Tracking Down South Branch House:

A Critical Look at the Identification of the

Hudson's Bay Company's South Branch House (FfNm-1)

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By

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ABSTRACT

The late Arthur Silver Morton has contributed immensely to our understanding and preservation of western Canadian history. One of Morton's joys was locating remains of long forgotten fur trade posts. As a result, a large number of the Saskatchewan fur trade posts that we know of were located and recorded by Morton. The majority of Morton's investigations took place throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Morton consulted whatever historic sources were available to him at the time: numerous historic documents, ethnographic accounts and local histories.

There has been archaeological evidence that suggests Morton misidentified numerous fur trade post sites. For example, research at the Hudson's Bay Company's South Branch House (1786-1794), which Morton identified in 1944, has sparked some controversy as to whether or not it is that particular post. As a result, this provides the author with an excellent chance to examine how Morton identified Saskatchewan fur trade posts and to determine through archaeological excavations and historical documents the accuracy of Morton's historical site designation at South Branch House.

A critical approach to Morton's work will determine how accurate his work is for contemporary archaeological investigations of fur trade posts. Furthermore, this thesis may provide historical archaeologists with insights as to how to go about identifying fur trade posts, which will contribute to our overall understanding of the western Canadian fur trade.

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(Note: Volunteers include excavations, cataloguing and surface survey)

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"The abandoned posts crumbled to ruins, the weeds, the saplings [sic], then the forest cloaked them, and, with the day of their generation lost, their very location became a matter of legend."

(Arthur Silver Morton c.1937:19)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation

HBC: Hudson's Bay Company

NWC: North West Company

SBH: South Branch House I (1786 – 1794)

SAS: Saskatchewan Archaeological Society

HSMB: Historic Sites and Monument Board

DBS: Depth Below Surface

km: Kilometers

m: Meters

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

Multiple lines of evidence such as those provided through history, ethnohistory and archaeology must be used in order to reconstruct the past accurately. In some cases like the one to be explored in this thesis, archaeological studies can allow us to re-examine sites and raise questions that might not have been considered by any one discipline alone. While archaeology and history do differ from one another, they share similar goals and can benefit from one another. Given the multi-faceted nature of historical archaeology, it is inevitable that historical archaeologists will incorporate documentary and other types of sources into their research.

Historical archaeology did not gain formal status until the mid-1960s (Deagan 1996:16). During the discipline's infancy it was often criticized as being the 'handmaiden to history' (Barber 1994; Funeri et al. 1999:2; Jones 1999:222; Little 1996:43). British archaeologist Ivor Noël Hume coined this term in 1964 (Little 1996:43) and considerable controversy within the discipline resulted. The outcome of these debates (Barber 1994; Funeri et al. 1999:2; Jones 1999:222; Little 1996:43) was that historical archaeology emerged as a multifaceted discipline able to provide unique perspectives on past lives. A more productive relationship with the discipline of history has subsequently developed. The strength of historical archaeology is its incorporation of information from and contributions to a number of other disciplines both within and outside archaeology (Deagan 1996:18).

1.1 Documentary Archaeology

Historical archaeologists commonly use historical evidence derived from journals, maps, government records and oral histories as primary evidence. A reliance on historical evidence is what led Mary Beaudry to describe historical archaeology as 'documentary archaeology'"

(Beaudry 1988:1, in Wilkie 2006:13). A description of documentary archaeology is provided by Laurie A. Wilkie:

> While documentary archaeology shares an essential database, the documentary record, with historians, the two are distinct in their focus, practice, and gaze. Historians, although they may use oral history or material evidence, usually see the documentary record as the primary window available for gazing into the past. Documentary archaeologists see their 'archive' as including written records, oral traditions, and material culture – from both archaeological and curated sources. These additional windows may provide overlapping, conflicting, or entirely different insights into the past. The challenge for archaeologists is to use these independent but complementary lines of evidence to construct meaningful, fuller, understandings of the past [Wilkie 2006:14].

This thesis is concerned with a multi-faceted evaluation of the identification of a fur trade site (the HBC South Branch House or FfNm-1) located near St. Louis (Figure 1). Evidence from three seasons of excavations (2005, 2007 and 2008) and a re-evaluation of available historical and oral history accounts has challenged its identification and led to the research forming the present thesis.

