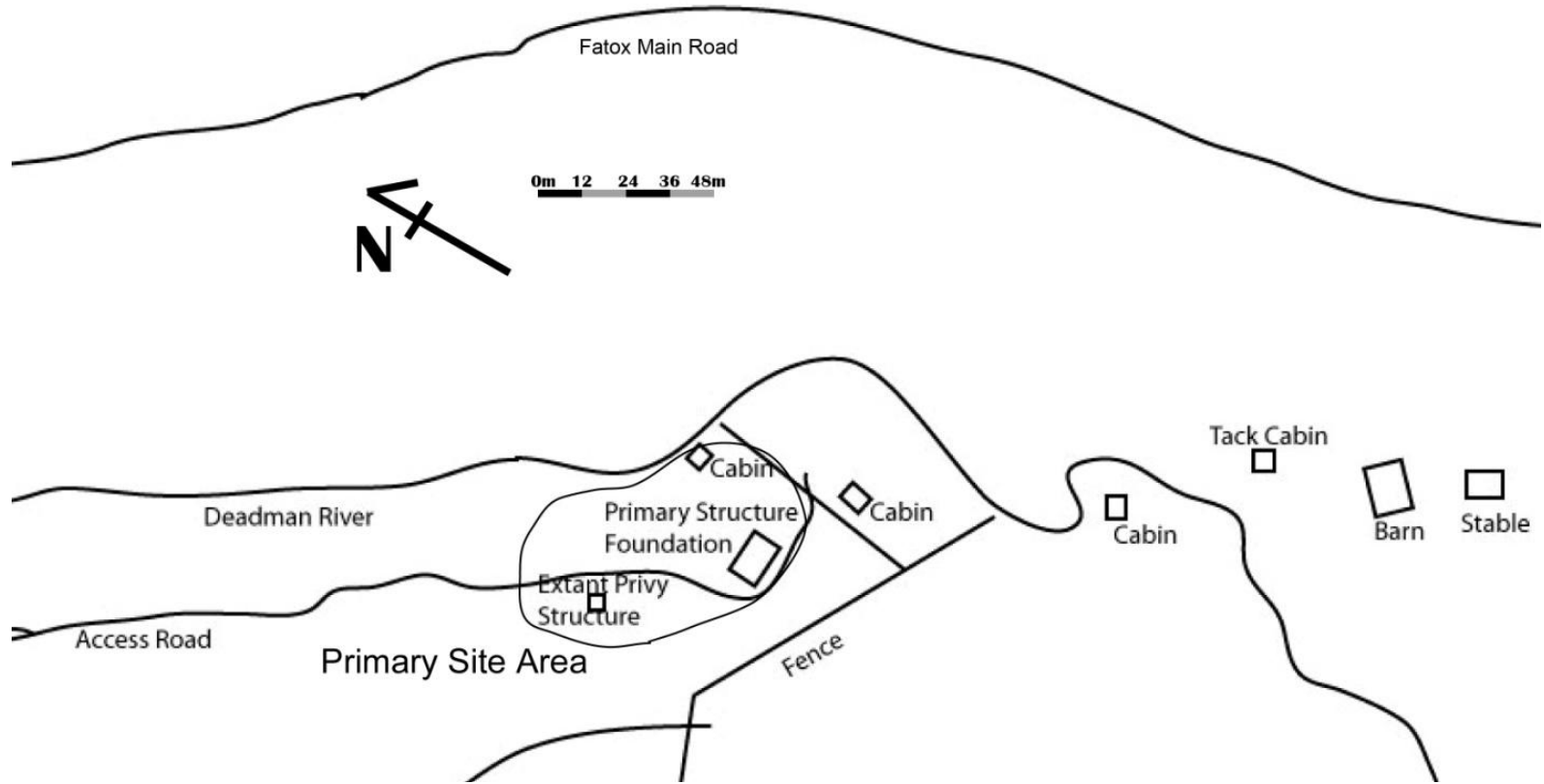
surface. Of these tests only one of the 12 was negative, the others all contained historical materials. Most of these materials showed fire damage and were determined to contain refuse from the burning of the primary structure. In Area 2 a series of 20 shovel tests were dug. These were initially laid out at five metre intervals running from west to east beginning five metres northeast of the midden datum (Figure 6). The grid is not complete however, due to the slope of the area and the presence of large trees. The line designated as Midden Shovel Tests A (MSTA) was primarily judgementally laid out based on ground cover and presence of surface artifacts; the line designated as Midden Shovel Tests B (MSTB) maintains the five metre west to east grid. The line designated as Midden Shovel Tests C (MSTC) runs roughly south to north between the base of the slope and the west bank of the Deadman River. This line maintains five metre intervals between tests. The base soils were the same as in Area 1, with the exception of the C line along the bank of the river. In this area the soil was far more organic and showed evidence of periodic flooding from the river. Of the 20 total tests in Area 2, 14 were positive. These contained a range of historic period artifacts. Again, there was no evidence of any prehistoric materials. The orientation of positive to negative tests was used to determine the approximate boundaries of the historic midden deposit. Nineteen shovel tests were dug in Area 3. These were laid out on a five metre grid, running south to north beginning 10 metres west of the extant privy structure. These were again excavated to the dense gravel packed base soil. There were no cultural materials recovered from any of the tests in this area.



**Figure 4: Aerial Photograph of Casa Grande property with remaining structures indicated by numbers 1-7 (photo courtesy of D. Peters)**

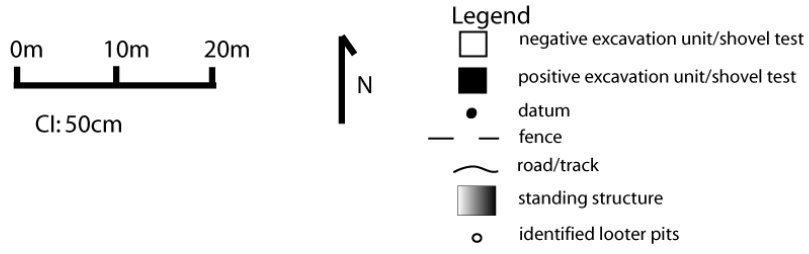
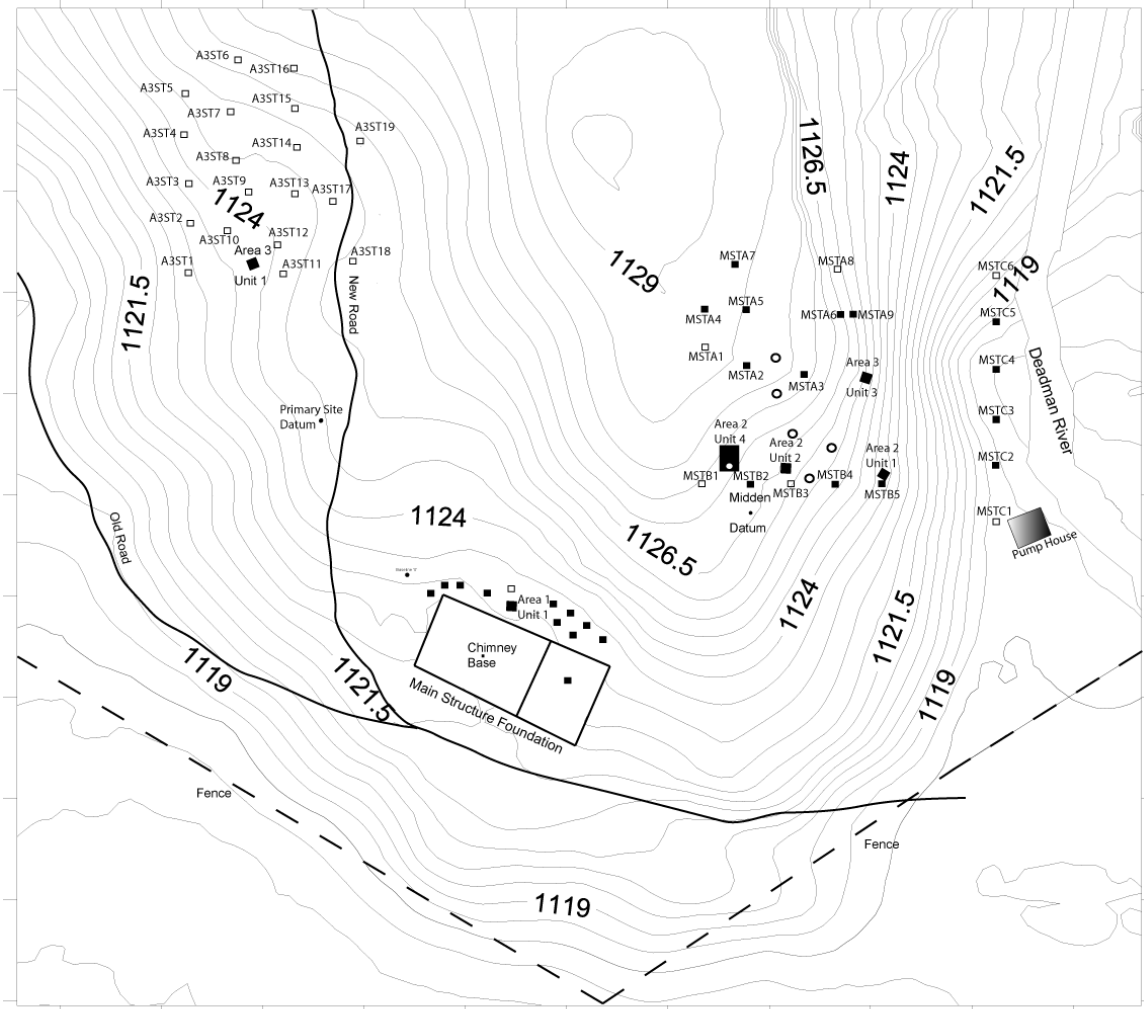


