

RESEARCH BULLETIN

*Fort Livingstone: North West Mounted Police Headquarters
and Northwest Territories Government Seat*



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Introduction

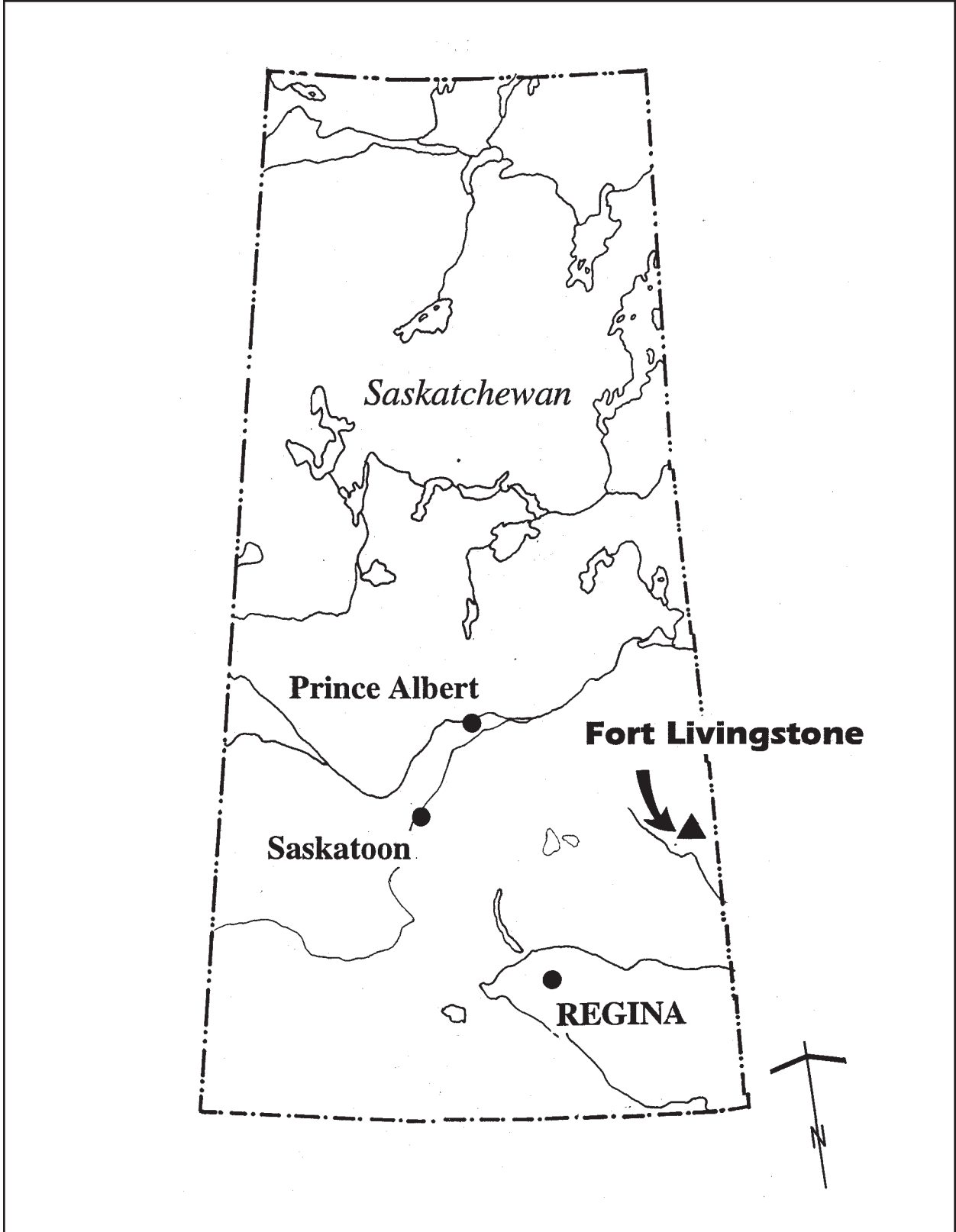
A survey of Fort Livingstone National Historic Site, 135N, (Borden site number EIMI-1) was conducted October 11 to 14, 1995, jointly by Department of Canadian Heritage, Professional and Technical Service Centre archaeologists Peter Priess and Biron Ebell, and Real Property Services (RPS) surveyor Dennis McGonigal. The objectives were:

1. to determine whether all of the site of Fort Livingstone is contained within the land owned by Parks Canada,
2. to determine the nature and condition of archaeological remains of buildings that once stood on the site, and
3. to create a map of the site that accurately represents the topography and the cultural remains that were observed.

Location, Geology and Environment

Fort Livingstone is located in legal subdivisions 8, 9, and 10 of Section 8, Township 34, Range 32, west of the Prime Meridian (Fig. 1). The site is located on the upland peninsula above the east bank of Snake Creek near its junction with the Swan River. In this location, numerous large rocks occur on the ground surface (Fig. 2). A ground surface geology map shows the surrounding area to be eroded glacial fluvial terrain (Saskatchewan Research Council 1986). The boulder deposit is restricted to an area not much exceeding the legal subdivisions described above and may be the result of fluvial erosion of the till resulting in a localized deposit of boulders becoming exposed on the ground surface. Figure 3 shows a vertical profile exposed in a gravel pit less than one-quarter mile (one-half km) south of the site monument. The profile re-veals a thin layer of soil on top of a column of unsorted gravel. No large rocks were observed in this profile.

A map showing the natural vegetation of Saskatchewan, suggests that the site is located north of the aspen grove region, just inside the southern limit of a closed aspen-spruce vegetation zone. This map, however, characterizes pre-agricultural vegetation patterns and suggests the nature of the environment encountered by the first Fort Livingstone residents (Coupland and Rowe 1969:73-77). This pattern may have varied considerably due to prairie fires. There are at least two records of prairie fires in the area: one in 1874, during the time when Fort Livingstone was being constructed; and one in 1884 that destroyed the fort. In the first instance, North West Mounted Police (NWMP) personnel were assigned to help fight the fire still burning in the forest because it threatened the lumber resources necessary for the construction of buildings at Fort Livingstone (Turner 1950:184).



1 Map showing the location of Fort Livingstone National Historic Site. (Drawn by D. Elrick)



2 Rocks and boulders exposed on the west-facing terrace slope of Snake Creek. Holocene fluvial erosion in this area emphasizes the rocky nature of the till. *(Photo by Biron Ebell)*



3 Gravels exposed in a gravel pit about one-half kilometre south of Fort Livingstone. *(Photo by Biron Ebell)*



4 Overview of Fort Livingstone westward toward Snake Creek. The commemorative monument is in the right-hand side of the photo. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

Currently, the site is predominately grass covered and extremely rocky, with perhaps as much as 15% of the ground surface occupied by aspen and hawthorn copses (Fig. 4). On the west side of Snake Creek, across from the site, is a closed aspen forest containing islands of spruce. A similar vegetation regime may have existed in the past. J.W Scott, as recorded by Hawkes (1924: 316), states “. . . on the west of Snake Creek was a thick forest and from this forest the logs and lumber were made that built the post.” The aspen/spruce appears from aerial photographs to be limited to the quarter section across the Creek from the site with most surrounding lands currently under cultivation. Currently, the site itself is being grazed by cattle belonging to a local farmer.

Significance of the Site

Parks Canada’s State of the Parks Report (Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada 1994: 91) states that Fort Livingstone National Historic Site commemorates “the original headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police, the first post built specifically for the Force, and the site of the temporary government of the North-West Territories 1876-1878.” It was designated to be nationally significant in 1923 and the land was acquired in 1927. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the text approved by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board in 1972.

The summary of “heritage values and features,” listed in the State of the Parks Report are:
the site of the original headquarters of the North West Mounted Police 1874-1876,

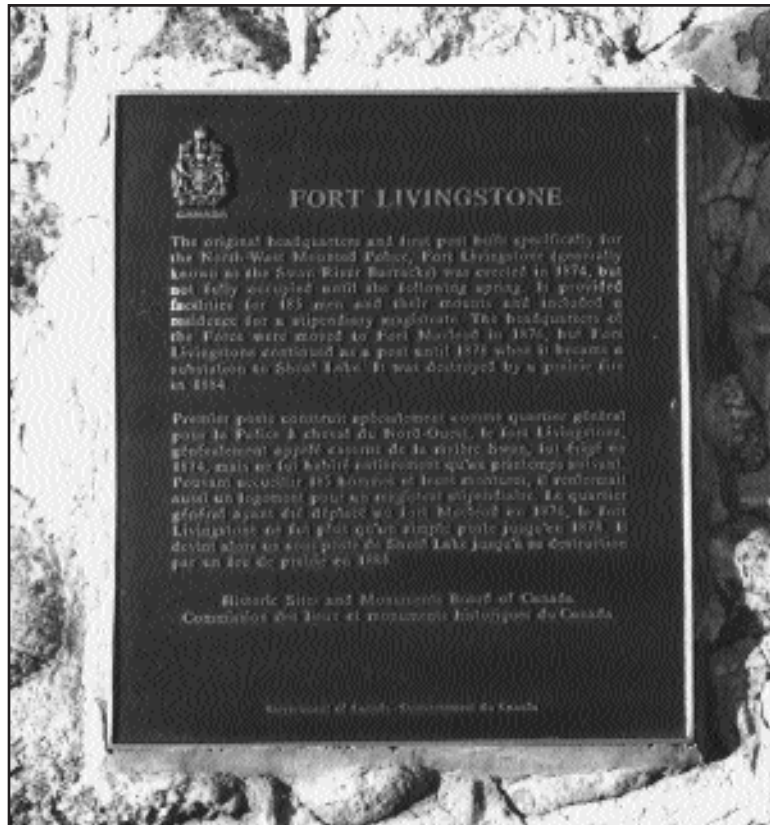
- the site of the temporary government of the Northwest Territories 1876-1878,
- the Site of the first session of the Council of the Northwest Territories in 1877,
- occupied from 1874-1884,
- destroyed by a prairie fire in 1884,
- probably archaeological remains,

These statements err in some of the temporal information. As will be discussed below, the Northwest Territory (NWT) government was present only from November 1876 until March of 1877, when it was moved to Battleford, Saskatchewan.