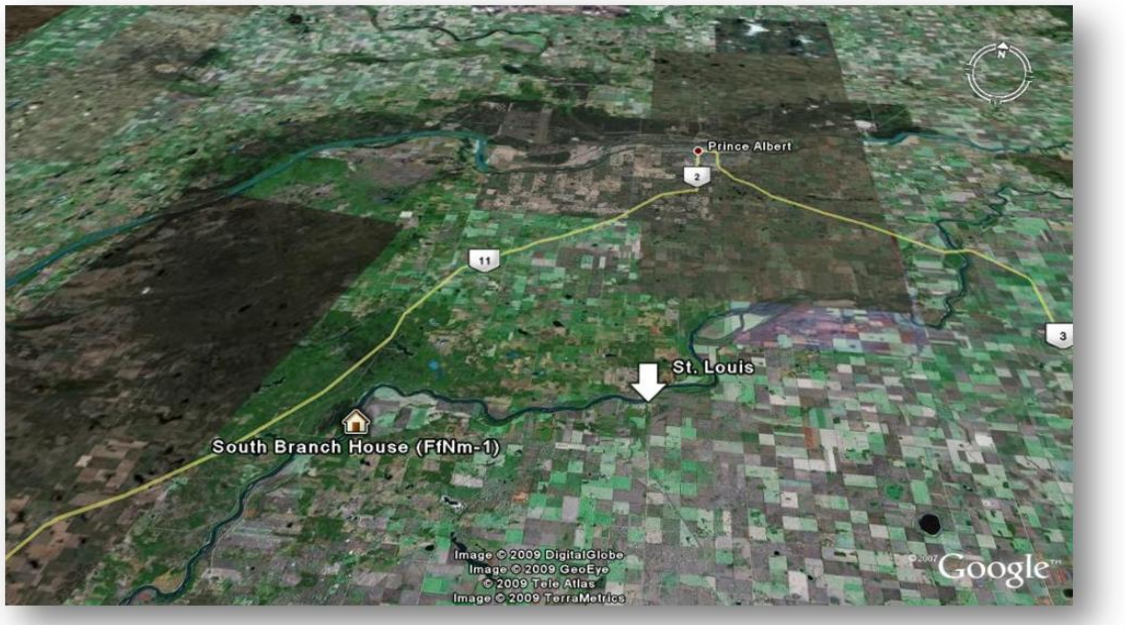

Figure 1: Google Earth image of the location of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1).

While historical evidence can provide crucial information, historical archaeologists must critically evaluate the authenticity of that evidence and thus its applicability to archaeological interpretations. For example,

> Contradictions between documents create problems in verification of historic fact. Occasionally, it is virtually impossible to determine which documents are accurate. For example, if a document stating one thing is contradicted by another document, the second document does not necessarily falsify the first one. There is no objective way to decide which document is correct. In these instances, an independent set of data, such as archaeological remains, is often important for verification [Pyszczyk 1989a:8].

Charles Orser also argues along this same line. He explains, "[…] a person's personal letters, memoirs, and diaries usually present only tiny pieces of history. In many cases, eyewitnesses are misleading, are ambiguous, and even downright wrong" (Orser 1996:10). Historical evidence, such as documents, "should be considered in terms of the social and political contexts in which they were produced, the positions and interests of the authors and the audiences, and the active role which texts may have played in the construction and negotiation of cultural identity" (Jones 1999:223-224).

The following chapters will review numerous historical accounts from both fur traders' journals and Arthur Silver Morton's personal notes. In addition to the historical accounts, archaeological evidence will also be reviewed to further the overall interpretation of the site. In order to identify a trading post site in terms of company affiliation and age, it is crucial that we take a critical approach, or in terms documentary archaeology, we avoid conclusions on the basis of a particular reference.

A critical evaluation of Arthur Silver Morton's fur trade post identifications will be addressed in the following chapters. A vast amount of Morton's personal records are housed in the Saskatchewan Archives (*Historical Geography of the Canadian West up to 1870, vol. X.*

Saskatchewan River – The Forks and South Branch, Sturgeon Forts, Carlton House, Battleford Region), University of Saskatchewan Archives (*Morton Papers*), and in the Special Collections (*Arthur S. Morton Manuscripts Collection*) at the University of Saskatchewan library. Joan Champ (1990) has also written a Master's thesis on Morton's early contributions to Saskatchewan heritage. Fortunately, a few of the fur trade posts "identified" by Morton have been archaeologically investigated and their final reports will be reviewed. Aside from the critical examination of the literature, an archaeological investigation of the HBC South Branch House will provide a contemporary archaeological example to add weight to my arguments.

An understanding of the fur trade history and historical evidence, together with a discussion of the archaeological findings at South Branch House (FfNm-1), will demonstrate the problems with the identification of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1). The objective of this thesis is to sort out the problems associated with this site in the hope of contributing to the overall interpretation of FfNm-1. Perhaps my research also could assist with future archaeological work that deals with trading posts identified by Morton. Although an exact identification of South Branch House (FfNm-1) may be difficult to reach at this time, this thesis will identify and demonstrate the various problems associated with correlating historical descriptions with the archaeological remains of fur trade sites.

The following chapters will explore a number of areas that will demonstrate the benefits of documentary archaeology as opposed to relying on identifications based on limited evidence. Chapter 2 will address how the fur trade has been researched in western Canada while Chapter 3 will discuss Morton's practice in identifying sites. Morton's identification of the HBC's South Branch House is the focus of Chapter 4. Chapter 5 will review the history of the fur trade along the South Saskatchewan River. The historical evidence from the fur trade literature for the

identification of South Branch House is the focus of Chapter 6 while Chapter 7 addresses the archaeological evidence. Chapter 8 will present the final conclusions from this attempt to identify the location of the HBC's South Branch House.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Researching the Fur Trade

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the developments that have shaped research into the fur trade. Although the concept of nationalism is primarily responsible for such research, influential historians such as Arthur S. Morton have also played fundamental roles by identifying, protecting, and in most cases conducting the initial research on these sites. The following paragraphs will explore these developments and provide the necessary background in order to appreciate the problem with the identification of the HBC South Branch House.

2.1 Historic Sites and Monuments Board

In the early 20th century, Canada, unlike other 'great nations,' appeared to lack a historical identity that consequently set it aside from the rest of the world. The Canadian government responded to this lack by creating the Federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board in 1919 which soon became known as the Historic Sites and Monuments Board (HSMB) (Klimko 2004). The intent of this government body was to promote Canada's history with a nationalistic agenda.

The HSMB soon realized the potential of the history of the fur trade for contributing to a Canadian sense of identity. The fur trade offered an excellent chance for a dominantly white male organization to promote concepts such as exploration into untamed wilderness, masculinity, and nationalism. "The board viewed itself as part of an educated elite whose duty lay in imparting proper values of patriotism, duty, self sacrifice and spiritual devotion to young and new Canadians and member of lower orders of society" (Taylor 1990:47 as cited in Klimko

2004:170). The ingrained image of the rugged, tough fur trader and/or company civilizing the Canadian wilderness added fuel to the growing interest in promoting an almost mythological history of which Canadians could be proud.