Figure 5: Map of Survey Area showing Primary Site Area



**Figure 6: Site Map**

'CASA GRANDE' LILLOOET LAND DISTRICT LOT 3538  
 2008/09 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS  
 PERMIT NO. 2008-0224



Based on the results of the shovel tests, five 1x1 metre units were laid out for in-depth excavation. One of these was in Area 1 (designated Area 1 unit 1), directly adjacent to the north wall of the structure, three were located throughout the midden area (designated as Area 2 units 1-3) and after movement of the extant privy structure a 1 by 1 metre area was excavated into the privy deposit (designated as Area 3 unit 1) (Figure 6). Excavations were carried out using trowels and brushes, all materials were screened through ¼" (6mm) steel mesh and all cultural materials were collected. Excavation of the extant privy determined it to be related to a later occupation of the site than that of primary interest for this project. Information from a local resident closely associated with the site indicated that the privy associated with the period of interest had been located within the extent of the midden deposit, near the crest of the slope to the north of the primary foundation. In June of 2009 secondary testing was carried out and the location of this privy was determined. In September of 2009 a 2.5 by 2 metre unit was laid out running north/south with the unit datum (southwest unit corner) located 2.9 metres north of the midden datum (Figure 6). This was designated as Area 2 Unit 4. The size of the unit was determined by a rectangular depression in the soil. Within this a 1 by 1 metre unit was laid out in the northeast corner of the larger unit (designated Area 2 unit 4-1) and a 1.5 by .5 metre unit was laid out in the southwest corner (designated Area 2 unit 4-2) for more focussed excavation.

All recovered artifacts from shovel tests and excavation units were bagged and labelled by area, unit and level. For units demonstrating stratigraphic change, unit wall profiles were drawn. This included mapping of the extent of strata and descriptions of soil

(colour, texture, compaction, clast content, and carbon/ash content). A stratum was defined as a visible change in colour, texture, and makeup of soil.

## **Excavation Results**

### **Area 1 Unit 1**

Area 1 is the area of the site focussed around the remains of the foundation of the primary building.

Area 1, Unit 1 was located against the north wall of the structure foundation. This was excavated in a series of 10cm levels from surface to sterile soil at a depth of 115cm below datum. This unit proved to be much deeper than most others, because a large portion of it was made up of fire debris from the burning of the structure. Artifacts recovered from this unit included fire damaged nails and other metal objects, broken and melted glass, a complete metal bucket, one complete small glass bottle, and small faunal remains that are more recent, likely representing members of the local gopher population. Fire damaged brick, some of which came from the Clayburn brick factory in Abbotsford, BC, were present on the surface, and indicate where the chimney from the building had collapsed during the fire. Though deposition appears uniform when viewing the stratigraphic profile, there was a large amount of turbation throughout the centre of the unit because of gopher activity. A series of tunnels were located within the bounds of the unit. Due to this disturbance and the presence of large amounts of fire damaged materials it is difficult to provide any interpretations of site-use based on the information recovered in this unit.

## **Area 2**

The portion of the site designated as Area 2 is located within the boundaries of the historic midden deposit, on top of the hill to the northeast of the primary structure foundation. Four units were excavated throughout this area.

### **Area 2 Unit 1**

This unit was located east-northeast of the main structure foundation, at the base of a large tree stump midway down the slope to the Deadman River. The presence of the tree allowed for the collection of materials that otherwise would have rolled down slope and been washed away with the flooding of the river. Due to this collection process, Area 2 Unit 1 had a higher concentration of artifacts than any of the other units on the site. Six hundred and fourteen artifacts in total were collected, not including 132 metal cans that were recorded and discarded in the field. Collected materials included food and tobacco tins, glass jar and bottle fragments, several complete bottles, fragments of leather, buttons, ceramics and faunal remains (deer, cow, bird). The unit was 1 metre by 1 metre square and excavated to a depth of 20cm below surface, where sterile soil was encountered. Contrary to other units, this was excavated in 5cm spits, rather than 10cm, due to the density of artifacts. As the deposit was almost entirely made up of artifacts, no soil profile was drawn. Due to the down slope movement of materials and collection at the base of the stump, as well as the overall density of artifacts present in this unit, artifacts from several periods were intermixed, making determination of approximate depositional dates impossible.

## **Area 2 Unit 2**

Area 2 Unit 2 was located on the apex of the hill to the north of the primary structure foundation. This was also a 1 metre by 1 metre square unit, and was excavated to a depth of 40cm below surface. This unit was thought to be located within the older portion of the midden deposits, as indicated by shovel testing. However, once excavation began it was clear that this unit was beyond the boundary of any deposit. The northern corner of the unit was somewhat softer, being made up of a silty loam, but the remainder of the unit was dense gravel. Only 13 artifacts were recovered from this unit, and the majority of these (n=8) were broken bottle glass. The remaining artifacts were two cow metatarsals, and three fragments of fire damaged cell batteries.

## **Area 2 Unit 3**

Area 2 Unit 3 was located on the steeply sloping bank above the Deadman River, to the northeast of the primary structure foundation, to the north of Area 2 Unit 1. Shovel testing in this area had indicated dense concentrations of artifacts caught up in the root systems of several closely placed trees. 218 artifacts were recovered from this unit, and 49 metal tins were recorded and discarded in the field. Artifacts included glass, metal, ceramic and faunal materials. The unit was excavated to sterile soil at a depth of 40cm below surface.

## **Area 2 Unit 4**

Area 2 Unit 4 was excavated after it was determined that Area 3 Unit 1 represented a more modern privy than the period of interest for the site. After contacting informant Linda Vernon and carrying out further shovel testing it was determined that an older privy had been present on the hilltop behind (to the north of) the primary structure.

This unit was excavated in the Fall of 2009. It was initially laid out to encompass a depression in the soil 2.5 metres by 2 metres square. This area was excavated to a depth of 50cm below unit datum. At this point, it was determined that the area of the unit was too large to be completely investigated in the time available. Artifacts were concentrated in the northeast corner of the unit and along the southwest wall. With this in mind, new units were laid out within the boundary of Area 2 Unit 4. Area 2 Unit 4-1 was a 1 metre by 1 metre unit in the northeast corner and Area 2 Unit 4-2 was a .5 metre by 1.5 metre trench along the southwest wall.

A pit feature was also present within the Area 2 Unit 4 boundary, along the south wall of the unit. This was 78.5cm in diameter going into the south wall, and was excavated separately to a depth of 60 cm below unit datum. The soil within this pit was much softer and filled with ash along with other evidence of burning. The only artifacts present within this feature were three non-diagnostic food tins. This may indicate that the feature represents a looter pit; dug since the site was abandoned by someone looking for complete bottles. Pits of this type and of a size similar to this were present throughout the midden area.

#### **Area 2 Unit 4-1**

Area 2 Unit 4-1 is the 1 metre by 1 metre square unit located in the northeast corner of Area 2 Unit 4. This unit begins at the base of Area 2 Unit 4 Level 2 (50cm below unit datum) and was excavated to a depth of 110 cm below unit datum. Sediment was very soft and was olive yellow in colour. A large rock was present in the north wall of the unit, likely demarcating the original wall boundary of the privy hole. It is possible that the deposit in this unit was deeper than 110cm below unit datum, but time and weather constraints made it impossible to excavate fully. Artifacts recovered from this



unit included several (n=47) fire damaged nails of differing sizes, a metal cylinder manufactured by the Burgess company of Canada to contain black powder, fragments of a ceramic saucer, a teapot and a figurine, as well as fragments of clear and brown bottle/jar glass, and window glass. Ten fragments of non-human burned bone were also recovered. This unit contained a complete painted ceramic figurine of a seated horse/giraffe creature with “Made in Japan” painted on the bottom (Figure 7). The presence of a complete figure like this in a privy deposit indicates it was either thrown in on purpose, or dropped by accident by someone who had taken it in with him or her. Identification of the figure as to time of manufacture was not possible, however the presence of the “Made in Japan” mark on the base indicates it was imported to Canada prior to 1941 or post World War 2, as trade between Canada and Japan was highly limited during the War (Meehan 2004)