The Name

The history of the name “Fort Livingstone” is interesting. It does not seem to have been widely used by anyone at the time of its occupation. At least three names were used by various agencies to refer to this establishment. The North West Mounted Police (NWMP) usually called it Swan River Post or “Swan River Barracks” (Turner 1950:index). At the nearby Hudson Bay Company post, Fort Pelly, it is simply

called “the Barracks” in their Journal of Daily Events (HBCA B/159/A/20 and 21). In Canadian Government Public Works documents, it is sometimes referred to as “Fort Pelly” and other times “the Barracks at Swan River,” with the regional reference being “Pelly.” Even the contemporary press seems to have preferred to identify it as the “Swan River Barracks” (Anonymous 1877). To add further to the confusion, “Livingstone” was the name of a telegraph station about three-quarter miles south on the Mackenzie telegraph line between Selkirk, Manitoba, and Edmonton (Scott in Hawkes 1924:318). It is unclear how or when the site began to be commonly called Fort Livingstone,



5 Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque commemorating Fort Livingstone as the original NWMP headquarters. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

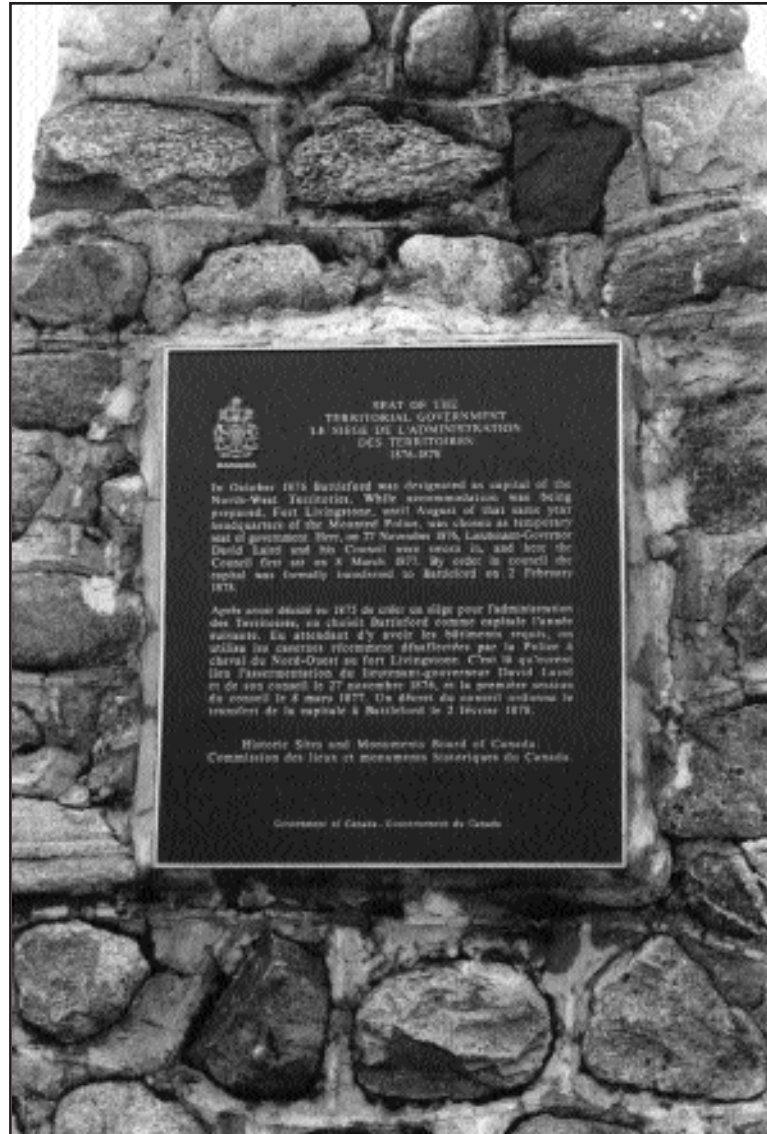
but the name may have become commonly used during and after it served as the capital of the Northwest Territories between November 27, 1876 and August 11, 1877.

Documentary Record

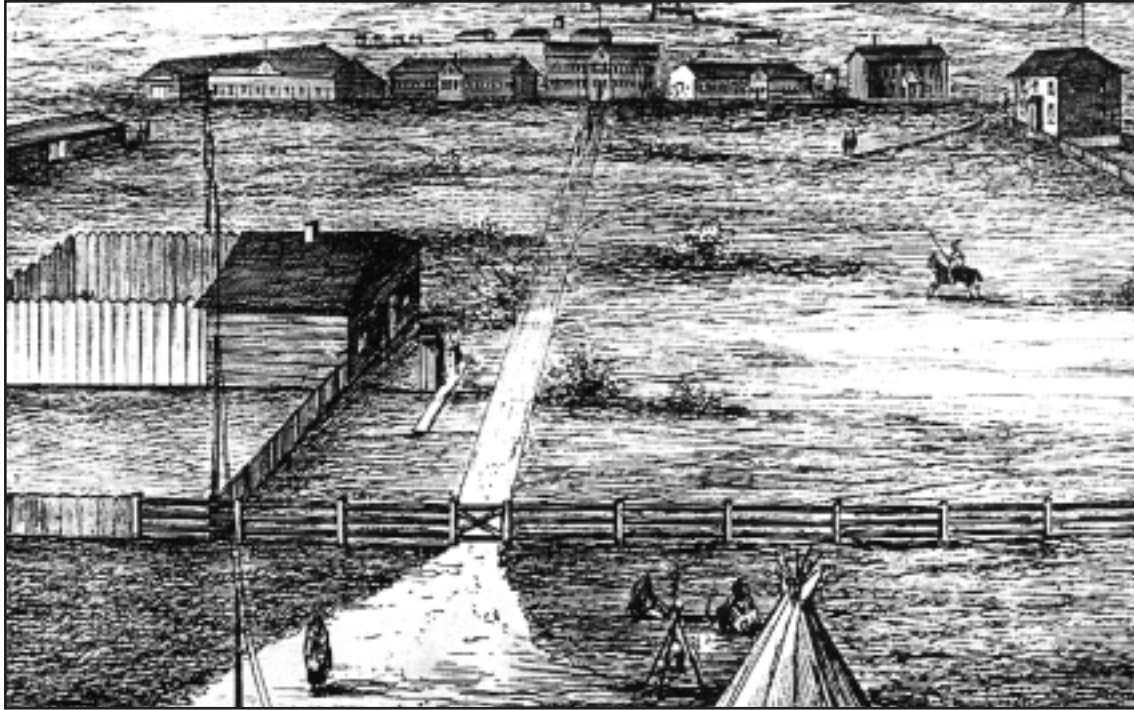
Attached to this document is a partially annotated bibliography. This consists of documents either directly consulted in preparing this report or references Klaus (1962) used in his article on Fort Livingstone. This site is surprisingly lacking in documentary records. There are a number of reasons for this.

The early files and records of the NWMP were destroyed by fire in the West Block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa on February 11, 1897 (Turner 1950:xiii). Those destroyed included records pertaining to Fort Livingstone. One of the reasons that Turner wrote *The North-West Mounted Police* when he did was to be able to reconstruct NWMP history from living memory. In his publication, Fort Livingstone is mentioned numerous times, and is cited in the index as “Swan River” and “Headquarters.”

Almost no information exists about Fort Livingstone in Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) files. In their files, there is a microfilm of Public Works documents and communications concerning construction of the Barracks and subsequent criticisms of it (SAB:R2.53), a newspaper clipping file, and a Fort Livingstone file R-E3359. Copies of everything except the microfilm, were obtained and are in the Archaeology Site files in the Professional and Technical Service Centre in Winnipeg. A list of the specific items in the files is included in this document’s bibliography. Nothing relating to Fort Livingstone was found in SAB files on the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories, David Laird.



6 Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque commemorating Fort Livingstone as the temporary seat of government for the Northwest Territories. (Photo by Biron Ebell)