The HSMB can be seen as the fundamental building block that led to fur trade research conducted from a variety of disciplines. Klimko (2004:163) summarizes the HSMB role by explaining, "[i]n their consideration of regional themes the HSMB identified 'discovery and exploration' as representative of western Canada, and, as such, set the tone for commemorative sites and future research." Aside from the establishment of the HSMB, it took influential figures such as Arthur S. Morton to further the recognition of western Canada's history alongside that of eastern Canada.

Despite Morton's efforts, the HSMB failed to recognize the fur trade posts identified by Morton and consequently few sites were protected by the HSMB prior to the formation of the Parks Branch in Saskatchewan. Champ (1991) feels that this problem was partially due to Morton's favouritism toward things British. Despite having been raised in Trinidad, British West Indies, Morton was given the equivalent of the British public school education system and therefore tended to pay more attention to sites that were occupied by the HBC (Champ 1991). Champ speculates,

> Morton's historical bias in favour of the HBC resulted in a clash of opinion with historians in eastern Canada who traditionally viewed the British company as an obstacle to Canadian expansion prior to 1870. This clash manifested itself in Morton's struggles to have the fur-trading posts commemorated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) throughout the 1920s and 1930s. His desire to commemorate the fort sites was inconsistent with the board's focus on the "civilization" of the West after Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory were transferred to Canada [Champ 1991:43].

Out of frustration, Morton created the Provincial Trust in 1937. Champ (1991) points out that this group enabled the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan to acquire historic sites.

We have to take into consideration that documentary evidence, such as trading post journals, are scarce and thus are hard to come by with respect to the majority of the trading companies, as opposed to the rich archives of the HBC. The HBC required that journals be kept at each trading post to document their daily work activities. Therefore, it is no surprise that Morton took advantage of these records for his research. In fact, in 1933Morton was the first historian granted access to the HBC archives which were at that time located in London, England. Furthermore, in the case of South Branch House, Morton initially attempted to protect the NWC South Branch House opposed to the HBC South Branch House (Morton 1928-1945a). While Morton's notes (1928-1945) do not provide his reason for protecting the HBC South Branch House he may have been fascinated by its violent history, or possibly he was shown the HBC's remains prior to being taken to the remains across the river which he identified as the NWC South Branch House.

Archaeology was not widely practiced in Saskatchewan during Morton's lifetime. It is rather unfortunate that Morton was unable to utilize archaeology as a source to provide him with additional evidence. Morton, along with the Provincial Trust, protected a number of sites and this has allowed archaeological research to commence at these sites. Years after Morton's death an important development – the formation of the Massey Commission – occurred that would help protect historical sites.

2.2 The Massey Commission and the Creation of the Parks Branch

While Morton was not able to witness the full effects of his preservation efforts, his endeavors would lead to significant developments for the protection of a number of historical sites. The formation of the Massey Commission in the 1950s led to new developments with regard to how historical sites were protected. "The Massey Commission had as its task, investigating the role federal agencies could play in promoting Canadian history, traditions, national life and common achievements" (Klimko 1998:205). While the Massey Commission certainly played a crucial role with respect to the perception of western Canadian history, it would eventually evolve into an even more powerful organization.

The HSMB, Arthur S. Morton's influence and the Massey Commission played significant roles in the formation of the Saskatchewan Parks Branch in the 1960s. The Parks Branch was a response to renewed interests in nationalistic ideals. Ironically, this is exactly what Morton was striving for prior to 1945. "From a regional perspective these projects served to give depth and meaning to local areas by revealing that not all history occurred in eastern Canada" (Klimko 1998:206). Western Canada now had the resources and support needed for the protection and commemoration of historic sites.

2.3 Canada's Centennial

Another influential event, Canada's centennial, played an integral role in the development not only of the Parks Branch but also of archaeological fieldwork. Former fur trade post sites once again became a focus for promoting nationalism. Klimko, who has written numerous articles on this topic, demonstrates how these feelings have influenced the development of fur trade archaeology. Klimko (1998:206) explains, "archaeology's purpose was

to identify sites, locate structures, and recover artifacts (Fry 1986:38); thereby lending an aura of authenticity to whatever interpretation program was chosen, be it the technological, economic, or social aspects of the fur trade."

Fur trade archaeology, unlike other areas of study in historical archaeology, has been heavily influenced by the public's imagination. Klimko provides an interesting discussion on how the fur trade has become part of Canadian folklore.

> Over the past century the fur trade era has become a part of Canadian mythology replete with visions of beavers, hardy traders battling rapids in canoes or traversing portages, major trading company posts in the wilderness, and trading ceremonies with aboriginal groups – all described within a prevailing atmosphere of romanticism and adventure [Klimko 2004:157].

Initially, the role of fur trade archaeology was to reinforce the public's imagination with regard to this unique period in Canadian history. Aside from its appealing nature, the images and lore of the fur trade also instilled a sense of nationalism within Canadians.

Fur trade archaeology was at its height throughout the 1960s and 1970s. There were major reconnaissance projects conducted in the Churchill River, Saskatchewan River Forks, Nipawin and Amisk Lake areas and major excavations of at least 11 post sites (Klimko 1994). The heavy emphasis on nationalism lying behind many of these excavations led to archaeologists excavating numerous fur trade posts for the intent of reconstruction and interpretation for the general public. Unfortunately, most of these excavations were primarily focused on locating structural features and attractive artifacts for display. Sadly, few reports were actually completed for many of these excavations (Klimko 1994). A good example to demonstrate this is the site of Fort Carlton. Although the fort has been reconstructed (Figure 2) and acts as a tourist attraction for Saskatchewan, the archaeological fieldwork has yet to be fully documented.