**Figure 7: Ceramic Figurine recovered from Area 2 Unit 4-1**



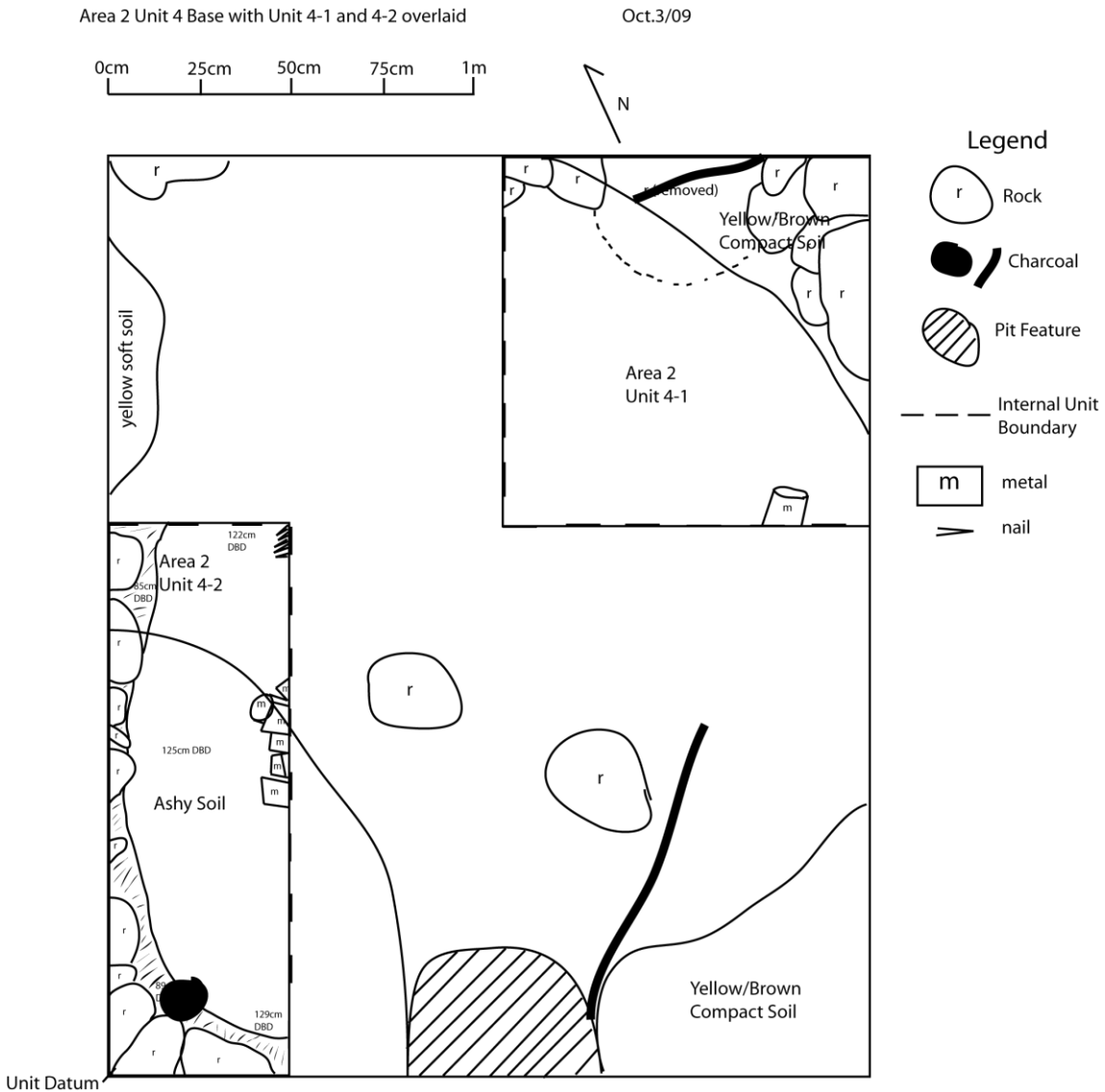
This unit appears to have been a part of the original privy, but was possibly filled in with fire debris following the burning of the main structure.

#### **Area 2 Unit 4-2**

Area 2 Unit 4-2 is a .5 by 1.5 metre trench located along the west wall of Area 2 Unit 4. This unit began at the base of Area 2 Unit 4 Level 2 at a depth of 50cm below unit datum and was excavated to a depth of 130cm below unit datum. It contained a high level of fire damaged remains and ash deposits. This included 207 fire damaged nails and 11 fragments of melted window glass. These, along with the presence of fire-damaged ceramics indicate that this unit was in-filled with debris following the structure fire. The presence of a dense layer of hard packed soil may indicate the base of the original privy excavation. Large rocks present along the west wall of the unit may also demarcate the original excavation boundaries for the privy hole.

The top-down view of Area 2 Unit 4 with the top down views of the bases of Units 4-1 and 4-2 overlaid (Figure 8) indicate the approximate boundary of the original privy excavation with the presence of large rocks around the original walls.

**Figure 8: Area 2 Units 4, 4-1, 4-2**



### Area 3 Unit 1

Area 3 Unit 1 is located to the west of the main structure. A standing privy structure was present at this location when excavations began. Working on the assumption that this was the privy related to the occupation of interest, the structure was reinforced and then tipped over to allow access to the deposit beneath. A 1 by 1 metre unit was laid out to encompass the deposit. This was excavated to a depth of 150cm

below surface. Of the 281 artifacts recovered from this unit, 218 of them were faunal remains. These were made up of skull, spine, tarsal/carpal and metatarsal/metacarpal bones from two deer and a juvenile cow. The unit also contained artifacts deep in the deposit (100 cm below surface) that date to post-1974 (a plastic toilet paper wrapper with the label written in both English and French). It was in 1974 that the Canadian Government passed the Official Labelling Act, making it law that all goods in Canada be labelled in both official languages (Government of Canada 1974). Twenty centimetres below this the deposit became very hard packed and full of pea-gravel. Excavation continued through this highly compact stratum for a further 30cm, and at this point excavation ceased on this unit. The presence of modern (post-1974) materials in deeper parts of this unit, along with the cow and deer remains, indicate that this privy was excavated for a later, more transient occupation of the site, likely when it was used by local hunters as a base camp in the years following the structure fire. The fact that the cow was juvenile and that the deer antlers had been cut to a size so the skulls could fit through the outhouse seat hole may indicate that these remains were deposited by poachers following the on-site butchering of the animals.

Following excavation of this unit it was determined that it is highly unlikely that any of the artifacts recovered from within are relevant to the current study. While they were all processed and recorded, they will not be included in the overall analysis of site function for the period of the 1930s.

Once excavation of all units and shovel tests was completed, analysis of artifacts began.

## **Analysis Methods**

Analysis of all recovered materials began on-site with initial sorting of tin can remains by size and shape. A large number of general food storage cans were recovered. In the case of any of these that showed no remaining distinguishing features (labels, stamped words or numbers), they were recorded by size and shape and reburied when units were backfilled. The remainder of the artifacts were washed and sorted by material type. These types include botanical, ceramic, faunal, glass, leather, metal, plastic, rubber, shell, and unknown. As materials will be stored in the collections of the Ashcroft Museum and Archives, their system of numbering was used. Each item was given a specific designation number using the format of year (009) donor number (1) artifact number (1) (e.g. 009.1.1).

## **Glass Artifacts**

Glass artifacts were sorted by colour (clear, brown/amber, green, blue, white) and type (window glass, bottle/jar glass, glass tablewares and lighting glass). There were a number of complete bottles present, several with maker marks and brand labels (Heinz, French's, Mason etc). A large percentage of the glass materials recovered were non-diagnostic fragments of bottle/jar glass, and so these were only catalogued by colour and type (when possible), and no further analysis was carried out. For vessels whose shape/label/maker's mark were identifiable a series of resources including product catalogues and online reference collections were used to attempt to determine production dates and vessel identifications.

## **Ceramic Artifacts**

Ceramic artifacts were sorted by paste type (earthenware, stoneware, refined stoneware, porcelain), vessel type (when determinable), glaze/decoration (when present) and estimated purchase cost (low, low/mid, mid, mid/high or high). Purchase cost estimates were based on quality of vessel (paste, glaze etc.) and, when possible, actual catalogue cost. No complete ceramic vessels were recovered, however one complete ceramic figurine of a seated horse was found in the 1 by 1m excavation unit designated as Area 2 Unit 4-1 (Figure 7, above). Vessel fragments were refitted when possible. For vessels including distinctive shapes, decorations or maker's marks, attempts were made to determine production dates.

## **Metal Artifacts**

Analysis of metal artifacts began with separating nails out from all other metal artifacts. Due to the destruction by fire of the primary building and the subsequent dumping of the fire debris in and around the midden deposit a large number (n=664) of nails of varying sizes were recovered. These were sorted by general size: large (8.6cm long and greater), medium (3.1-8.5cm long), small (0-3cm long). All of the nails associated with the fire debris were of the same type, a wire cut nail with a machine made head. Aside from these, 57 finishing nails and two horseshoe nails represent the only other nail types present in the assemblage.

In terms of tin can remains, as mentioned before, many were recorded and left on site. Those that were retained were examples showing labels or distinguishing features of some sort, or were unique in terms of shape and/or size. These were sorted by shape, size and when possible, label. They were primarily food cans, including tinned fish, meat,

soups and vegetables. Also analysed with the tin remains were “keys” from corned beef-style cans. These were present throughout the midden deposits (n=13).

Remaining metal artifacts were sorted by type. These included bottle caps (n=55) some of which retained remnants of labels. Also included were other fasteners, including screws, upholstery pins, and staples. Beyond these broad categories the remainder of the metal artifacts were represented by only one or two examples, and so were catalogued under the category “miscellaneous metal”.

### **Plastic Artifacts**

A small number of artifacts made of plastic were recovered (n=22). These all represented unique examples and so were catalogued by item type.

### **Leather Artifacts**

Several pieces of leather were recovered during the course of investigations. These included shoe and belt remnants as well as portions of other leather items. These were recorded by size, thickness, shape, and any presence of composite materials (such as buckles and/or rivets).

### **Faunal Analysis**

All fragments were counted and recorded, and in cases where enough identifiable features were retained to allow species identification that also was recorded. When species identification was not possible, remains were catalogued as “unidentified”. No apparent human remains were recovered.