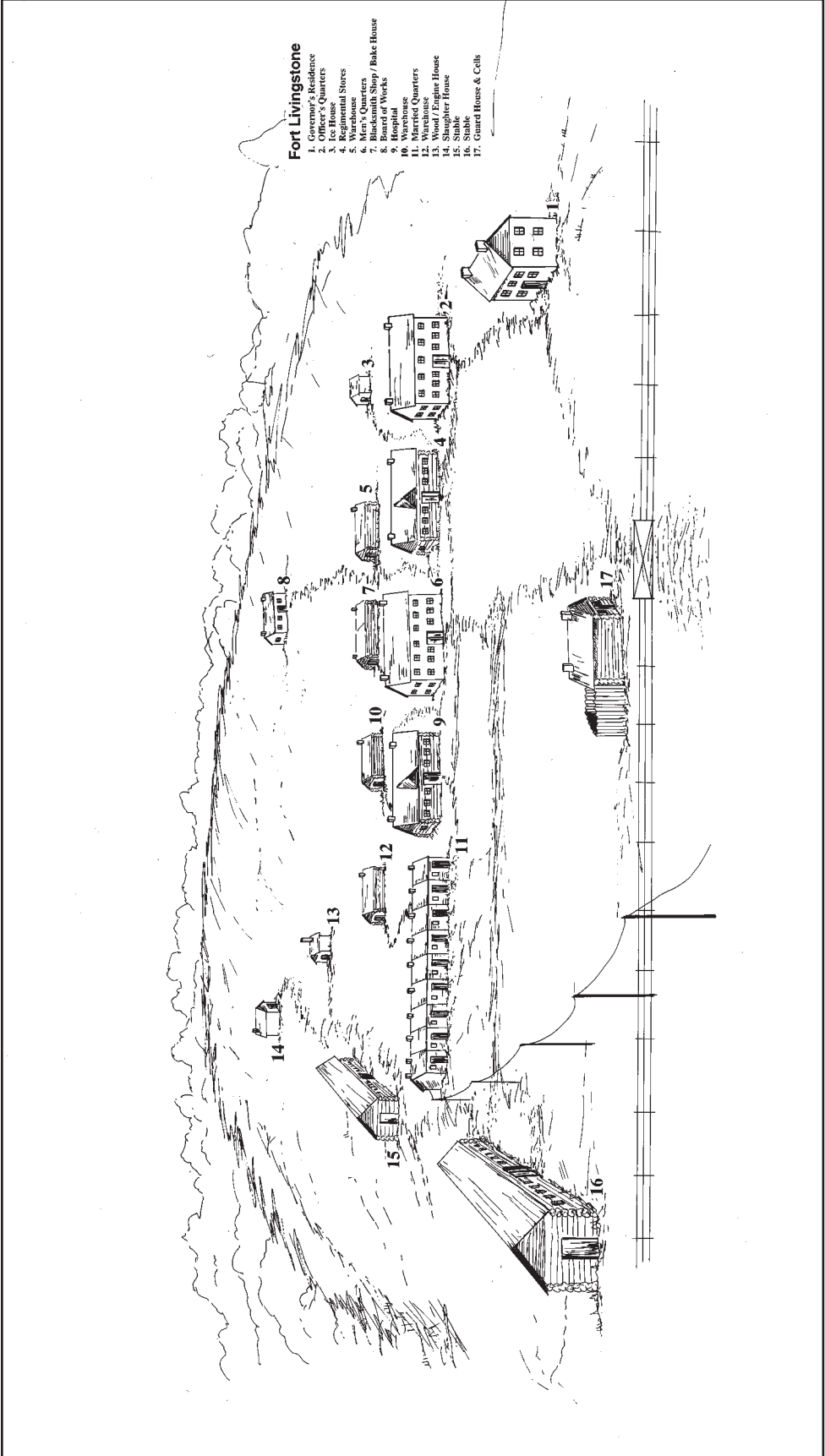
7 Probable Henri Julien sketch of Swan River Barracks published in *Canadian Illustrated News*, June 30, 1877, page 405.

According to the Saskatchewan Legislative Library proceedings from the early NWT council meetings were not kept.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives [hereafter HBCA] in Winnipeg, Manitoba, have two daily journals from Fort Pelly, the first dating from 1874 (B159/a/20) and the second dating from 1876 to 1878 (B159/a/21). These journals record dates and names of people travelling to and from the Barracks. Although interesting in themselves, they contribute little information about Fort Livingstone itself and it seems that some of the recorded events, specifically the arrival of Lieut.-Governor David Laird, may be inaccurately dated. These apparent errors tend to reduce the usefulness of these documents to corroborate historic events at Livingstone.

Only one contemporary graphic record of Fort Livingstone is known. This is a sketch attributed to Henri Julien (Fig. 7) depicting the layout of the Fort, probably as it was originally constructed.

Another documentary record is preserved by Hawkes (1924:315-318). These are undated "reminiscences" "jotted down" by W.J. Scott, probably written in 1913. Scott was a former acting constable at Fort Livingstone from 1876 to 1879. These "jottings" were made at the request of Mr. J.K. Johnson, M.L.A. for the Fort Pelly district. According to Saskatchewan Archives Board records in Regina, Mr. Scott revisited the site of Fort Livingstone in July 1913 (SAB:R-E3359). At that time he placed a wooden sign on the site of the Governor's house, to locate where the first session of the NWT council was held.



10 A redrawing of the Scott sketch to the same scale as the original with buildings placed upright. (Drawn by D. Elrick)

In addition, Scott drew a sketch map of the site. Figure 8 is a retracing of the sketch. A drawing created by or for John Hawkes from this rough sketch contains a number of inaccuracies when compared to the Julien sketch (Fig. 7) (see Hawkes 1924:interleaf between pp. 316 & 317, reproduced here in Fig. 9). Chimneys and dormers have been added or changed along with fences and sidewalks, an extra section was added to the married men's quarters, and in addition, several buildings were not shown by Scott, and the relative position and size of several buildings are different. Scott had probably not seen the site in over 30 years, and this would account for the apparent inaccuracies depicted in his drawing. Figure 10 is a redrawing of Scott's sketch showing the relative scale he depicted along with the location of the buildings. It is not known if Scott helped prepare the illustration used by Hawkes. In any case, the drawing used by Hawkes is similar to the Julien sketch and may reflect some knowledge of it.

An excellent short article about Fort Livingstone was published by J.F. Klaus in *Saskatchewan History* (1962:93-110). This article is concise and, based on current research, remains an important document recounting the history of the site. I had hoped to discuss the sources that Mr. Klaus used to research his article, but found that he was deceased. His article is important in that it draws together most of the data that I consulted and provides an excellent account of the site both as the NWMP headquarters and the seat of government.

Historic Summary

NWMP Headquarters

In 1874, the NWMP headquarters was planned to be located near Hudson's Bay Company [hereafter HBC] Fort Ellice at the junction of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers. Fort Ellice was the "converging point" of a number of important trails leading into the Territories. Initial Dominion land surveys extended that far west and there was regular mail service there from Winnipeg along a well-established cart trail. Arrangements were made for men at the Ellice detachment to build temporary huts and stables and early in the year, Sub-Inspector Shurtliff, along with at least ten men and horses were sent to there establish a detachment on the site chosen. A portable sawmill was to be provided and ground was to be cultivated for raising vegetables and oats. This was to be the return point of Commissioner French and "D" and "E" troops from their long march west to quell the whisky trade. By October 1874, Public Works Department was to have constructed "suitable barracks" on the site.

These plans were suddenly abandoned. Dominion surveys of the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway right of way and telegraph line ran further north near the HBC post of Fort Pelly. A site near the telegraph station of Livingstone on the survey line was chosen as the NWMP headquarters as being more suitable both because of access to communication and nearness to timber suitable for construction, and the soil was considered suitable for agriculture (Turner 1950:114 & 208).



11 Feature 135N1A: a probable cellar on the upper edge of the Snake Creek bank. This is a view westward along the feature looking towards Snake Creek Valley. (Photo by Biron Ebell)



12 Feature 135N1A: A view northward across the feature. Note the growth of mature aspen on the edge of the excavation. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

On October 21, 1874, Commissioner French arrived at the new headquarters under a pall of smoke from prairie and brush fires. He was unhappy to find the buildings erected along a 1000-foot line, unprotected from the wind, on a site strewn with large boulders. Further, the prairie fire that had come within 20 feet of the buildings, had destroyed half of the hay that had been cut for the winter. The frame and log buildings were unfinished and unsuitable for winter accommodation. The next day, the Commissioner made the decision to leave only the "E" Troop to winter at Livingstone, and to move the rest of his men to Fort Ellice (Turner 1950:183-184).

The Winter of 1874-75 at Swan River Barracks was not pleasant. Livestock were lost, men were taken ill and the diet was limited to fat pork, biscuit, bread and tea with the occasional rabbit, prairie chicken and pemmican for variety. The buildings, in spite of the large wood burning Carron stoves, were cold and uncomfortable with temperatures inside the buildings sometimes below zero Fahrenheit and snow on the floor that had drifted in through the roof (Turner 1950:207-209).

After a year of waiting for improvements to the buildings Commissioner French expressed his displeasure with the Federal Government in no uncertain terms. His letter, dated September 4, 1875, outlined the deficiencies he found in a somewhat personal and accusative tone. In it he unequivocally states his belief that the Department of Public Works "... at this station is in a singularly disorganized state, and that owing to lack of common foresight, there are no materials available for the completion of these barracks before an almost arctic winter is upon us" (Klaus 1962:101). His dissatisfaction with the services being supplied to the force by Public Works and his overtly stated criticisms were undoubtedly a factor in his resignation from the force in 1876 (Turner 1950:265).

In July 20, 1876, James F. Macleod was appointed by order-in-council to replace Commissioner French (Turner 1950:265). However, by August 1876 the decision was made to transfer the NWMP headquarters to Fort Macleod. On August 7, 1876, leaving only a small part of "D" Troop in charge, the new Commissioner departed the Swan River Barracks with the rest of the force and a police band that was organized earlier in the year. With that, the Swan River Barracks ceased to be NWMP Headquarters and became a small detachment of the Force (Turner 1950:270).

Northwest Territories Government Seat

The North-West Territory Act was proclaimed on October 7, 1876. The Swan River Barracks recently all but vacated by the NWMP assumed a new role in Canadian history. Pending the construction of suitable quarters at Battleford, Fort Livingstone became the interim capital of the newly formed Northwest Territories in November 1876 (Thomas 1956:80).

In the October 11, 1876 edition of the Manitoba Daily Free Press, the new Lieutenant-Governor, David Laird, is introduced. He was a journalist by profession and part of his political activities involved forming a delegation to Ottawa to negotiate terms for the union of Prince Edward Island with Canada. It was claimed in the same article, that he possessed experience and familiarity with the west.



13 Feature 135N1B: Possible footing for a small building located on the terrace of Snake Creek below 135N1A. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

In the same paper, dateline Ottawa, October 13 (1876), it is written “Lieut-Governor Laird and officials of the Government of the North-West Territories will proceed to Pelly this fall, where the seat of administration for the Territories will be established till next year,” indicating that Fort Livingstone was intended at the outset to be the temporary seat of the NWT.

There is a little confusion about the Lieutenant-Governor’s arrival date. The October 16, 1876 Manitoba Daily Free Press, dateline: Ottawa, states, “Lieut-Governor Laird leaves tomorrow for Pelly.” Meanwhile, the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor is recorded in the Fort Pelly Journal of Daily Events for October 1876, as follows: “Friday 10 The Honourable David Laird, Lieut. Governor of the North West and staff passed down to the Barracks en rout from Ottawa. Magistrates Ryan and Richardson also arrived from Winnipeg” (HBCA B/159/a/21). Could it be possible that the Pelly journal was out of step by over a week?