Figure 2: The reconstruction of Fort Carlton
(photograph by Michael A. Markowski)

Fortunately, in the last three decades or so, many positive research initiatives have been developed in fur trade archaeology, including the study of such topics as ethnicity, gender, status and rank, spatial arrangement of posts, culture contact and much more (eg. Hamilton 2000; Pyszczyk 1997; Rubbertone 2000). One common problem in many fur trade investigations is the identification of the post. Archaeologists have realized this problem (ie. Klimko and McKeand 1998); however, the identification of posts has not been the primary focus of past research. The objective of this thesis is to focus entirely on the identification of a trading post identified during the 1930s, which became the first provincial historic site.

Prior to discussing the evidence that challenges Morton's identification of South Branch House, an understanding of how Morton identified sites will provide the necessary background to understand the importance of re-evaluating his identifications. This topic will be examined in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Arthur Silver Morton

Arthur Silver Morton, a well-known Canadian historian, identified a plethora of fur trade posts – at least 30 – in Saskatchewan. How did Morton identify these sites? Are Morton's identifications relevant to contemporary fur trade archaeological research? The evidence suggests that problems arise with Morton's identification of fur trade company affiliations once archaeology has been applied to the sites he studied (Clark 1969; Klimko and McKeand 1998; MacKie 1968; Smyth and Chism 1973). To be fair, Morton was searching for trading post sites prior to professional archaeology in Saskatchewan and did not have access to the historical records that we have at hand today.

Aside from Morton, it is also important to recognize the early work of geologist J. B. Tyrrell, avocational historian Campbell Innes and amateur archaeologists (see Innes 1927-1930; Tyrrell 1888, 1916,). Avocational archaeologists along with these influential men can be credited with locating and identifying the majority of fur trade posts in the west, which would be investigated by later fur trade archaeologists. While Morton was active in the Battleford area, much of the pioneering work there was done by Campbell Innes (Robert Clipperton, personal communication 2009):

> Morton and Innes seemed to be in competition to some extent in the collecting of early accounts of western settlement. Innes certainly regarded Morton to be the expert on trading posts and would get Morton to come up and 'verify' what he had found. On the other hand, Morton had little use for Innes in so far as his scholarship was concerned [Robert Clipperton, personal communication 2009].

Unfortunately, there has been little research on the roles that these men played in the preservation, commemoration, and archival research that have contributed to our comprehension

of the history of the fur trade. Of Morton, Tyrrell and Innes, Morton is often recognized as playing the most significant role. Perhaps this is due to his meticulous record keeping and to the availability of his documents in the Saskatchewan Archives, Special Collections, and the University Archives, all located at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition to these collections Joan Champ, former Master of Arts student in the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan, wrote a thesis, *Laying the Foundations: Arthur Silver Morton and his Early Saskatchewan Heritage* Activities. This thesis discusses Morton's contributions to Saskatchewan history (1990). Champ also wrote an article, *Arthur Silver Morton: Beating the Bounds on the Saskatchewan,* which is an invaluable resource that portrays Morton's passion for western Canada's history.

Morton is credited with initiating the first archival and field search for Saskatchewan fur trade post sites beginning around 1930 (Champ 1991:43; Klimko 1994:70). While other individuals such as J. B. Tyrrell (1858-1957) in the late 1800s and Campbell Innes (1886-1961) in the early 1900s were active in locating trading post sites they were not as meticulous as Morton. Morton's education played a key role in his preservation efforts, which he also passed on to his students and colleagues such as O. C. Furniss, W.M. Stewart (Morton 1928-1945a:454) and the prominent western Canadian historian and politician Grant MacEwan (Klimko 1994:70).

We should take into consideration the time period in which Morton was active in Saskatchewan, the 1920s up until his death in 1945. Morton never had access to microfilms of post journals, or to published versions of trader's journals. In fact, there was considerably less information available during Morton's time than there is today. Furthermore, professional archaeology was not widely practiced in Saskatchewan until the 1960s. Despite difficulties obtaining information, Morton identified well over 30 fur trade posts sites (Klimko 1994:70, 76).

Currently, it is estimated by Dale Russell and David Meyer, based on careful research into post journals, maps, surface remains and archaeological excavation reports, that there were approximately 380 posts in the province (Russell and Meyer 1999:33-35). Only 12 of these 380 sites have been the subject of major excavations (Klimko 1994:92: Markowski and Cyr-Steenkamp 2009, 2008). Some of these projects included the involvement of the following individuals and organizations: Alice and Thomas Kehoe, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History excavation at the Francois-Finlay complex during the mid 1960s; Anthony. J. Ranere, Department of Natural Resources archaeologist at Fort Carlton during the mid 1960s; John Hodges, Regina Archaeological Society at Last Mountain House during the 1960s; Norman and Anne Barka – Sturgeon Post during the early 1960s; Terrance Smythe and James Chism at Fort Esperance and at Qu'Appelle (1969) and Pelly II (1971) and Hugh MacKie at Fort Riviere Tremblante1967, 1968) ((Klimko 1994:77-81, 90).

Aside from identifying and recording these sites, Morton felt confident in the identification of the company that had occupied the trading post site. Many archaeologists who have experience working on trading post sites that Morton identified agree that Morton's identifications were not always correct. A retired archaeologist pointed out:

> Although Morton was fantastic in locating post sites (usually by asking the local farmers), he was often in complete error in his statements that a site was either North West Company (NWC) or HBC (HBC). Somehow he was able to trace evidence of stockades through all the frost-heaves and underbrush (something no recent works have never been able to do) and then identify the company by their shape [Dale Russell, personal communication 2008].

After reviewing a large number of archaeological reports, it appears that archaeologists have realized problems with the identification of trading posts but have not been able to focus exclusively on the identification of the site.

Before we examine Morton's work, which would eventually play a role in fur trade archaeology, it is appropriate to learn a little about who Arthur S. Morton was. Morton was born in the village of Iere in Trinidad, British West Indies on May 16, 1870 (Champ 1990:1). Prior to becoming a noted historian in western Canada, Morton completed a course in theology which was required for the Bachelor of Divinity degree at Edinburgh (Champ 1990:4).