### **Discussion**

The primary difficulty encountered during fieldwork was caused by the topographic nature of the site. With the trash midden used throughout the occupation

being located on a steep bank above a periodically inundated river there was little to no stratigraphic change within excavation units. There were very few areas where materials built up in any quantity, only at the bases of large trees. It was expected that materials would have accumulated at the base of the hill, but due to the flooding of the river, all materials from this area were washed away, as was revealed through a system of shovel testing along the base of the hill. This made it nearly impossible to determine which recovered materials dated to which occupation, barring the presence of any identifiable marks or production techniques on artifacts. For this reason, all the artifacts had to be included in all analyses, and this undoubtedly changes the profile of the site and makes identification of site function for a set period difficult. It is possible only to generalize about the overall occupation, rather than specifically focus on one ten year period. There had also been a large amount of cattle activity on the site from the 1940s onward causing problems with trampling and spreading of archaeological materials. This resulted in highly fragmentary artifacts and in some cases with fragments of the same objects being located in very different areas of the site. As well, the site had been looted throughout its history, as was discovered when several looter pits were located through survey and shovel testing (see Figure 6). This explained why there were so few intact objects recovered from the surface of the site.

Another key problem encountered was the excavation of the extant privy. This had been assumed to be the privy used during the operation of the Casa Grande, but this assumption was incorrect. After excavation it was determined, based on the shallow nature of the deposit, the presence of post-1974 artifacts and large amounts of immature cow and deer bones, that this privy was likely used by campers or poachers on the site



long after it ceased any sort of commercial operation. Once this was determined, informant Linda Vernon was questioned again. She revealed that when her grandfather owned the property the privy was located to the north of the hotel structure, on the hilltop above the midden, and that it was a “two-seater” (Linda Vernon, Personal Communication 2009), unlike the single seat outhouse that was moved to allow excavation of the privy deposit on the west side of the site. With this information the area she indicated was tested again and the privy deposit was identified. This led to further excavations of this deposit in the fall of 2009, which revealed some artifacts that appeared to be related to the time period of interest, but also a large amount of fire debris. This indicated that following the fire which destroyed the structure in 1966 the privy was in-filled with the debris in order to clear the site.

In terms of artifacts recovered, there was a very large volume of fragmentary items. This is likely related to the fact that the site has been a popular location for looting since the 1960s, as well as movement of cattle on the site. In the area around the occupation privy there were indentations and mounds that appeared to be the results of looter pits. Some of these were excavated during shovel testing and none contained any artifacts, fragmentary or otherwise. Some complete articles were recovered during excavations, and some of these were helpful in determining dates of manufacture, however, as stated above, because of the nature of the deposits, having one dateable artifact in a context in no way indicates that the other items around it are of a similar date. The overwhelming number of fragmentary artifacts made vessel count calculations nearly impossible. Because of this MNI/MNV counts were not calculated, and unless otherwise

stated, all following discussions relate to raw artifact counts; where possible items were cross-mended, but in the majority of cases this was not possible.

## Chapter 5: Artifact Analysis and Comparisons

As previously discussed, artifacts recovered during archaeological investigations were processed and recorded using the methods described in Chapter 4. Throughout excavations 2867 artifacts were recovered and catalogued. This includes tin can remains that were measured and counted in the field and reburied during backfilling (n=311). Artifacts were initially categorized by material; totals of artifacts by material are presented in the table below (Table 1). Number refers to raw counts; no MNI/MNV numbers were calculated due to the highly fragmentary nature of the artifacts.

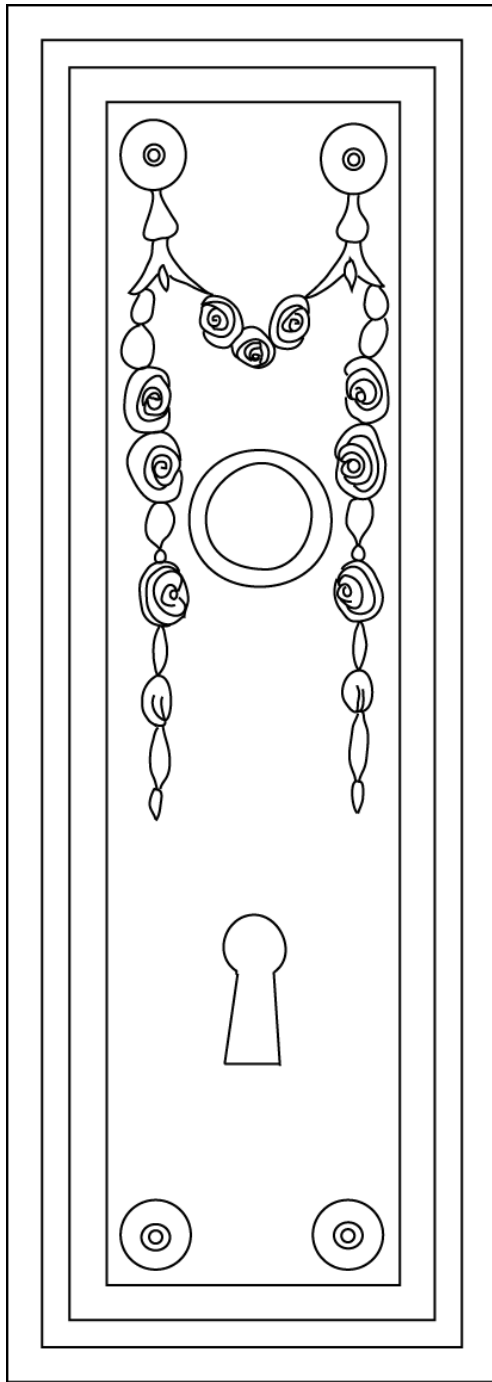
**Table 1: Artifacts by Material**

<b>Artifact Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Botanical	10	0.35%
Ceramic	372	12.98%
Fauna	372	12.98%
Glass	786	27.42%
Leather	18	0.63%
Metal	1272	44.37%
Plastic	22	0.77%
Rubber	6	0.21%
Shell	4	0.14%
Unknown	5	0.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2867</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

With Area 3 materials removed the total artifact count drops to 2586. To better understand these totals, artifacts were split into more specific categories (Table 2). These

are based on categories used by other researchers to define presence or absence of a brothel (Kennedy 1983, 1989; Simmons 1982, 1989). The Structural category makes up the largest percentage of artifacts (28.4%). This is due to the destruction by fire of the primary structure (the Casa Grande itself) and subsequent deposition of the architectural materials on site. The majority of this category is made up of nails and window glass. As structural materials are not used in any of the comparative collections to be utilized in this study, they were removed to allow for a more comparable assemblage (Table 3). There is however, one item related to the structure that is of interest. This is a door-handle back plate, recovered from surface scatter adjacent to the remains of the foundation. It is embossed with a pattern of roses around the door handle (Figures 9-11). This is an odd item to be used in the construction of a log and mortar structure such as the Casa Grande.

The data presented thus far is skewed by the inclusion of materials from Area 3, which were determined to have dated to post-1974, as discussed in Chapter 4. These materials can be removed from any analysis as they cannot relate to the occupation period of interest. Removal of more recent items proved difficult in all other contexts due to the high level of topographic relief and the short occupation of the site. All artifacts recovered were made using modern machine technologies, so dating based on changes in manufacturing techniques was not possible. Only items with identifiable characteristics such as maker's marks or labels could be clearly shown to post-date the period of interest for this site (post 1944: the date that Percy Wilson sold the Casa Grande) these items, along with the post-1944 materials from Area 3, were removed from the analysis (Table 3).



**Figure 9: Drawing of Door Back plate**



**Figure 10: Door Back plate**



**Figure 11: Close-up of Rose Motif on Door Back plat**

**Table 2: Artifacts by Category with Area 3 Removed**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Beverage	167	6.46%
Bottle/Jar	256	9.90%
Clothing/Tack	45	1.74%
Personal/Medicinal	51	1.97%
Food Refuse	432	16.71%
Fauna	87	3.36%
Firearms	5	0.19%
Household Goods	103	3.98%
Lighting	23	0.89%
Miscellaneous	27	1.04%
Storage Vessels	130	5.03%
Structural	737	28.50%
Tablewares	398	15.39%
Tobacco	14	0.54%
Tools/Automotive	45	1.74%
UID Glass	63	2.44%
UID Metal	3	0.12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2586</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 3: Artifacts by Category with Area 3, Structural and post 1944 objects removed**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Beverage	157	8.6%
Bottle/Jar	256	14.1%
Clothing/Tack	45	2.5%
Personal/Medicinal	47	2.6%
Food Refuse	429	23.6%
Fauna	87	4.8%
Firearms	4	0.2%
Household Goods	93	5.1%
Lighting	23	1.3%
Miscellaneous	27	1.5%
Storage Vessels	130	7.2%
Tablewares	395	21.7%
Tobacco	13	0.7%
Tools/Automotive	45	2.5%
UID Glass	63	3.5%
UID Metal	3	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1817</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Beverage

Artifacts in the Beverage category include all bottle and can remains from drinkable liquids, both alcoholic and non, as well as bottle caps and stoppers. This category can be further broken down into alcoholic, non-alcoholic, and unidentifiable. Those listed as ‘Unidentifiable’ were damaged by fire or depositional processes to a point where no discernable features were present, or were too fragmentary to allow identification beyond basic shape/function. The remains of alcoholic beverages included six fragments identified as coming from a 25 ounce panelled polygonal Lamb’s Navy Rum bottle. Lamb’s Navy Rum was produced in the UK from 1849 onward. Fragments of a Dominion Glass five and a half ounce “shoofly flask” bottle were also recovered; these were most often used by liquor companies for whiskey, and were produced in Montreal beginning in 1915 and continued until at least 1933 (Miller and Jorgensen 1986:16). Other alcohol related glass artifacts include two fragments of amber bottle glass with embossed stalks of barley, one clear and two green glass machine made bottle necks with “kork n’ seal” closures (Figure 12). This style of bottle closure was in use from 1911 until at least the 1960s, but was most popular from the mid 1910s until the 1940s (Lindsey 2008). Amber bottle glass from ‘stubby’ style beer bottles were also recovered from throughout the excavation areas. This type of bottle came into use in the

**Table 4: Beverage by type**

<b>Beverages</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Alcoholic	39	24.8%
Non-Alcoholic	37	23.6%
Unidentifiable	81	51.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Figure 12: "Kork n' Seal" bottle neck, finish and cap**



mid 1930s and continued to be the primary form of beer bottle into the 1980s in Canada (Lindsey 2008). Most of these bottles are date stamped with year of production on the base, so any fragments containing base remains were easily dateable. Remaining clearly diagnostic glass fragments in this category include the base and portion of the body of a clear glass panelled bottle with LIBBY MCNEILL & LIBBY OF CANADA LTD RD. 1932 with a Dominion Glass makers mark embossed on the base. The remainder of this category is made up of fragments of unidentified liquor, beer, soda and wine bottle glass.