The Lieutenant-Governor lived in the commissioners residence from November 27, 1876 to August 11, 1877. This same building also served as the temporary seat of government from March 8 to 22, 1877 (Klaus 1962:107). Present at this rather auspicious, but unheralded occasion, was the Lieutenant-Governor and council members, Stipendiary Magistrates Hugh Richardson, Matthew Ryan and NWMP Commissioner Lt. Col. J.F. Macleod (Turner 1950:309; Thomas 1956:81; Klaus 1962:107). A.E. Forget, who later became the first Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, was the recording secretary.



14 Feature 135N1C: A linear ridge, probably a building foundation segment, being used as a cow path, at the base of the slope below feature 135N1A. The feature is located between the white rock in the photo's lower left and the first rock beyond the photo board. Notice the rocks exposed in the valley wall in the cow path above the feature. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

The *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, under the dateline "Livingstone, Nov 27" (1876), briefly recorded the opening of the NWT Council. It stated:

The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West, the Honourable David Laird was sworn in to-day at noon in presence of officers of the North-West Mounted Police and several others. The Governor's Commission and the Commission *dedimus potestaten* addressed to Messrs Matthew Ryan and Hugh Richardson, and which did not arrive from Ottawa before Thursday last, was read by the Clerk of the Council, A. Forget and then the several oaths were administered to His Honour by Mr. Ryan as senior commissioner. Messrs Scott and Dickinson were acting aids-de-camp. It is understood that the Government proceeds to business immediately.

A number of bills were introduced and 12 ordinances were passed during this session. At the close of the council on March 22, 1877, the dignitaries disbursed (cf. Claus 1962:107).



15 Feature 135N1D: Interconnected rectangular depressions outlined with a low ridge of earth. No buildings are illustrated by Scott in this area of the site. (Photo by Biron Ebell)



16 Feature 135N1E: Cellar depression situated on the edge of the upper terrace of Snake Creek. It is positioned approximately where the married men's quarters were located, however it is much smaller than the building was. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

Fort Livingstone's importance as the seat of government was very short lived and the NWT capital was moved to Battleford in August, 1877 along with Lieutenant-Governor Laird. This event was dispassionately recorded in the Fort Pelly Journal of Daily Events for Saturday, August 11, 1877 wherein it states, "Governor Laird started for Battleford" (HBCA B/159/A/21).

While still the seat of Government, a short article appeared in the June 30, 1877 edition of the Canadian Illustrated News, as follows:

Swan River Barracks. — These barracks situated ten miles north of Fort Pelly, North-West Territory were commenced in the summer of 1874 and completed in the fall of 1875. A detachment of D Troop, N.W.M.P., are at present stationed there, under the command of Captain W.M. Herchmer, and Sub-Inspector Griesbach. The buildings are chiefly frame work of spruce. This is at present the residence of the Lieut.-Governor of the Province of Keewatin. The soil is very rocky, and snakes are numerous. Making it difficult at some periods to walk without treading them down. A mail reaches here every three weeks (Anonymous 1877).



17 Feature 135N1F: Long narrow cellar depression without the usual earth ridges. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

The Barracks continued to be used by the NWMP for a number of years following the removal of the headquarters to Fort Macleod. At the end of 1877, Fort Livingstone, including sub-posts of Shoal Lake and Qu'Appelle, housed portions of various troops including four commissioned officers, 33 noncommissioned officers, constables and sub-constables and 25 horses (Turner 1950:380). The actual population of Fort Livingstone is not certain and it may have been that these personnel circulated among the three posts.



18 Feature 135N1G: View eastward of the southwest corner of an earth ridge that is probably a foundation remnant of the men's quarters. Remnants of a boardwalk may be visible to the right of the photo board. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

Turner (1950:422) indicates that in 1878, "The old Swan River Barracks remained unoccupied." In 1879 and 1880, Swan River is listed along with Fort Qu'Appelle as a sub-post of Shoal Lake (Turner:505, 518).

The last physical description of Fort Livingstone is by Mr. Clark of Clark's Crossing. He describes how it appeared to him in 1879:

The buildings at present (1879) have a very shabby appearance. The site is middling, but the position of the buildings reflects anything but credit on those who had the placing of them, they being of the most defenceless character, built in a long row and exposed on all sides. The buildings are only shells, and around them are scattered rusting and rotting implements of every description for the police use, for the police are supposed to be Jacks of All Trades. Inside the storehouses are heaps of worthless and expensive goods, all speaking of extravagance and dishonesty on the part of those whom the people pay to protect their rights (in Hawkes 1924:313).



19 Feature 135N1G: View eastward of the north west corner of an earthen ridge that is probably a foundation remnant of the men's quarters. A road cutting through this feature appears at the edge of the aspen grove.

It is unclear, but there is a suggestion elsewhere that parts of Fort Livingstone may have been demolished and used to construct a stable and guard room at Qu'Appelle. In this regard, Turner (1950:554) states, "The lumber for this work had been hauled from old Swan River Barracks, 128 miles to the north. . . ." It may also be possible that the sawmill used to construct Fort Livingstone was still in operation at that time.

However, at the end of both 1880 and 1881, Swan River still had one inspector and two constables stationed there (Turner:562, 625). In 1882, there was a "small detachment" stationed at Fort Pelly (Turner:685) and no mention of it again until its destruction by fire in 1884 (see also J.B. Tyrrell 1892:106).

Archaeological Survey

Method

The tangible remains of Fort Livingstone are at best, difficult to discern. It is interesting that Tyrrell notes in 1892 that, ". . . The Mounted Police had a large barracks which was burnt by a prairie fire in 1884. The place where the fort stood is now strewn over with charred wood, pieces of rusty iron. &c." Currently, the ground surface is obscured by cattle trails, aspen and hawthorn groves, and grass, making it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to discern patterns that can be attributed to building remains.



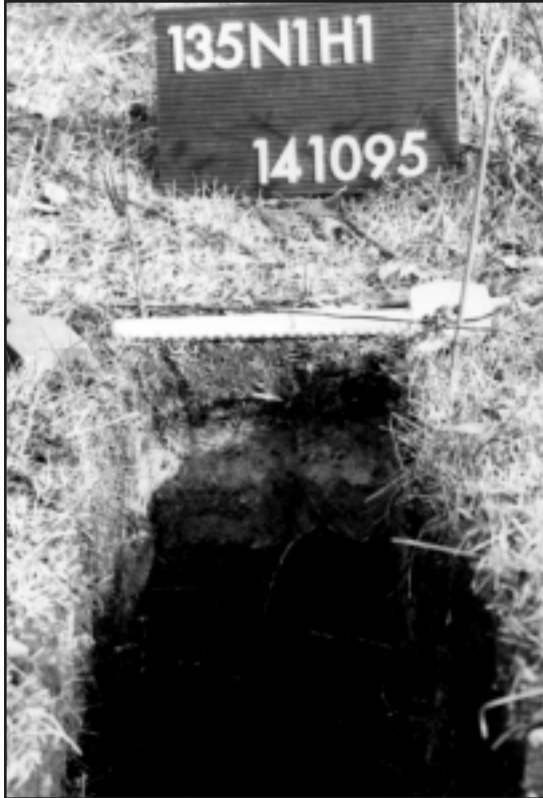
20 Feature 135N1H: Earth ridge that is probably the north east corner of the officer's residence. The location of test excavation 135N1H1, is 2.0 m north of the corner. (Photo by Biron Ebell)

As an initial introduction to the site, we did a random walking survey, flagging suspected features as they became apparent. Almost no artifacts were observed on the ground surface. A number of depressions and linear ridges that are probably building remains associated with the Barracks were identified. Each of these features was assigned a Parks Canada archaeological provenience number. All structural remains found in this survey were assigned to operation 135N1, and each individual feature was assigned sub-operations from 135N1A to 135N1L.

All features were photographed in colour, and black and white. The colour slide photos of the features are stereo pairs and make apparent the rather subtle vertical characteristics of the features. All photos and photographic records have been catalogued into the Professional and Technical Service Centre, Cultural and Natural Ecology data base in Winnipeg.

The following is a descriptive summary of these features.

Feature 135N1A is a probable cellar oriented perpendicular to the upper edge of the valley where it breaks into the Snake Creek valley. The feature is a linear incision with a V-shaped transverse cross section. There is a low earth embankment surrounding the edge of the excavation. The excavation may have progressed from the edge of the bank. There are numerous rocks laying on the surface of the terrace below its eastern end that were probably removed during the excavation. Possibly the reason for digging into the bank edge was to leave the end open to allow the easy removal of rocks during its excavation. A bank of soil



21 The east profile of the test trench 135N1H1 showing the sand and mortar deposit occurring outside the probable foundation or insulation bank.

the valley bottom up to the slope to the prairie level (Fig.14). The linear ridge is about 10 m long, quite straight and is oriented nearly perpendicular to the valley wall. It may be a segment of a building footing. However, no other structural remains were observed that relate to this feature.

Feature 135N1D is two interconnected rectangular depressions located on the lowest terrace not far from the eastern bank of Snake Creek (Fig. 15). These pits are surrounded by a low, roughly rectangular linear ridge of earth. No structures are indicated in this area in the Scott drawing. The dimensions of the feature are 3.0 m x 7.0 m.

Feature 135N1E is a cellar depression on the upper terrace of Snake Creek (Fig. 16). With reference to the Scott drawing, this cellar depression is located where the married men's quarters may have stood (Fig. 9). The dimensions of this building were reported by Sutherland to be 250' x 26' (76 m x 7.9 m) (Klaus 1962:103). This depression feature is much smaller, measuring only 5.0 m x 7.0 m. The 7.0 m dimension is oriented the same direction as the 7.9 m dimension of the married men's quarters. No features were found that suggest this depression was associated with a building. It may have served as a root cellar or similar storage facility under one of the apartments in the married men's quarters.

across what would have been the open end of the excavation, was probably added after digging was completed. The total dimensions of the feature are 14.5 metres, east/west by 6.5 metres north/south (Figs. 11 and 12).