As part of his schooling he was able to take a variety of subjects in which he soon found his niche. Morton soon became specialized in church and medieval history (Champ 1990:5). Morton's interest in medieval history would eventually influence his career as a professor at the University of Saskatchewan. While Morton was attending University, he was influenced by a reform movement that began in Victorian England during the latter half of the 19th century (Champ 1990:5). This movement included a renewed interest in British history and influenced all schools that recognized history as a scholarly discipline. While Morton was attending school in Edinburgh, Scotland, he was instructed in the new paradigm. One of the most important factors of this new model involved recognizing national heritage. Popular pastimes soon developed that consisted of visiting historical sites, collecting historical documents and artifacts that reaffirmed peoples' connection to their past. The expression "beating the bounds," also known as field history, consequently played an important role in the education of history students.

> This custom involved taking young people of the community around to the boundary markers in the countryside and knocking the youngsters' heads against the markers to ensure that they would remember their locations [Morton c.1937:3; as cited in Lowenthal 1985:250; Champ 1991:41].

Morton's education instilled a sense of identity in him. "Morton likened the fort remains to the English boundary markers: if lost to memory, the community would lose something of

fundamental value. “We may well ‘beat the bounds’ of these marks of our history,” wrote Morton, “and in the old fur trade forts see the birthplace of national qualities to which we must hold” (Morton c.1937:19-20 in Champ 1991:41).

3.1 Saskatchewan Heritage Activities

After a few years in eastern Canada, Morton took a position as a history professor at the University of Saskatchewan in 1914. It was not long afterward that Morton would begin to apply the concepts of history in which he was educated. Champ explains, “Morton’s urge to learn more about Saskatchewan’s past was part of his need to gain a sense of place and identity” (Champ 1990:20). Having lived in eastern Canada, Morton soon recognized that western Canada’s heritage was given little value in comparison to that of the east.

Arthur S. Morton felt that the HSMB was ignoring the history of western Canada and thus felt the need to demonstrate that the history of the west deserved as much attention as that of the east. Champ provides an excellent overview of this development.

> Beginning in the fall of 1926, Morton went to great lengths to discover and protect the sites of the old posts. He was motivated as well by a strong sense of duty as a professional historian to the people of Saskatchewan to provide them with as complete as possible of their region’s history. The sites of the old fur-trading posts would, he believed, evoke a sense of the full flavour of the past and stimulate historical awareness in the public [Champ 1991:43].

Morton’s English background and the English custom of ‘beating the bounds’ (Champ 1991) added inspiration to his undertakings.

As a result of Morton’s determination, he provided the framework for western Canadian history. Morton contributed to not only our understanding of western Canadian history but also the preservation of historic sites. While Morton published books, *Under Western Skies* (Morton

1937), and transcribed and published journals, *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray* (Morton 1929), his greatest work was his 1939 publication, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (Morton 1973). Morton felt that an understanding of the historical geography of the west was required prior to writing *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (Champ 1990). An important element of Morton's historical geography was locating the remains of fur trade posts. If it were not for Morton's efforts, a number of historical sites may have been destroyed.

While Morton's activity in locating trading post sites is acknowledged, nobody has really challenged how he conducted his research. Russell notes,

> I have always had a great deal of respect for the amount of archival research he [Morton] was able to get through and make sense of. I am also amazed at his fieldwork in the days when roads were very poor and he often had to force his way over farm trails. He was also able to locate good informants. However, he was very quick to readily identify sites with actually very little evidence. He could find stockades at the drop of a hat! [Dale Russell, personal communication 2008].

Joan Champ provides a descriptive account of Morton in the field which one can easily visualize:

> Often Morton would make several visits to the site of an old post, writing detailed descriptions and drawing intricate maps of the area. Then he checked and double checked his findings against the fur-trading company records (Morton 1928-1945a). A cautious man by nature, Morton hesitated to announce the discovery of a post until all doubt had been eliminated. Often this process took years and resulted in the deferral of site commemorations by the federal board [Champ 1991:45-46].

While reading over Morton's records (SAB 1928-1945 Arthur S. Morton, of the University of Saskatchewan. Historical Geography of the Canadian West up to 1870) which he used to write one of his famed publications, *Historical Geography of the Canadian West up to 1870*, it is evident that he literally excavated historical documents and conducted thorough research.

After Morton exhausted the historical evidence, he often set out to locate the remains of the fur trade post (Figure 3). It was important to Morton to locate these types of sites and to try

to protect them. Aside from Morton's personal interests, he felt it was important to locate the sites of long forgotten fur trade posts prior to writing, *Historical Geography of the Canadian West to 1870* (Figure 3). During this period, Morton developed a set of guidelines for locating trading post remains (Champ 1990:64). "Morton set out these guidelines in a memorandum to the committee of the Prince Albert Historical Society that had been appointed to search for the sites of forts in their region" (Champ 1990:64). Morton explained:

> The remains of the forts are in the form of cellars, and beside the cellars of the more important houses will be found mounds with stones about six to nine inches across. These are the chimneys which were made of stone and mud plaster, the upper part being mud. At times the line of the palisade can be traced out – forming a square around the fort. It will also assist in fixing the doubtful sites of forts to remember that rival companies built not far from one another so as to protect their own interests at the hands of their opponents. The forts were usually on a 'low bottom' easily approached from the river […] [Morton 1908-1946:I.37 as cited in Champ 1990:65].