Non-glass artifacts in this category include crown style bottle caps and bottle openers. Crown style bottle caps were first patented in 1892 (Lindsey 2008). Though the majority of the crown style bottle caps recovered are too highly corroded to identify, there are two other identifiable examples; these are from the Princeton Brewing Company (Figure 13), which was in operation from 1900 until 1961, but only used the official name "Princeton Brewing Co. Ltd." which is seen on the caps from 1936 until 1957 (Suderman 2009).



**Figure 13: Princeton Brewing Company Bottle Caps**



There are also 42 complete bottle caps corroded past the point of identification and four fragments of corroded caps. The bottle openers included in this category are all of the same style; an inexpensive machine made wire opener embossed with ‘Lucky Lager’ along the handle. These were manufactured by Vaughan of Chicago beginning in 1935 as promotional items with purchase (Figure 14) (Bull 2000). All of these artifacts show that regardless of whatever other activities were taking place on the site, there was ongoing alcohol consumption.

**Figure 14: Lucky Lager Brand Bottle Opener**



## **Bottle/Jar**

The category Bottle/Jar was used as a catch-all for unidentifiable body fragments of clear glass that were clearly not window glass. Based on thickness and curvature it is likely that the majority of these are fragments of sealing jars, with the remainder being fragments of bottles for liquids.

## **Clothing/Tack**

The category of 'clothing/tack' contains all items identified as clothing as well as leather items that could have been either parts of clothing, such as belts, or parts of horse or cattle harnesses and tack. Amongst items in this category are three mother of pearl

**Figure 15: Mother of Pearl Buttons**



**Figure 16: Machine Stitched Leather Shoe Sole**



buttons which could have been from ladies garments, or alternatively, men's undergarments (Figure 15), as well as three plastic garment buttons from three separate garments. There are also two pieces of machine stitched shoe leather, the smaller of which was approximately 15cms long and so likely belonged to a woman or child (Figure 16), and a larger and more complete fragment of a man's shoe approximately 24cms long. Included in this category are also four metal shoe grommets which appear to be from a single lace-up shoe, and a further six grommets from a different shoe, also metal, but enamelled blue. The only other pieces in this category are the sole and a portion of the upper of a black rubber 'Wellington' style boot. Taken together the items in this category do not provide any conclusive information regarding the gender of any occupants or visitors to the Casa Grande.

### **Personal/Medicinal**

The artifact category 'Personal/Medicinal' is important for comparison with existing brothel collections, as this is seen as a diagnostic indicator of presence of women. This category contains all items identified as being medicines or lotions, powders and other cosmetics. This category can be further broken down, as shown in Table 5:

**Table 5: Personal/Medicinal Artifact Breakdown**

<b>Personal/Medicinal</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Cosmetic	7	14%
Personal Hygiene	10	20%
Medicinal	34	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>

The seven items identified as cosmetic are all fragments of at least two cold cream jars. One of these fragments is a base containing a maker's mark for the Hazel-Atlas Glass

Company, who manufactured jars of this type with this mark from 1924 until 1964 (Figure 17) (Whitten 2009). The ‘Personal Hygiene’ category includes two fragments making up a complete razor blade as well as fragments of a brass razor guard, a highly corroded pocket knife (Figure 18). Also included are two metal blades and part of the motor for an electric hair/beard trimmer, a pipe bowl, a metal bobby pin, a metal clip with ceramic ring that made up a portion of a hair curler. As well, a portion of a yellow plastic hair comb and a 6.5cm by 6.5cm square flat metal compact engraved on the top with a ribbon/flower design were recovered (Figures 19 and 20). Though the razor portions and pipe bowl could have belonged to either men or women, they likely represent objects primarily utilized by males, while the bobby pin, hair curler and compact represent female objects. The small size of this group of artifacts and the nearly equal combination

**Figure 17: Hazel Atlas Cold Cream Jar Base**



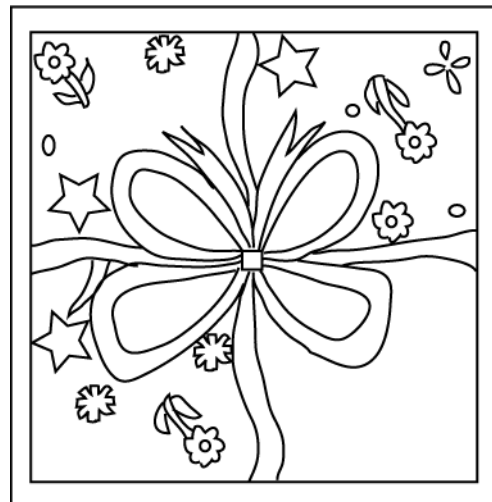
**Figure 18: Pocket Knife**



**Figure 19: Engraved Metal Compact**



**Figure 20: Detail Drawing of Engraving on Metal Compact**



of male and female related items cannot show whether the site was primarily occupied by men or women, as this category is helpful in doing on other sites (e.g. Bonasera and Raymer 2001; Kennedy 1983;1989; Ketz et al. 2005; Meyer et al. 2005; Milne and Crabtree 2001; Seifert 1991; Simmons 1989; Spude 2005; Yamin 2005).



The 'Medicinal' category is equally unhelpful in determination of any sort of gender dominance in terms of site occupants. This category is made up entirely of bottle remains, including 10 complete or near complete bottles and two complete glass jars. All but one of these were recovered from within the historical midden area of the site (Area 2), believed to have been in use throughout the entire occupation history of the site (see Chapter 4). The only example recovered outside of this area was found in Area 1 Unit 1, adjacent to the primary structure foundation (Figure 21). This is a small (4cm tall with 1cm base diameter) octagonal shaped

**Figure 21: Octagonal Bottle Recovered From Area 1**



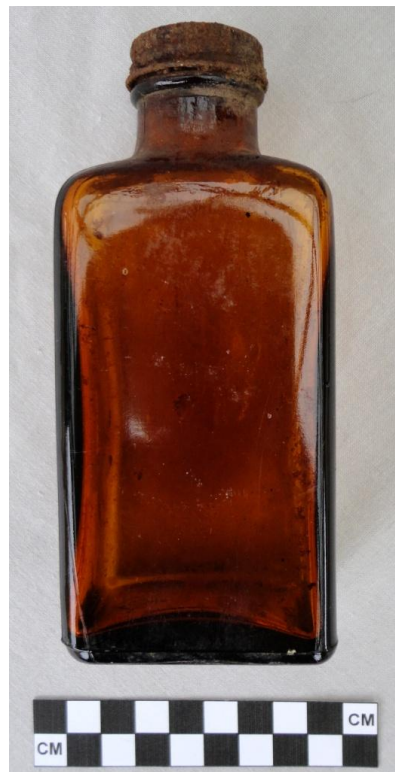
amber coloured machine made external threaded finish bottle. The bottle has no maker's mark, but does have a small-embossed number '2' on its base. The lack of a distinctive identification makes it possible that this bottle is more recent than the period of interest of this site. It is similar in form to bottles for liquid medicine to be applied with a dropper.

The remainder of the materials in the ‘Medicinal’ category were recovered from within the midden area. Two other near-complete examples are the square amber coloured machine-made bottles with wide-mouth external threaded finishes, shown below (Figures 22 and 23). This was a style commonly used to hold tablets or salts during the early 1900s (Fike 2006:15). Though these bottles indicate medicines were in use on the site, without any embossing or labelling to determine exact contents they do not tell us anything concrete about site occupants. Other complete bottles in this category include a series of five bottles, three of which are the same form; the fourth and fifth are of similar form but slightly larger. These are all clear glass machine-made narrow external

**Figure 22: Amber Glass Tablet/Salts Bottle**



**Figure 23: Amber Glass Tablet/Salts Bottle**



threaded finish bottles, three of these are 10cm tall while the fourth and fifth stand 11.5cms tall (Figures 24 and 25). All have maker’s marks identifying them as being

produced by the Northwest Glass Company, based in Seattle, which began production in 1931 (Whitten 2009). No information could be recovered as to what these bottles may have contained.

**Figure 24: Northwest Glass Bottles**



**Figure 25: Northwest Glass Bottles Side View**





Another of the complete bottles recovered is a very small (5cm tall, 3cm across, .5cm wide) clear glass machine made bottle with a very narrow outside threaded finish. It appears to have been designed for use with a hypodermic needle (Figure 26). This bottle was recovered from within the occupation privy deposit, indicating it may have been disposed of in a covert manner (i.e. dumped down the toilet). It shows evidence of having been heated, so it is possible it was damaged in the structure fire, or it may have been heated in some other manner.