The cellar is located within in a mature aspen grove along the edge of the Snake Creek Valley. There are a number of deadfalls at the east end of the feature. The vegetation has probably affected the archaeological integrity of the feature somewhat, however, the extent and nature of these affects were not determined.

Feature 135N1B is a possible footing for a small building. The feature consists of rectangular ridges occurring on a shallow slope of the terrace below 135N1A. The ridges may have been constructed in order to level an area to support a structure. A shallow depression in the west end of the feature may be where earth was obtained to construct the ridges. It is approximately 3.0 m square (Fig. 13).

Feature 135N1C is a linear ridge of soil across a depression at the bottom of the slope between the highest prairie level and the first terrace of Snake Creek. It is immediately below 135N1A and is currently being used as a cow path leading from



22 Feature 135N1J: Earth trench and platform feature that supported the hospital.
(Photo by Biron Ebell)



23 Feature 135N1K: Foundation ridges of the Commissioner's residence looking west. The van is parked next to the site monument. The road into the site passes just the other side of the aspen copse. (Photo by Biron Ebell)



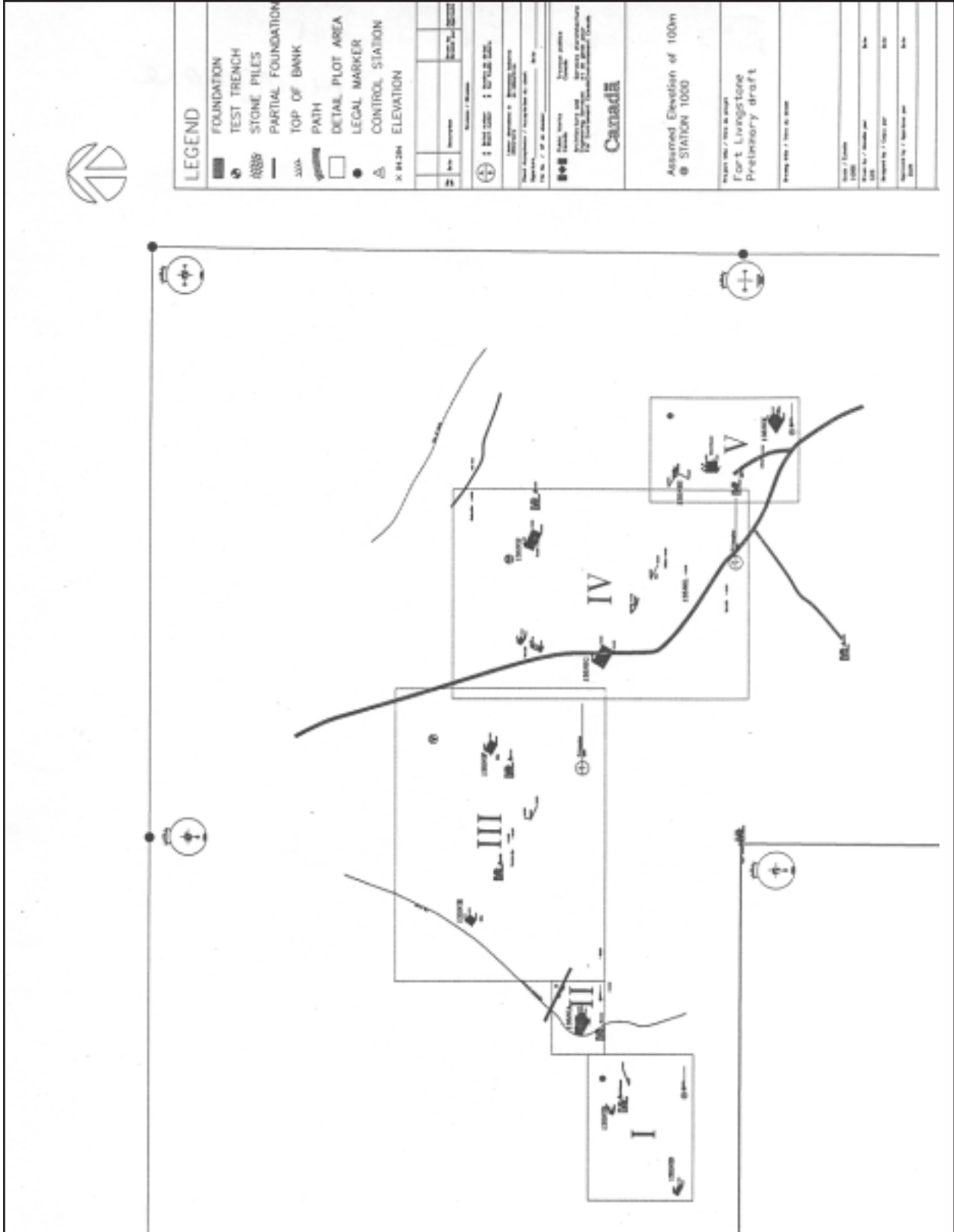
24 Feature 135N1K: Foundation ridges of the Commissioner's Residence looking south.
(Photo by Biron Ebell)

Feature 135N1F is a narrow shallow cellar depression (Fig. 17). Based on the Julien drawing (Fig. 7), this cellar would be associated with one of the buildings in the row of three behind the married men's quarters. There is no earth mound outlining this excavation as there is in the other possible cellar depressions on the site. This feature measures 5.0m x 8.0 m.

Feature 135N1G is a rectangular area enclosed by open U shaped earth ridges (Figs. 18 and 19). The north/south dimension of this feature is approximately 8.0 m (about 26'). Sutherland in his January 1876 report on the buildings at Fort Livingstone, reported that the buildings in this area are 26 feet wide (Klaus 1962:102-103). Based on the central location of this feature in the courtyard, it may be remains of the west end of the building identified by Scott as the men's quarters (see Fig. 10).

The ridge itself may be a remnant of the earth banked up against the side of the building to serve as insulation. In the above-mentioned report, Sutherland mentions that the "buildings are also well banked up outside" (Klaus 1962:103). Banking earth around a building's foundations is a measure used to provide insulation in the winter.

There may be evidence of a boardwalk adjacent to the earth ridges. There is a wide linear ridge apparently parallel to and outside the building footing. This wide ridge has ridges across it approximately perpendicular to its long axis. This feature was not noticed in the field but is apparent in the photograph where it appears to the right and in front of the photo board in Figure 18.



25 Site survey map prepared by Real Property Services. (Prepared by D. McGonigal/G. Shlachletka)



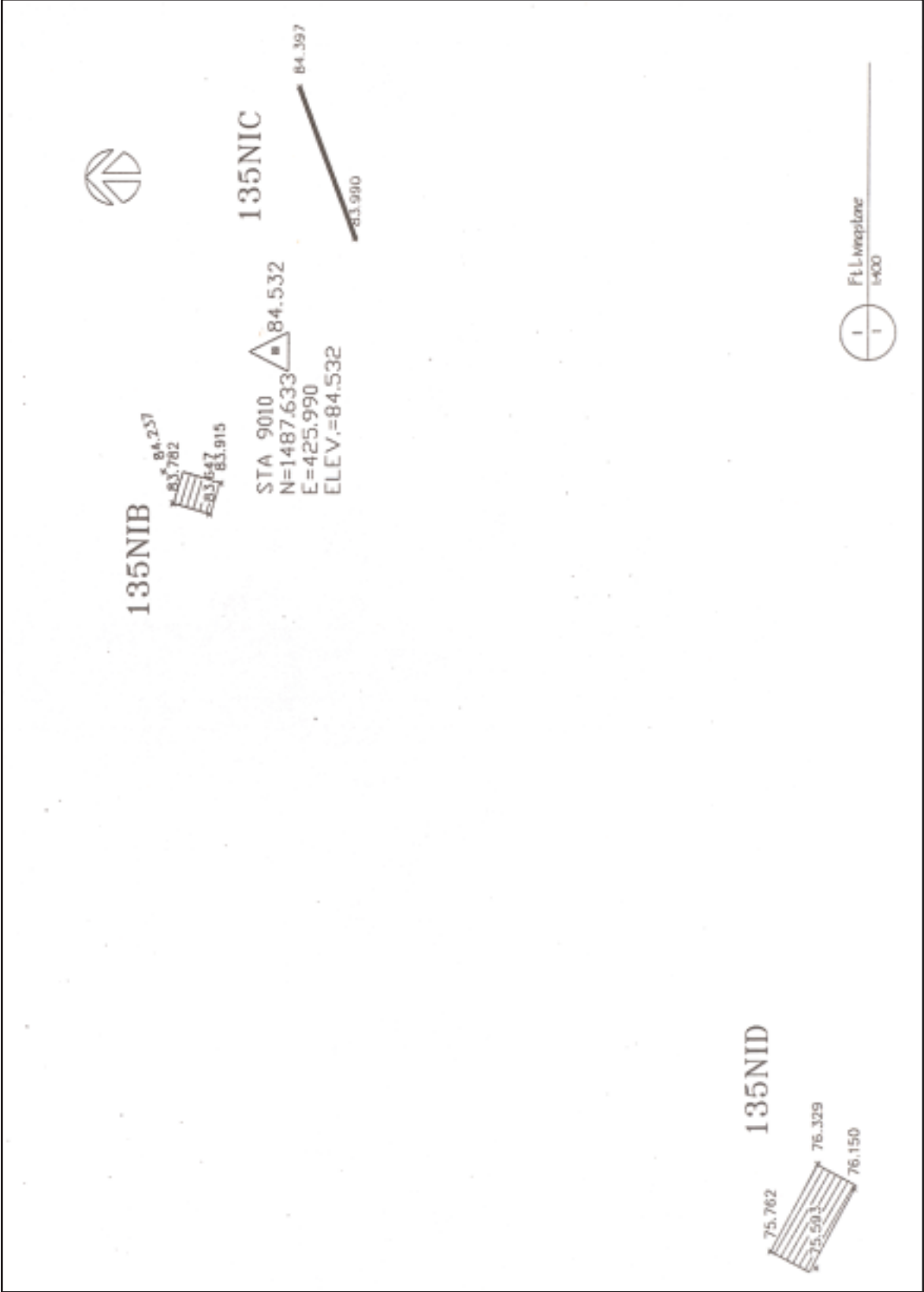
26 View up the Snake Creek Valley wall showing the eroded cow paths incised into the slope.
(Photo by Biron Ebell)

Feature 135N1H are earthen ridge segments forming an nearly right-angle corner that are probably insulation embankments around the north east corner of the officer's quarters (Fig. 20). The earth ridge at the eastern end measured about 8 metres long, while the segment on the northern side is 12 metres long.