Morton's guideline provides evidence that he was primarily interested in the presence of 1) cellar depressions and 2) chimney mounds. Russell Clarke, an information officer with the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources, explains, "[p]rofessor Morton found that most posts on the Saskatchewan were built on land that had not later been brought under cultivation. Where this was the case, the outline of stockades and buildings could sometimes be traced. A shallow depression in the earth is the most common clue leading to the discovery of a fort site […]" (Clarke 1966:41). In his book, *Under Western Skies*, Morton provides additional evidence to support the basis on which he identified trading post sites:

> The ruins of the forts, as they are today, are marked by the cellars and the chimney heaps, that is mounds of the mud of the chimney which had fallen over stone fire-places usually, though not always, standing beside the cellars. Sometimes the position of the bastion can be traced, more rarely the lines of the palisades. In any case, the palisades would run so as to include within them the cellars and chimney-heaps. The French forts

were usually narrow and long, with the narrow end to the water. The English forts were usually square [Morton 1937:81].

Morton relied entirely on documentary evidence to support his identifications. Fortunately, the HBC, unlike other companies, kept detailed journals at their posts which Morton relied on to support his identifications.

Figure 3: Arthur S. Morton and crew searching for posts, August 17 1942. Left to Right: Grant MacEwan, Father Latour, Arthur S. Morton, and Father Doucette at the proposed site of the St. Laurent Post [NWC SBH II and HBC Carlton House II] (permission to use from the SAB accession number S-219).

3.2 Identifying Trading Posts

While Morton followed a set of guidelines to identify the physical remains of trading posts, he relied on documentary evidence to determine the age and affiliation of the features. In order to appreciate Morton's thorough system of identifying sites we will take a brief look at

several examples. The following sections will review four posts along the South Saskatchewan River for which Morton left detailed records that explain how he identified these sites (Figure 4).

3.2.1 Forts des Isles and Belleau's Post

Morton was able to associate features on opposite sides of the South Saskatchewan River as the forts known as Forts des Isles and Belleau's Post (Figures 4, 5 and 6). Morton primarily relied on Peter Fidler's observations recorded in his journal while heading upriver to establish Chesterfield House at the confluence of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer rivers (Morton 1928-1945a:418). However, Fidler failed to record the locations of these posts while passing the remains in 1800 (Johnson 1967; Morton 1928-1945a:451b). In a later version of this journal, after recording his course mileage and noting a poplar island on the south side of the river, Fidler made the following comments:

> and [sic] old French House built about 1784 called Fort De Lislee on South side now not any part of the House to be seen only a part of the Beaver Press. Just above on the North side a Canadian House built by Mr Belleau a Canadian 1801 in the Fall [HBCA E.3/2, Johnson 1967:254].

It appears Fidler had met Mr. Belleau a few years after his 1800 trip. Once Belleau informed Fidler that he had had a post in this area, Fidler inserted it into his revised version. In addition to Fidler's excerpt above, he recorded the latitude shortly after passing the remains. It is Fidler's latitude and his geographical descriptions that Morton used to locate the post.

There is little additional historical documentation in which these posts were described. The only other references to the Forts des Isles are found in the HBC South Branch House journal (HBCA B.205/a/1) and the Hudson House journal (HBCA B.87/a/8). The South Branch House journal's author mentioned Pangman's and Holmes' posts (HBCA B.205/a/1) while the