**Figure 26: Small Glass Bottle**



Also included in this category are fragments of an embossed clear glass bottle manufactured by Consumer's Glass Canada (Berge 1980:84). The base is embossed with the Consumer's Glass maker's mark as well as "RD. 1934". The front of the bottle is embossed with "2 FL OZ" as well as a stylized mark within a circle of a K and D overlapping. Unfortunately no information on the contents of this bottle could be

discovered, but it is likely that it contained some form of patent medicine. The two glass jars included in the category of Personal/Medicinal both represent cream/ointment jars (Figures 27 and 28). Figure 27 has no maker's mark, but

**Figure 27: 3cm tall 6cm diameter Ointment Jar**



**Figure 28: 4.5cm tall 5.5cm diameter Ointment Jar**



Figure 28 has the mark of the Owens-Illinois glass company; an O over a Diamond with an I in the interior. This particular mark was in use from 1929 until 1954 (Whitten 2009).

### **Food Refuse**

Food Refuse is also important for comparisons to existing brothel collections as several researchers have noted an increase in the amounts of imported and higher cost foods in high-class brothel assemblages compared to standard residential assemblages of similar date and location (Kennedy 1989; Ketz et al. 2005; Meyer et al. 2005; O'Brien 2005; Seifert 1991). To allow for comparisons with other research the category was separated into Domestic Food Refuse, Imported Food Refuse and General Food Refuse. Domestic Food Refuse relates to any items that could be clearly identified as originating from within North America; Imported Food Refuse denotes items clearly identified as originating outside of North America; General Food Refuse contains all other items that

could be identified as food refuse but not sourced. Though it is likely that many of the faunal remains recovered from the site represent food refuse, only items showing evidence of having been utilized as such were included in the Food Refuse category (i.e. showing evidence of burning or butchering). As is clear from the following table (Table 6), the majority of the food items recovered could not be identified as to source.

Most of the Domestic Food Refuse was made up of fragments (n=27) of clear glass machine made “Heinz” bottles, the one base recovered is embossed “HEINZ 257 MADE IN CANADA” with a Dominion Glass Maker’s Mark. This style of bottle began being produced

**Table 6: Food Refuse**

<b>Food Refuse</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Domestic Food Refuse	44	10%
Imported Food Refuse	12	3%
General Food Refuse	375	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100%</b>

by Dominion in 1926 (Miller and Jorgensen 1986:31). Two complete Heinz vinegar bottles were also recovered, both with the lids still in place. These were also produced by Dominion Glass starting in 1926 (Miller and Jorgensen 1986:32). Three metal screw-on bottle lids, white with ‘Heinz’ written in red text were also recovered. There are three fragments of a clear glass “Kraft Miracle Whip Salad Dressing” jar, which began production in Illinois in 1933 (Zeldes 2009). The final items in this category are a collection of oval shaped tins stamped “CANADA” on the bases. These are all double seam cans, as were all cans recovered from this site (see Rock 2000:284 for more on double seam cans). These particular examples are similar in shape and form to a common oval shaped sardine or anchovy tin.

The collection of Imported food refuse recovered from the Casa Grande is meagre and entirely made up of tin can remains. Of the 12 items classified as belonging to this category, nine are tapered “Boston Brand Corned Beef” tins (see Rock 2000:281 for more on tapered tins). Though information on the company could not be obtained, the cans themselves state the product has been imported from Australia. Also included are two other tapered tins, one with the label “Burns Spork” and the other “James Barn Rty. Co. Corned Beef”; both of these are also products of Australia. The remaining item in this category is a Norwegian sardine tin labelled “NORVEGE NORWAY 256”. Though these items represent imported goods, they do not compare well with the high cost imported foods found in recorded brothel assemblages.

The remaining food items categorized as General Food Refuse include all faunal remains showing evidence of processing for food. Though these likely represent animals raised and butchered on-site this cannot be proved and so they could not be included with Domestic Food Refuse. Faunal remains included as food refuse numbered 66, 15 of which were bird bone, the remainder cow, and possibly deer. There were also 10 apricot pits recovered; these represent the entirety of botanical remains recovered during excavation. All of the remaining items in this category are tin remains, including lids and ‘keys’ for tapered tins. The majority of these are standard sized “soup” tins, 8.5cm by 11.5cm in size (n=181). There were also unlabeled tapered tins (n=15) as well as various other tin remains of different sizes. All of these were highly corroded and showed no labels. Beyond demonstrating a high reliance on tinned foods, which was expected due to the harsh environmental conditions, these remains do not indicate anything conclusive regarding activities taking place at the Casa Grande.

## **Fauna**

As discussed above, remains categorized as fauna are those that showed no visible evidence of butchery, cooking, or preparation of any other form. This does not preclude their use as food though, it is likely that aside from the rodent remains that were likely the result of post-depositional activities, the vast majority of the fauna recovered were raised and butchered for on-site consumption. As these remains cannot be dated they are likely the result of the entire occupation of the site, not merely the period of interest in the 1930s/40s. Faunal remains included 25 complete or fragmented rodent bones likely representing members of the large gopher population present on site. Three bird bones (chicken and/or grouse) are included in the assemblage, and the remaining identifiable bones/fragments are from cow and/or deer. The specimens listed as unidentified bone are either too fragmented or too damaged by post-depositional processes to be identified as to species/element.

## **Firearms**

The Firearms category contains only four items. These include the brass base of a shotgun cartridge and two Dominion Cartridge company cartridges. One of these is a .300 calibre Savage rifle shell, which Dominion began producing in 1921 and a Winchester 30-30 shell, which was produced from 1911 until 1955 (Barnes 2006). The final item is a metal cylinder labelled "MADE IN CANADA BURGESS" with an exterior threaded opening. This would have been to hold black powder, most likely for the reloading of cartridges (Dennis Peters personal communication). If the site was being used as a hunting lodge this category should have made up a much higher portion of the overall assemblage.

## Household Goods

The Household Goods category is relatively large, making up over five percent of the total assemblage. This category contains all objects related to general household operation, such as cooking and cleaning, as well as decorative items. These items include 32 upholstery tacks, which were all recovered from a single shovel test unit along with the remains of a sealing jar, indicating they had been stored in said jar. These cause this category to appear somewhat more influential in terms of the entire assemblage than it likely was. Other items in this category include fragments of a glass washboard (Figure 29) and a machine made external threaded embossed clear glass ink bottle (Figure 30). Though no information on the bottle itself could be discovered the base is embossed with “PEERLESS PRODUCTS LIMITED” and a Dominion Glass Maker’s Mark. No mould number is visible on the bottle, but Dominion did produce a series of square ink bottles beginning as early as 1903 (Miller and Jorgensen 1986:19). Also included with household goods are items used in food preparation. This includes four fragments of “Pyrex” glassware from a single white bowl. Pyrex is a brand of glass bake ware introduced by the Corning corporation in 1915 (World Kitchen 2008). A metal pie plate, hand mixer, 39.5 cm long kitchen knife, a clock gear, a complete ceramic figurine (see Chapter 4) and several fragments of batteries are also included in this category. None of these provides any clear evidence of site function but do indicate food preparation on site.

**Figure 29: Glass Washboard  
Fragments**



**Figure 30: Peerless Ink Bottle**



### **Lighting Glass**

Lighting Glass is viewed as an important artifact category in brothel studies due to the commonly nocturnal nature of the business (Kennedy 1989:99). The theory is that with more night-time activities, more light bulbs will burn out faster, resulting in a higher level of lighting glass within the assemblage than would be expected in a site of a different type. This pattern is not seen with the assemblage from the Casa Grande. The items that were placed in this category are very small fragments of fine, clear glass, possibly representing household lights, but also possible automotive lights. The small size of this category cannot be taken as diagnostic of site use however; it is highly likely that due to the isolated nature of the site there was no electricity during the time of its commercial operations.

## **Miscellaneous**

Miscellaneous was used as a catch all category for items that proved difficult to identify and/or categorize. Most of these are highly corroded or fire damaged metal objects. As they are not clearly definable they are not of relevance to the current study.

## **Storage Vessels**

The Storage Vessel category is made up of 50 fragments of clear glass machine made sealing jars, some showing embossing of the letters “CAN...” on one fragment and “...ADA” on a cross-mendable piece. Beyond this, none of the script is legible. Also included are 16 components of sealing jar lids, including three rubber sealing rings for 7cm diameter sealing jars, five “snap-tight” style flat metal sealing lids, fragments making up one glass sealing jar lid, and one corroded metal ring for home canning. The remainder of this category consists of fragments of interior and exterior glazed thick walled straight-sided coarse stoneware vessels, presumably for dry goods storage. None of these showed any decoration or elaboration, aside from a single lug/handle. These items add to the food refuse can remains to indicate a heavy reliance on stored foods.

## **Tablewares**

The category of Tablewares is not of vital importance for the initial identification of a brothel, but is used to aid in differentiating grades of brothel in sites known to have been operating as such (see Chapter 2 for more on grades of brothels). High class brothels are expected to contain a greater percentage of high cost/quality tablewares in comparison to other brothel types, while mid level brothels could contain a few high quality items, but were more likely to contain lower cost items made to resemble higher cost items (Simmons 1989:65). As we move down the spectrum of grades of brothel the



quality of expected artifacts decreases.