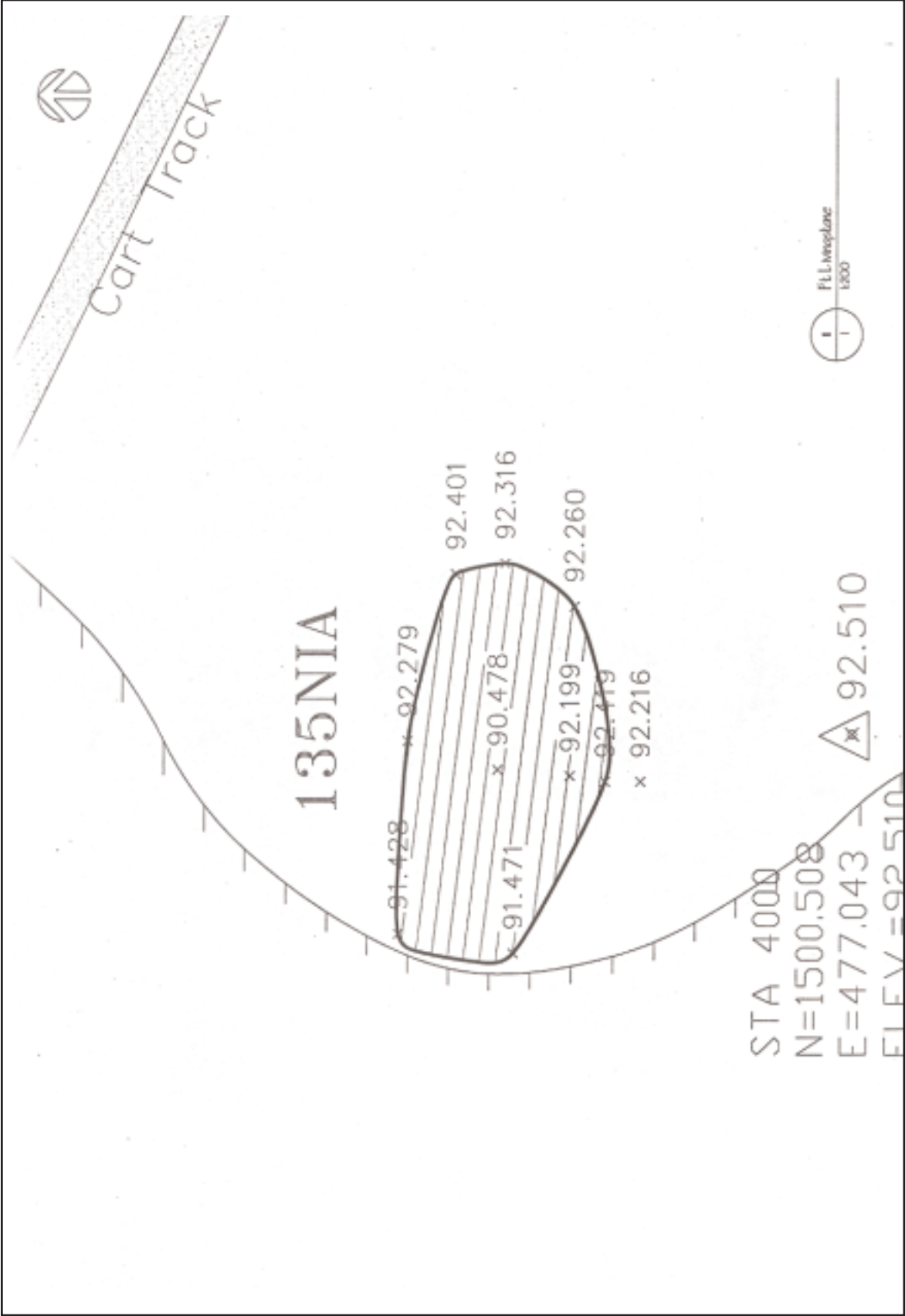
A shovel trench was excavated across the earth ridge about 2.0 m west of the corner of the feature. The trench extended completely across the ridge from the apparent interior to the exterior of the building (Fig. 21). The trench was 25 cm wide by 200 cm long. From the top of the ridge to the bottom of the trench was 31 cm. The north end of the trench was 19 cm deep. In this area, a layer of mortar was encountered 5.5 cm from the surface and extended 13 cm deep. This lay on a 5.0 cm thick layer of sand. The sand and mortar feature occurred on the exterior (north) side of the ridge. This deposit may be remnants of mortar insulation applied to the exterior of the building. No tangible structural remains were observed.

Machine-cut nails, melted glass and a fragment of cast iron were found in the excavation. Five nails were collected (inventory numbers 135N1H1-1 to 4) along with four pieces of melted and heat distorted glass (inventory number 135N1H1-6). A cast iron fragment, inventory number 135N1H1-5, was also collected. The cast iron is uniform in thickness and curved, suggesting it may be a cast iron cooking pot fragment.

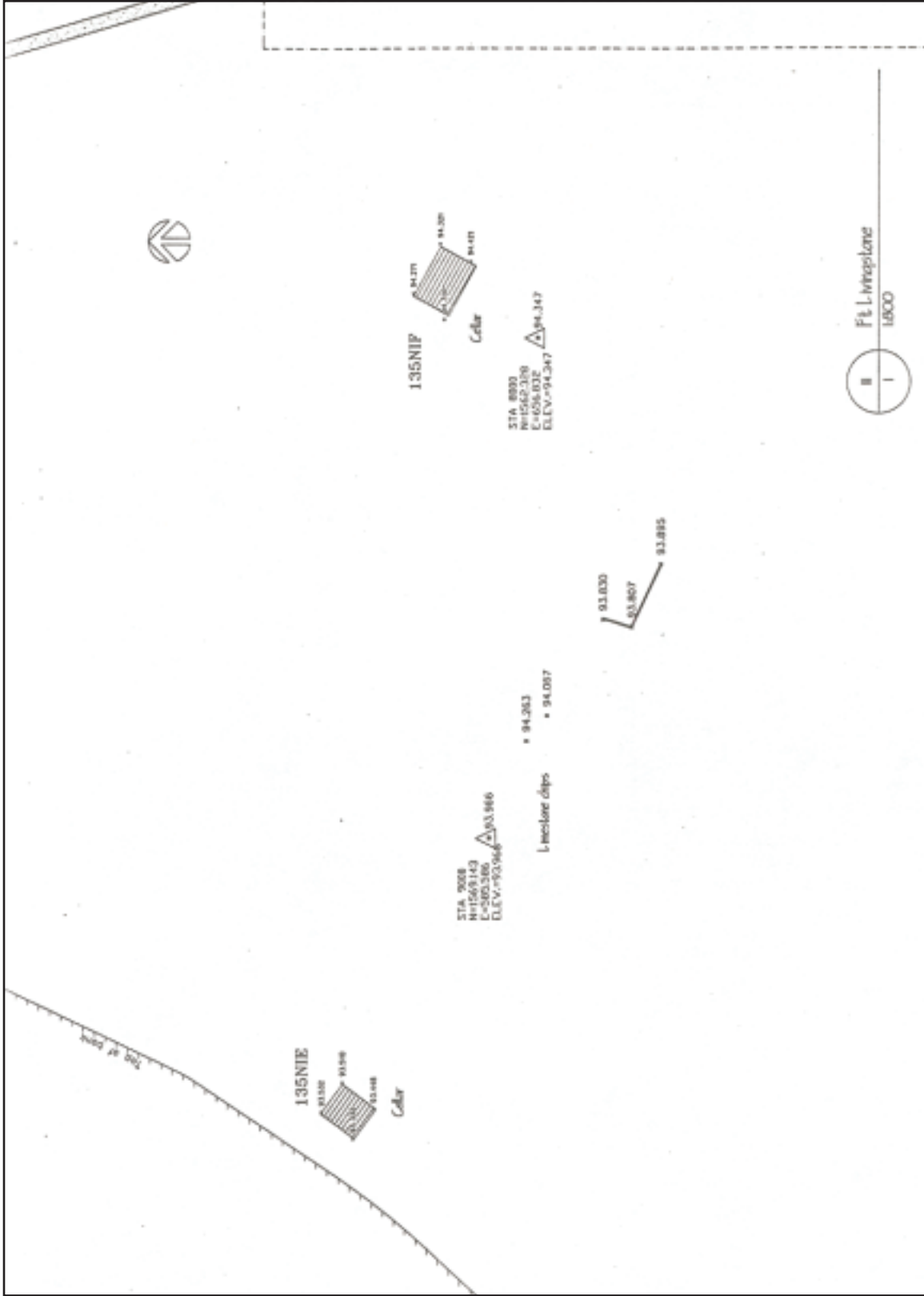
Feature 135N1J is a shallow rectangular trench feature measuring approximately 7.0 m by 12 m (22' x 42') located where the hospital is indicated in Scott's drawing (Fig. 22). These dimensions are nearly the same as those reported by Sutherland for the hospital (cf. Klaus 1962:103). The foundation is north of the courtyard on a low rocky ridge. This is the best