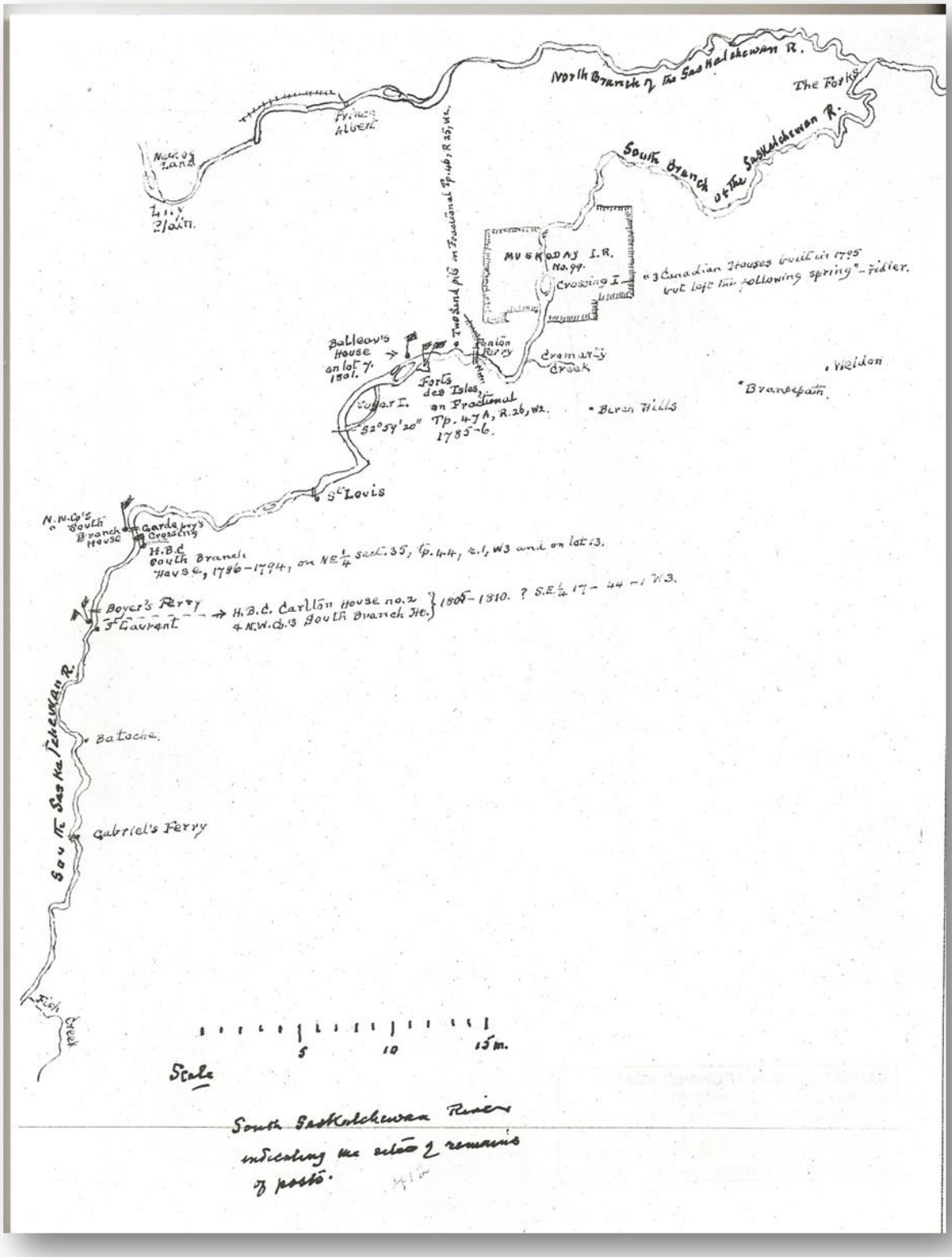

Figure 4: Arthur S. Morton's map of trading post remains (Morton 1928-1945a, permission to use from SAB A32 A.1.Vol. X).

Hudson House journal writer recorded that the Canadians from upriver had come to build where they were planning to build South Branch House (HBCA B.87/a/8). The Forts des Isles were supposedly built side by side on the south side of the South Saskatchewan River and were occupied for one year, 1785-1786. while Beleau's post was built across the river, according to Fidler (HBCA E.3/2; Johnson 1967:254) in 1801.

After acquiring Fidler's records, along with viewing the South Branch House and Hudson House post journals, Morton set off to locate these remains. In 1942 accompanied by Grant MacEwan, Dr. Furnier and Craig Muller, Morton found the remains. He recorded their find in his journal:

> We found that the bush in which the remains of the forts stood when I saw them […] had been cut down and the field cultivated. Now it was one mass of weeds. Nonetheless we found the cellars on either side of the road. Perhaps, had we searched more we might have found the stones which marked the fire places [Morton 1928-1945a:418].

Despite the vague evidence, Morton relied on Fidler's coordinates. Once he found cellar depressions in the general area he was examining, he was convinced that he had located the remains of Forts des Isles. In addition to Morton's notes, he also made sketch maps of Forts des Isles (Figure 5) and of Belleau's Post (Figure 6). It is interesting to point out that the drawing of Forts des Isles, which was occupied for only one year, indicate remains more complex than those of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1) that was occupied for nine years.