The tableware assemblage for the Casa Grande makes up a large portion of the overall assemblage, at over 21%. This high percentage is due to the highly fragmentary nature of the items. Only one nearly complete vessel was recovered (Figure 31), aside from this no other complete tableware vessels were recovered. This category is made up of ceramic and glass items used for food and beverage service. By far the highest number of fragments are of glazed stonewares; 25 fragments of cups/mugs, including the near complete mug in the form of a corn cob shown below (Figure 31), which unfortunately has no maker's mark on its base. There are also 68 fragments of plates/saucers, nine fragments of bowls and 101 fragments of non-diagnostic stoneware, as well as three fragments of a straight sided stoneware pitcher with clear glazing over hand painted flowers (Figure 33).

**Figure 31: Corn Cob Stoneware Mug**



Unfortunately very few (n=5) base fragments with portions of maker's marks were recovered. Those that were showed portions of words including "China", "...ngland",

“...AN...”, “...AL..”, and “...E IN...GLAND” (Figure 35 shows one example), none of which provided conclusive identifications. There were also 23 fragments of a single teapot, many of which were quite small. This vessel appears moulded and has basket hatching and leaves moulded into the body of it, covered with a light green glaze (Figure 32). All stonewares had interior and exterior glazing and most were transfer printed

**Figure 32: Fragments of Mould Made Stoneware Teapot**



**Figure 34: Fragments of Transfer Printed Stoneware Plate**



**Figure 33: Fragment of Hand Painted Stoneware Pitcher**



**Figure 35: Plate Base Fragment with Maker's Mark**



in a variety of patterns and qualities. Refined stonewares were also present on the site, but in lower quantities than would be expected for a high grade brothel; 34 tea cup fragments, six plate fragments, including what appears to be a fragment of a commemorative coronation plate, and 33 non-diagnostic fragments of refined stoneware. Though the coronation plate fragment is very small it appears to be a fragment of a Coronation plate for King Edward VIII (see Figures 36 and 37). Edward reigned for only one year, from January to December of 1936, before abdicating the throne to his younger brother George, so that Edward would be free to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson (The Royal Household 2008).

**Figure 36: Refined Stoneware Coronation Plate**



**Figure 37: Edward VIII Coronation Plate (Photo Courtesy Paul Higginbottom)**



This plate represents the only example of identifiable refined stoneware. Aside from this there are very few fragments of porcelain vessels. Two fragments of a single teacup with white glaze with no other visible decoration were among the only examples. There were no porcelain plate fragments, but one fragment of bone china was recovered; the base of a plate bearing the mark “...ER LAND BONE CHINA MADE IN ENGLAND”. The most interesting porcelain recovered are nine fragments of a porcelain teapot, clear glazed with blue hand painted decoration (Figure 38).



**Figure 38: Fragments of Hand Painted Porcelain Teapot**



The final category of tablewares are those made of glass. This includes opaque glass items such as mugs and plates, and clear glass vessels such as drinking glass, serving and dessert dishes. There are only 14 fragments of clear drinking glass fragments. None of these were identifiable to any brand or maker. There are 11 fragments of opaque blue glass, all part of a single mug; again, this vessel had no maker's mark (Figure 39). Seven fragments of glass plates and nine of glass bowls were recovered. Though these have no marks they are likely Pyrex plates. Excavations also uncovered fragments of clear glass serving dishes, similar in form to candy and pickle-style dishes; many of these fragments were too small to discern form, but there were two different embossing styles: bubbles on some and flowers on others, indicating at least two separate vessels. The only other items

within this category are fragments of Depression glass. Depression glass vessels were produced throughout the Great Depression as a cost-effective alternative to cut glass and crystal dishes. These were often given away as “gifts with purchase” for items such as soap and oats, or given away as gifts on “dish nights” at movie theatres (Shroy 2010:7).

**Figure 39: Blue Glass Mug**



Examples of both green and pink Depression Glass are present in the Casa Grande assemblage. These items include fragments of a green “Royal Lace Creamer” (Figure 40), fragments of a green ice cream cup (Figure 41), and of a pink unidentified vessel (Figure 42) (Shroy 2010:400). These are interesting as they fit perfectly within the period of interest, but are very low cost items, which is highly contradictory to the idea of the Casa Grande as a high-grade brothel.

**Figure 40: Green Depression Glass Royal Lace Creamer**



**Figure 41: Green Depression Glass Ice Cream Cup Fragment**



**Figure 42: Pink Depression Glass Fragment**



The only item of cutlery recovered is a single knife, 24 centimetres long and made of stainless steel with a highly corroded metal hilt (Figure 43).

**Figure 43: stainless steel table knife**



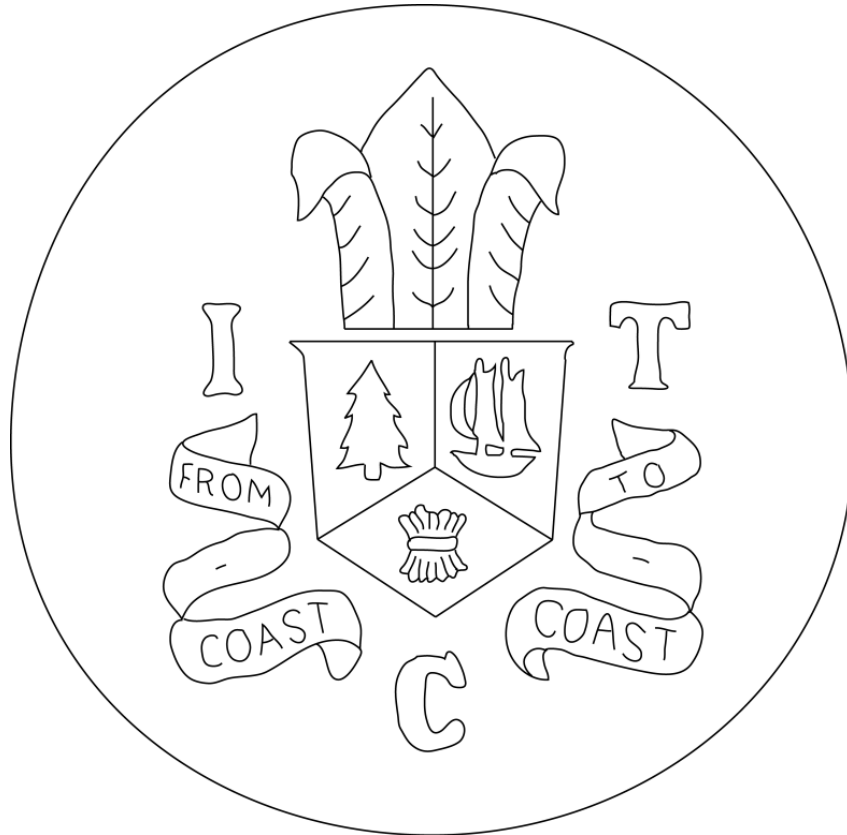
Taken together these tablewares indicate a general household assemblage, without a great deal of effort put toward appearing to be anything other. A lack of distinctive characteristics made it impossible to separate out more modern items from within the assemblage, so this group of artifacts likely represents a greater period of occupation than the specific period of the Casa Grande.



## Tobacco

The tobacco category is made up of only 13 artifacts. Of these, nine are imperial tobacco tin lids (Figures 44 and 45). These lids were used on all Imperial Tobacco products, including Player's, Dominion, and Du Maurier tobaccos from the beginning of Imperial's production in Canada in 1908 (Imperial Tobacco Canada 2009). The remainder of this category is made up of four double seam tobacco cans, all too corroded to show any identifying marks as to brand.

**Figure 44: Imperial Tobacco Tin Lid**



**Figure 45: Imperial Tobacco Tin Lid**



### **Tools/Automotive**

‘Tools/Automotive’ contains a collection of items used in repair and maintenance. Amongst these are 11 portions of highly corroded spark plugs, nine flat head screws, a 35 centimetre long saw blade, with no handle, and a chisel with no handle (Figures 46 and 47). Aside from these the category contains a series of brackets, nuts and washers. Though these items do not give any specific information about activities at the site, they do indicate that repair work was being done in some form. This would not be expected in a high class brothel in a city setting, but due to the remote nature of the Casa Grande it is

likely that high levels of mechanical and structural repairs and overall labour were commonly done to prolong the life of items which were difficult to obtain.

**Figure 46: Saw Blade**



**Figure 47: Chisel Blade**



### **Unidentified Metal and Unidentified Glass**

The final two categories of artifacts recovered are unidentified metal and glass. Both of these categories are made up of highly fragmented and corroded/fire damaged

items which could not be clearly identified. It was not possible to determine whether the glass in this category was window or bottle glass.