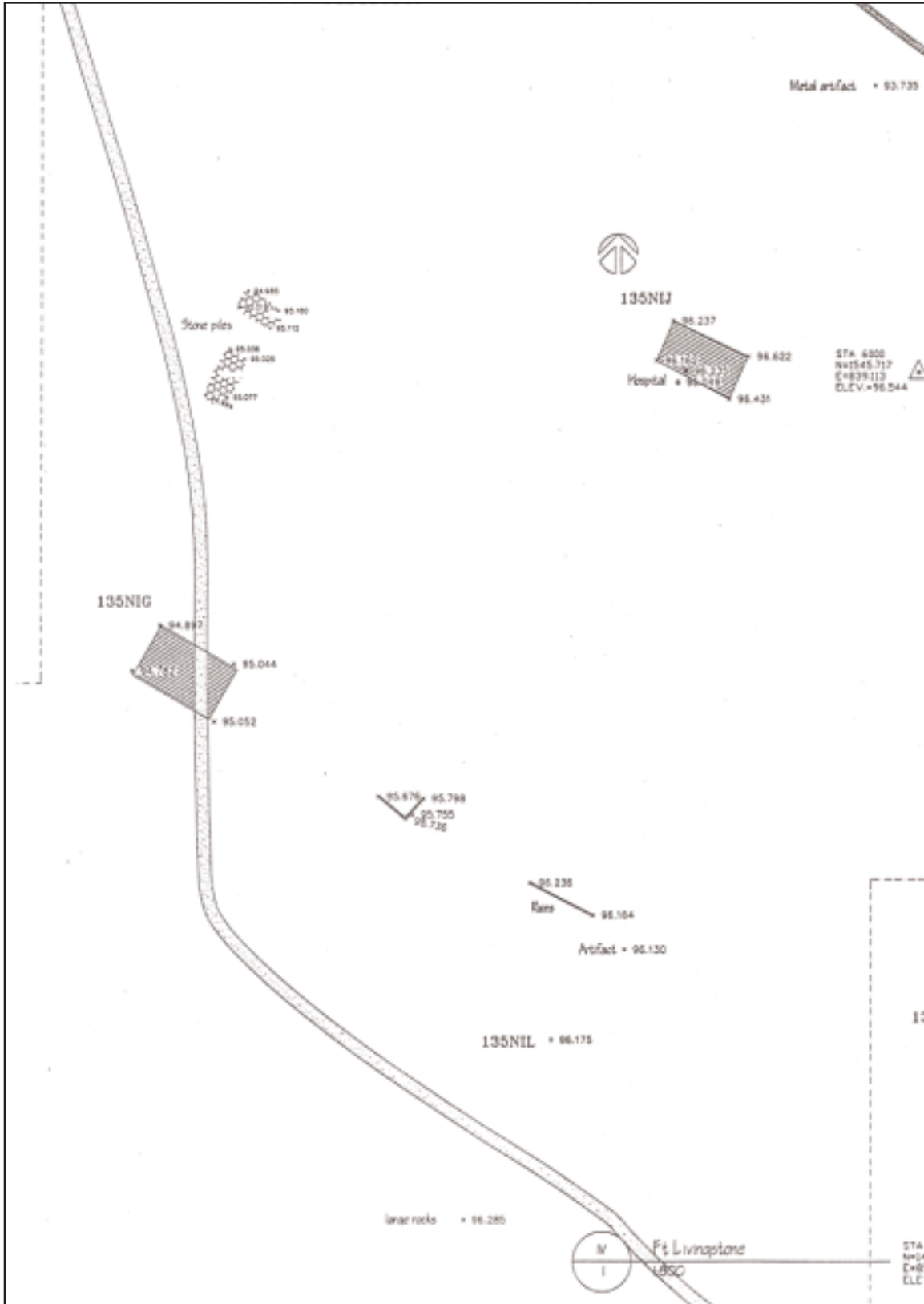
27 Detail of probable structure foundations located below the Snake Creek bank edge. (Prepared by D. McGonigal/G. Shtachletka)



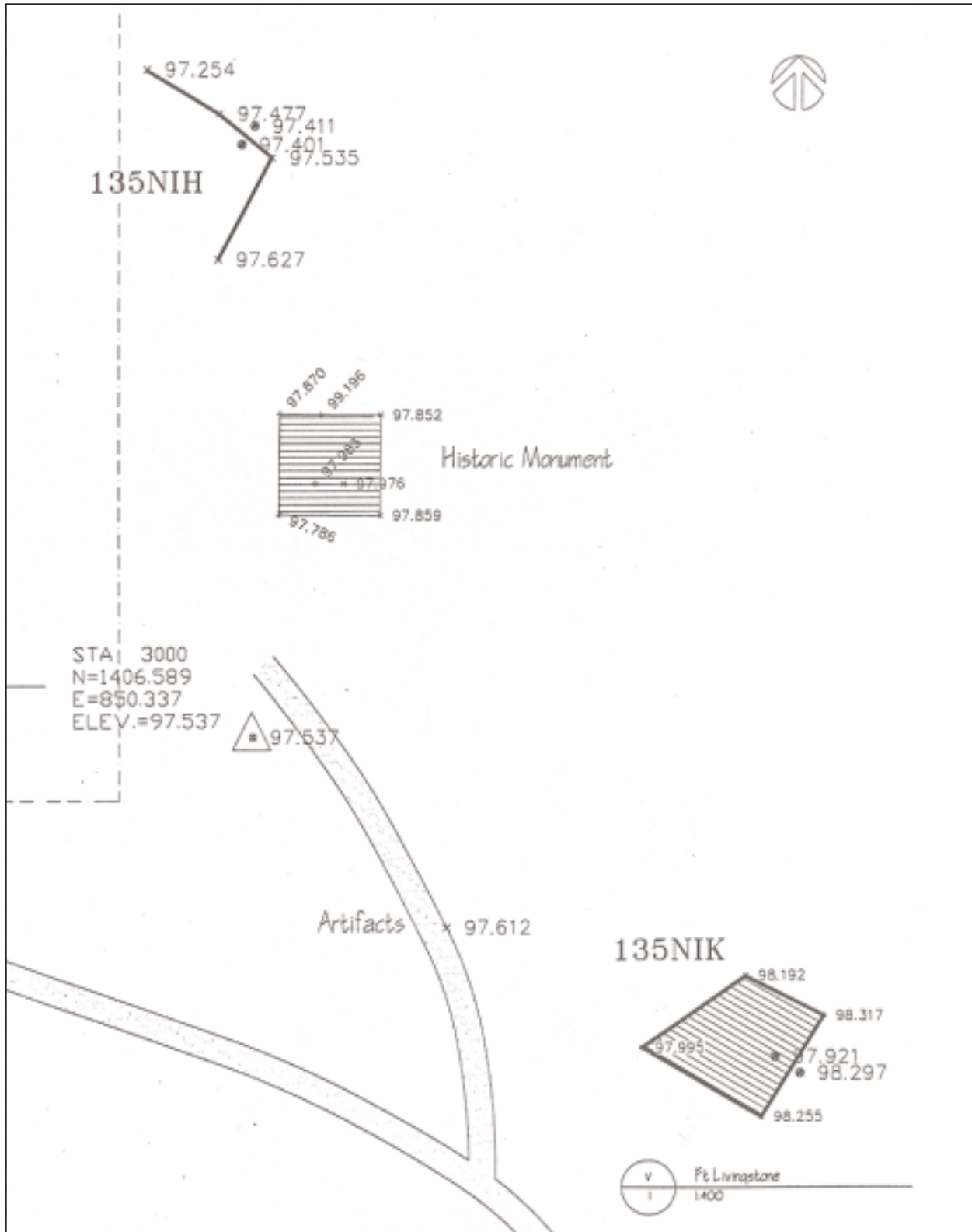
28 Detail of the large cellar depression, 135N1A. (Prepared by D. McGonigal/G. Shlachletka)



29 Detail of features 135N1E and 135N1F. The right angle line and the limestone chips may be where structural remains are located as well but were not identified as such in the field. (Prepared by D. McGonigal and G and . Shlachitka)



30 Detail of features 135N1G, 135N1J and 135N1L. The heavy lines are earth ridge segments that may be building remains. The function of the stone piles is unknown. (Prepared by D. McGonigal and G. Shlachletka)



31 Detail of features 135N1H and 135N1K. The archaeological test excavations were located between the small targets on the northern side of 135N1H. (Prepared by D. McGonigal and G. Shlachletka)

preserved of the foundations observed and the most visible. The trench makes it appear that the building may have stood on an earth and stone platform constructed using earth removed from the trench. Notice that in the Julien drawing (Fig. 7), the hospital seems to be sitting on a raised platform of some sort.

Feature 135N1K is three sides of a shallow rectangular excavation located south- southeast of the site monument. The commissioner's residence/ "governor's house" stood in this area (Figs. 23 and 24). The dimensions of the feature are approximately 10 m x 10 m. In his building inventory of Fort Livingstone, Sutherland stated this building was 35' x 40' (10.6m x 12 m) (cf. Klaus 1962:102).

Feature 135N1L is an artifact cluster exposed in rodent burrow back dirt. There are almost no rodent burrows on the site, probably because of the rocks. However, in the one we observed there was several .577 Snider cartridge cases and clay bullet plugs in the back dirt. The four cartridge cases collected are of the coiled brass variety known as Boxer's Cartridge (Barnes 1980:218). The cartridge cases are inventoried as 135N1L1- 7 and 135N1L1-8 in the Professional and Technical Service Centre, Cultural and Natural Ecology data base. Three were missing their primers, and the fourth with its primer intact, appeared unfired. This could happen if the loaded cartridges had discharged in a fire. Most often, the explosion would cause the primers to be expelled from the cases.

Six clay bullet plugs were collected. Their archaeology inventory number is 135N1L1-9. It is difficult to explain why so many of these artifacts would be found together as they are used in the base of the .577 Snider lead bullet to ensure its expansion when fired. It would be expected to find this type of rifle cartridge at Fort Livingstone as the NWMP used the Enfield Carbine chambered for this ammunition until 1885 (Phillips and Kirby 1965:5-8).

Summary

Traces of the structures that once stood on the site were almost invisible. This is hard to understand given their size. However, a tentative explanation can be offered. An eyewitness account of the site in 1879, five years before it was destroyed by fire, speaks of the buildings as being shells with rusting and rotting implements scattered around them (Clark 1879 as quoted in Hawkes 1924:313). For years after the fort was burned, it was the source of nails and scrap iron for local farmers (Hawkes 1924:313). The scavenging of materials from the site may be the reason why it is so difficult to see structural remains and why there are so few artifacts on the ground surface.

Much of the area previously occupied by the buildings is overgrown by aspen copses. This makes it difficult to follow potential footing or foundation traces on the ground for any distance and to tie in segments so complete building outlines can be identified.

A map of the site was prepared by Parks Canada, Real Property Services, showing the location of the features surveyed to date. This site map is on file with Parks Canada's Professional and Technical Service Centre, Cultural and Natural Ecology section, in Winnipeg. Figures 25 and 27 to 31 are details of the Real Property Service map showing features surveyed. We now know with certainty that the site is completely contained in the land owned by Parks Canada. A comparison of this map with the drawings of Henri Julien and W.J. Scott demonstrates that there is much more yet to be found and mapped. A number of features were identified in the

field that were not assigned sub-operation numbers. Ground cover and trees obscured their possible relationship to other more obvious features. Only after the survey map was completed was it possible to see that some of these are probable structural remains. Further work is needed in this regard before a complete graphic record of the site can be prepared.

As mentioned above, the site is currently being grazed by cattle. As a result, the grass is kept short, probably reducing the threat of fire in dry years. But, the cattle have cut trails across the site that are as much as 30 cm deep in places (cf. Fig. 26). Cattle trampling has helped obscure building evidence. The ridges we surveyed were indistinct and discontinuous, and this may be in part, the result of cattle traffic. One feature, 135N1C, described above, is a probable building foundation that is being used as part of a cow path. This prevents vegetation from being established on it and so it continues to erode, both by animal traffic and slope wash. Its continued use will result in it eventually disappearing.

The site is used locally as a party spot. Several surface hearths were noticed containing evidence of recent use. Incorporating new charcoal from these hearths into the site can contaminate archaeological evidence. It may obscure evidence of structural remains of buildings, fences, flagpoles or any other charred wooden archaeological feature. If pre-contact archaeological remains are present — and there currently is no evidence of this — “new” carbon from these fires inadvertently incorporated into the soil near an ancient fire hearth will cause radio carbon dates obtained from the ancient hearth to be inaccurate.

One morning, we collected about 30 beer bottles from the site. Probably as many more had been broken against the site monument the evening before. Broken bottle fragments were only occasionally observed during our survey of the site, so it is probable that someone locally is cleaning the site. The amount of glass we found on the site the morning after the apparent party, would not be good for the cattle grazing the site. Because the remains of Fort Livingstone occur close to the ground surface (if not on the ground surface, in some places), and it is a relatively recent site archaeologically speaking, it would be difficult to differentiate between some of the modern glass deposited during the local parties, and the glass deposited during its occupation by the NWMP and the NWT government.

Garter Snake Hibernaculum

A garter snake hibernaculum occurs within or near Fort Livingstone. Historically, snakes occurred in phenomenal numbers, as revealed in an account by John Macoun in 1882 (as quoted in Klaus 1962:96-97) where he observed:

They (the snakes) were congregated in and around three basin shaped hollows, which were partly filled with very large boulders, and bordered by a few clumps of bushes. The grass for rods around was filled them and the stones completely covered . . . Coiled on every bush and forming cables from the size of a hawser up to writhing masses three feet in diameter, were snakes from one to five feet in length. Around the hollow, but more particularly on the sunny side, they lay in great heaps, so closely packed together that nothing but heads could be seen.

Klaus (1962:106) also mentions that apart from the inconvenience of the snakes, they were components of sport and entertainment. Contests were held to see how many snakes could be captured in an hour. It is reported that, in one instance, as many as 600 were captured in an hour.

There is evidence that the hibernaculum still exists. On May 11, 1957, James Bacon, a Saskatchewan Conservation Officer, reported a garter snake hibernaculum about 200 yards (183 m) northwest of the Fort Livingstone monument (Keith Roney, Royal Saskatchewan Museum 1995, pers. comm.). A snake migration was observed in 1989 near Norquay, a town about five miles (8 km) west of the site (Wedgwood 1989:143-144). The author of this report believed the snakes he observed were on their way to the hibernaculum near Pelly.

The snakes have been the subject of at least two newspaper accounts. The December 28, 1954 *Regina Leader Post* reported the same historic antidotes as reproduced above. A rather fanciful account was reported in the June 10, 1961 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press* by Gene Telpner, that perhaps the reason why the NWT capital was moved was because of the snakes (cf SAB clipping files).

During our 1995 surveys, we did not observe any snakes on the site, so it has yet to be determined whether the hibernaculum occurs on Parks property. Because Parks Canada is ultimately committed to the protection of animal species occurring in their property (cf. Canadian Heritage 1994:33), it is necessary that the location of the hibernaculum be determined. It may be possible that this location changes from year to year and areas of intermittent use would have to be protected if they fall within the site's boundaries. It may be necessary for an interdisciplinary team of biologists and ecologists to evaluate the ecological importance and management needs of the garter snake hibernaculum.

Annotated Bibliography

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1877

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1980

Cartridges of the World. DBI Books Inc., Northfield, Illinois.

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1897

Sessional Papers. 1879 Report of the Secretary of State for Canada, Extract from the Commissioner's Report, North West Mounted Police, Appendix D, p. 24

Canada, National Archives

Public Works Department Records. File No. 56817, File No. 53014, File No. 53799, File No. 57101.

Coupland, R.T. and J.S. Rowe

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"Natural Vegetation of Saskatchewan", in *Atlas of Saskatchewan*. J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung, eds. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. Pp. 73-77.

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Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies. Ottawa.

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State of the Parks 1994 Report. Parks Canada, Ottawa.**Fleming, Stanford**

1880

Report of the C.P.R., 1880. Maclean, Roger and Co., Ottawa.**Hawkes, John**

1924

The Story of Saskatchewan and its People. The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago/Regina. Chapters 37 and 38 contain valuable references to Fort Livingstone, some of them quoting eyewitness accounts. Among these are J.W. Scott, whose sketches are the basis of the only graphic record of the Fort. It also contains an eyewitness account of the site by Mr. Clark of Clark's Crossing, Saskatchewan.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Manitoba Archives*Fort Pelly Journal of Daily Events:***B/159/A/20**

Four pages from 1873 but without the month identified, contains references to the "Barracks" and the police living there. No specific details of events.

B/159/A/21

Journal from 1876-78 with numerous references to the "Barracks." Several pages are illegible due to the handwriting. There are references to (but no details of) important events at Swan River Barracks such as the arrival and departure of Lieutenant Governor David Laird. Note that there are some apparent date discrepancies between this journal and newspaper accounts of David Laird's arrival at Fort Livingstone.

Longstreth, T. Morris

1927

The Silent Force. The Century Company, New York.

See "Swan River" in Index.

Klaus, J.F.

1962

"Fort Livingstone". Saskatchewan History, Vol. 15:93-110.

A short, concise history summarizing the historic events surrounding the concept, construction and use of the facility. There is some confusion in this article whether Livingstone, the telegraph station, differs in location from Fort Livingstone, the NWMP headquarters. Sources of some of the information presented are not mentioned.

Macoun, John

1882

Manitoba and the Great Northwest. The World Publishing Co., Guelph, Ontario.**Phillips, R., and S.J. Kirby**

1965

“Small Arms of the Mounted Police”, *Historical Arms Series*, No. 6. Museum Restoration Service, Ottawa.

Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB)

Microfilm R2.53. Canada. Department of Public Works Records. Included Public Works Records files listed above as well as others relating to the construction and criticisms of the Fort.

———. . Clipping files

Contains four newspaper accounts about Fort Livingstone history.

———. . Fort Livingstone file R-E 3359. Contains the following items:

- a compilation of data in point form by L.H. Thomas, apparently extracted from various sources;
- a copy of a letter from D. Rudkin, Public Archives of Canada, dated September 24, 1962, to J.H. Archer listing documents in Public Archives that relate to Fort Livingstone;
- a letter signed by J.W. Scott telling of the sketch he drew and the stake he erected on the site of the Governor’s house;
- a file transferred to A.M. Sevewright from Department of Fisheries and Forestry containing Department of the Interior documents discussing erection of a sign by J.W. Scott at the site;
- a topographical surveys map dated 1900 showing the site of Fort Livingstone;
- copies of the complete contents of this file are in the archaeology site files in Winnipeg.

Saskatchewan Research Council

1986

Surficial Geology of the Yorkton Area (62M, N) Saskatchewan. Saskatoon.

Southesk, Earl of

1875

Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains. James Campbell and Son, Toronto.

Steele, Col. S.B.

1915

Forty Years in Canada. McMillan, Goodchild and Stewart, Toronto.

Thomas, Lewis H.

1956

The Struggle for Responsible Government in the North-West Territories 1870-97. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Turner, John Peter

1950

The North West Mounted Police. The Queen’s Printer, Ottawa. 2 vols.
See index of Vol. 2, “Detachment, Swan River” and “Headquarters.”
Swan River Barracks is mentioned numerous times throughout.

Tyrell, J.B.

1892

“Report on North-Western Manitoba with Portions of the Adjacent Districts of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan,” *Geological Survey of Canada, Part E. Annual Report, Vol. V, 1889 - 90 - 91*. Queen’s Printer, Ottawa.

States on page 106, in describing the Snake Creek Valley, he mentions in passing, “The Mounted Police had a large barracks which was burnt by a prairie fire in 1884. The place where the fort stood is now strewn over with charred wood, pieces of rusty iron. ”

Ward, B. Payton

1896

Roughing it in the North-West Territories of Canada Twenty Years Ago. Warrall and Robey, London.

Wedgwood, Jim A.

1989

“Migrating Snakes,” *Blue Jay*, Vol. 47(3):143-144. Regina.

Short observational account of garter snakes near Norquay migrating towards the Pelly hibernaculum, possibly at the site of Fort Livingstone.