## Discussion

Overall the artifacts recovered from the Casa Grande provide insights into some of the activities that may have been taking place at the site, but do not allow for a clear definition of site-type, as is expected with the ‘Brothel Pattern’. The following table demonstrates the expected patterns of artifacts for different frontier site types:

**Table 7: Expected Artifact Patterns (adapted from Simmons 1982; Kennedy 1983, 1989)**

Site Type \ Artifact type	Homestead	Hotel	Brothel
Domestic food refuse	Present	Present	Present
Imported food refuse	None	Low/None	Present
High cost Tablewares	Low/None	Low/None	Present
Low/mid cost-resembling high cost Tablewares	None	Low/None	Present
Low/Mid cost Tablewares	Low	Present	Low
Storage vessels	Present	Present	Present
Liquor bottles	Low/none	Present	Present
Medicine bottles	None	Low/None	Present
Lighting glass	Low/none	Low/None	High
Ornamental Clothing (Female)	None	Low/None	Present
Ornamental Clothing (Male)	None	Low/None	Low
Functional Clothing (Female)	High	Present	Low/none
Functional Clothing (Male)	High	Present	Low/none
Tools	Present	Present	Present
Women’s hygiene items	Present	Present	High
Men’s hygiene items	Present	Present	Low
Evidence for children	Present	Low	Low/none

The Casa Grande assemblage does not clearly fit within any of these patterns. This is likely due to the isolated nature of the site and the difficulty with obtaining many items on a regular basis. The predominance of tins, jars and ceramic storage vessels indicate a

heavy reliance on stored foods to compensate for the difficult growing environment on the site as well as the distance to any grocery merchant. This factor alone causes the Casa Grande assemblage to appear different from any other sites discussed in the archaeological literature regarding brothels. Overall, the artifacts recovered from the Casa Grande show that the use of patterns for the identification of site function is only a useful tool when site contexts are similar enough to allow for comparison. This site demonstrates that it is not possible to say that all brothels will contain similar

**Table 8: Casa Grande Artifact Distribution**

Artifact type	Casa Grande
Domestic food refuse	Low
Imported food refuse	Low/None
High cost Tablewares	Low/None
Low/mid cost-resembling high cost Tablewares	None
Low/Mid cost Tablewares	High
Storage vessels	High
Liquor bottles	Present
Medicine bottles	Low
Lighting glass	Low/none
Ornamental Clothing (Female)	Low/none
Ornamental Clothing (Male)	None
Functional Clothing (Female)	None
Functional Clothing (Male)	Low/none
Tools	Present
Women's hygiene items	Low
Men's hygiene items	Low
Evidence for children	None

general patterns of artifacts regardless of location or period. Though the Casa Grande is not proven to be a brothel through archival evidence, the statements by local residents believing it to be should be evaluable through archaeological data if the 'Brothel Pattern'

exists. The fact that the site cannot be defined conclusively as a brothel or not, indicates this system is flawed.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The Casa Grande presents a unique glimpse into an aspect of the history of British Columbia that has been previously neglected. As is demonstrated earlier in this thesis, the archaeological, historical and interview data collected could not provide conclusive evidence that the Casa Grande operated as a brothel at any point in its history. The artifacts recovered have been compared to what is referred to in historical archaeology as the 'brothel pattern' and the recovered assemblage does not compare with this pattern. This could be due to the fact that the Casa Grande represents a singularly difficult site to identify, but as is discussed earlier, the sites that are used to demonstrate the existence of this pattern were all conclusively documented to have been brothels prior to any excavations being carried out. In fact Donna Seifert, early proponent of the use of patterns in historical archaeology, has more recently stated that "it is likely that some brothels have been excavated without being recognized, particularly those not clearly identified through documents" (2005:2).

Many brothel studies are focussed on discussions of gender, as it is commonly through identification of the presence of women that brothels are classified as such. This can be a questionable system and is currently under discussion. Margaret Purser feels that "it is not a matter of finding methods for equating women with specific artifact types or site features. It requires a shift away from such methods" (1991:6). Though very little

evidence for the occurrence of women was recovered from the Casa Grande this does not indicate that they were not present.

**Table 9: Important Dates for the Casa Grande**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1913	Initial Survey of Lands of Casa Grande
1917	Joseph Simm becomes first legal owner of Casa Grande property
1921	Percy Wilson Purchases Casa Grande
1927/28	Percy Wilson takes out a series of loans on the Casa Grande Property
1931	The Vidette Goldmine opens
1934	Vidette Goldmine in full operation
1936	James McAdam, Manager of Casa Grande applies of license to sell beer on site
1939	Vidette Goldmine shuts down
1944	Percy Wilson sells Casa Grande property and it becomes a private ranch
1966	Casa Grande main building burns down

The site itself presents many problems in terms of classification, and provides a good example for the necessity of context in the identification of site function in historical archaeology. Without a complete understanding of the environment and location in which the Casa Grande is located it would be impossible to make any sense of the artifacts recovered. The highly geographically isolated nature of the site made it a



necessity to store foods in order to survive winter months, and also to repair and re-use items that might have been discarded in more urban locations. The topographic nature of the site (the midden being at the top of a steep embankment) meant that the majority of the materials discarded on site had rolled down slope and been washed away by flooding of the Deadman River. The activities of looters on the site also affected the recovered items, as any complete items that may have been located on the surface are long gone. The presence of a series of looter pits within the midden area along with gopher activity throughout the rest of the area caused extensive disturbance to the deposits.

In Chapter 1 a series of questions were laid out to be addressed throughout this thesis. The first of these is was the Casa Grande operating as a brothel during the late 1920s to early 1940s? As has been demonstrated through the collection of archival and archaeological data, this question could not be answered conclusively. It is not possible to definitively identify the activities taking place on this site during this period. This in itself is fascinating however, as it shows a complexity present in the historical archaeology of more recent sites. It is a commonly held assumption that archaeology of sites this recent would be simpler than that of older sites, but the opposite may be true. The introduction of mechanised production methods for nearly all of the items recovered preclude dating of materials based on manufacture techniques for many classes of artifacts. The recent nature of the site prevents access to police and census records as people affected by the release of this information may still be living. This site in particular fell within a difficult period; historical records are still sealed due to the recent date, but the people who owned and operated the site are deceased.

In an attempt to address this issue more completely, the primary question was

broken down into three smaller research tasks, the first of which was to identify what the local people remembered about the activities at the site known as the Casa Grande during the time period in question. This was addressed through interviews with local residents and historians. Though several possibilities were presented (see Chapter 3) it was the idea of the site as a brothel that was repeated most often.

The second task was archival research related to the Casa Grande for the period of interest. As discussed in Chapter 3 archival documentation relating to the Casa Grande is limited. It is entirely possible that in the future, when census and police documents become available, researchers will be able to confirm or deny the presence of prostitutes at the Casa Grande but as of now, it is not possible to do so through the documentary record alone.

The final research task was the archaeology of the Casa Grande. Specifically, what do the archaeological remains of the Casa Grande indicate about the activities taking place from the late 1920s to early 1940s. As discussed in Chapter 5, the architectural remains and archaeological assemblage cannot show if prostitution was taking place. It is clear that the site was occupied during this period, and that the occupants were both male and female. They were also highly reliant on stored foods. Beyond this the assemblage indicates repair and reuse of items, as well as usage of low to mid cost table and kitchenwares, indicating that there were no attempts made to make the Casa Grande appear to be high status. The remains do not clearly fit within the 'brothel pattern' but nor do they clearly represent a hotel or a hunting lodge. In an ideal context if the site were a hotel, more standardisation in tablewares, along with higher quality food remains would be present. A hunting lodge would contain greater amounts of firearm

related items as well as a greater volume of butchered game remains. Based purely on the archaeological materials recovered from this site it is not possible to define site function for the period of interest.

The second large question addressed through this research is can artifact patterns (specifically the brothel pattern) be used to determine the presence or absence of a specific site type in an isolated rural area when site function is not securely documented? The short answer to this question is no, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5. The isolated nature of the Casa Grande makes its archaeological signature far different from an urban site of any type, brothel or otherwise. As is discussed in the previous chapter, this use of patterns for identification of sites is questionable in most historical contexts. Without fitting into the exact parameters of the example site and without the presence of documentation to aid in identification of site function, reliance on established patterns may cause more harm than good. Researchers in historical archaeology have begun to move away from a reliance on patterns, and as mentioned previously, some of those who were strong supporters of the ‘brothel pattern’ initially have more recently been involved in discussions pointing out the weaknesses of such methods (e.g. Seifert 1991; 2005).

The final aspect of this research is related to community memory: what role does oral history play in the commemoration of the past for this community and why does this data seem to favour the illegal activities that may have taken place at the site? The role of the Casa Grande within the general memory of the community is interesting. The current inhabitants of this region have chosen to remember this site as a brothel, regardless of presence or absence of evidence for or against this conclusion. Though no documentary evidence exists to prove that this site was indeed in operation as a brothel at

any period in its history, the story lives on through local oral histories. As discussed in an article regarding public creation of memory Paul Shackel states “memory can be about ...developing a sense of nostalgia to legitimize a particular heritage” and that “they develop a collective memory by molding, shaping, and agreeing upon what to remember, although this process may not always be consciously planned” (2001:655). This seems to be the case with the Casa Grande. Though alternatives to the story do exist, it is the idea of a brothel that is continually repeated, and seems to have the most longevity. Perhaps the salacious nature of the subject matter makes it easier for the public to remember, and the presence of the remains of the structure creates on the landscape a concrete location to attach these memories and ideas of the site and the region to within a communal memory. It is interesting that memories also exist of a lower class establishment being located closer to the mine (see Chapter 3). It is highly possible that this site did indeed exist and that the memories associated with it were transferred to the Casa Grande due to its continued existence on the landscape and its more closely resembling the media perpetuated vision of the western brothel. The idea of the ‘Wild West’ is deeply rooted within the western psyche, and the residents of this area desire a connection with what they view as exciting adventures of the past.

Though when taken together the combination of archaeological, oral historical and archival information on the Casa Grande can provide a better picture of its history than any one line of evidence could on its own, they still do not give a clear picture of the role of the Casa Grande. They indicate that during the 1930s there was some form of commercial hospitality related operation underway, as indicated by stories of miners travelling up to the site during their days off, archival documentation of a beer license for

the premises, and archaeological remains of beer and liquor bottles. Beyond this though, specifics of site function are fuzzy. It is unclear exactly when these operations started, though the date of 1936 for the beer license application provides a baseline and the sale of the property in 1944 indicate an end of these operations. The exact nature of any business that may have been taking place beyond the sale of beer is unclear, but it is clear that amongst the local population, the story of the Casa Grande as a brothel is deeply ingrained, and is not likely to be changed or forgotten any time soon.

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