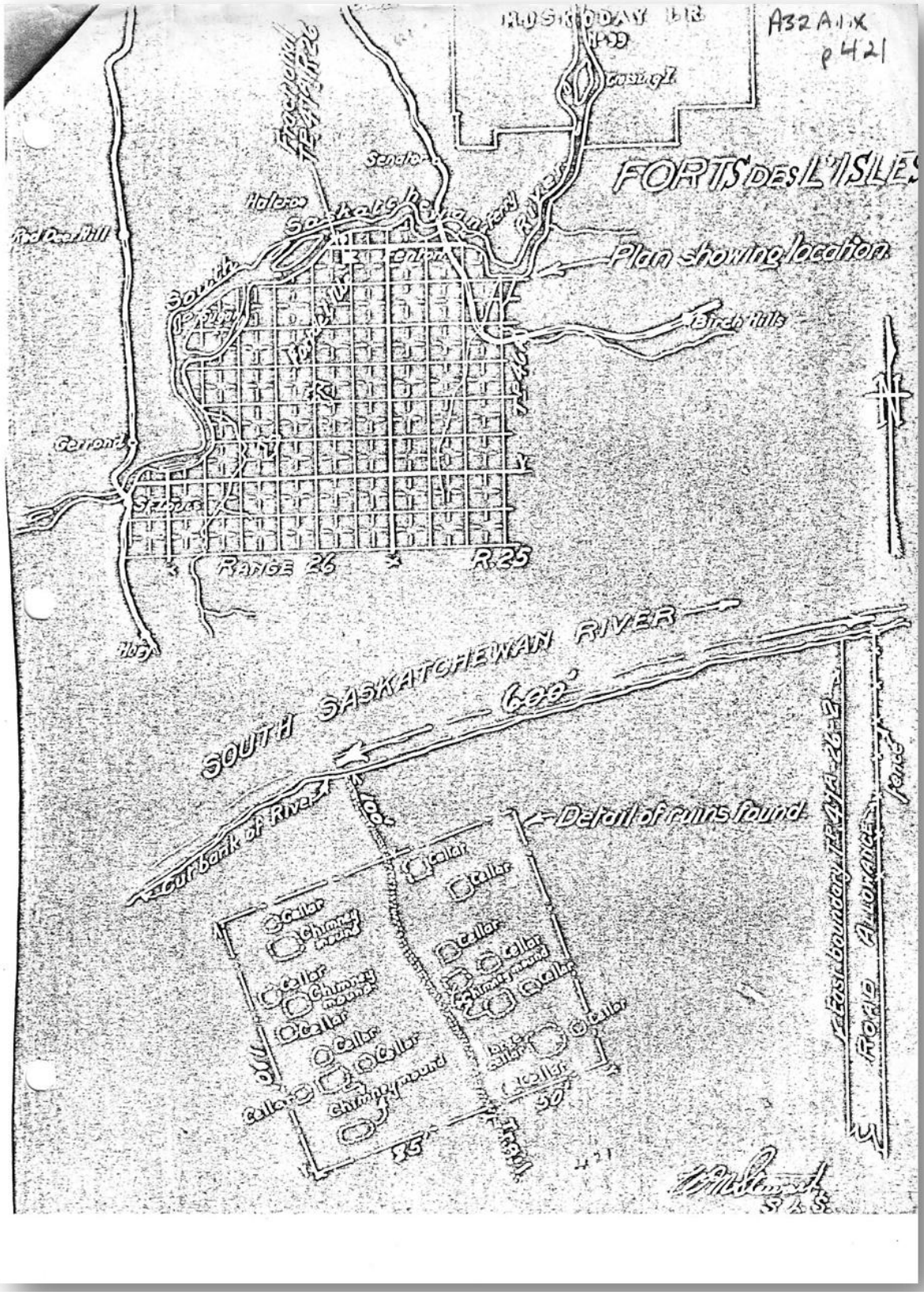

Figure 5: W.M. Stewart's map based on Morton's original sketch map of Forts des Isles (Morton 1928-1945a, permission to use from SAB) A32 A.1.Vol.X).

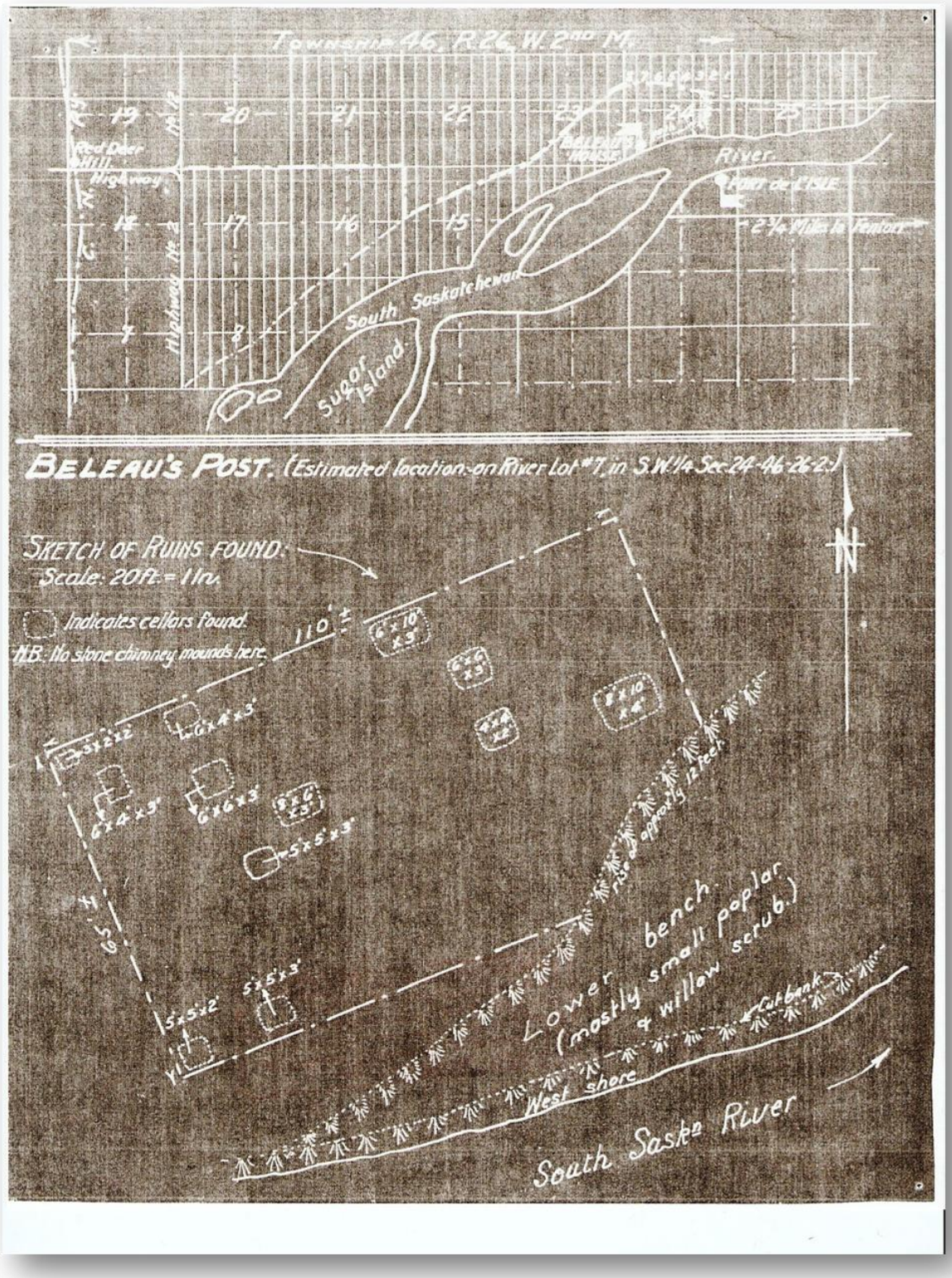

Figure 6: W.M. Stewart's map based on Morton's sketch map of Belleau's Post (Morton 1928-1945a, permission to use from SAB A32 A.1.Vol.X).

3.2.2 NWC South Branch House II and HBC Carlton House II

Another set of remains along the South Saskatchewan River that Morton was interested in finding was the NWC South Branch House II and the HBC Carlton House II (Figure 4). These posts were situated side by side and occupied from 1805-1810. While Morton does not mention how he found these remains, local farmers most likely told him of the ruins. Furthermore, no post journals exist for either post, a situation that would make the identification rather difficult. The only information on these posts comes from Daniel Harmon's personal journal (see Brown 2006) to which Morton refers to in his notes (Morton 1928-1945a:452). Morton must have consulted Harmon's journal while at the HBC Archives. In fact, Morton noted, "very little is known of these posts apart from the information in Harmon's all too brief journal" (Morton 1928-1945a:452).

While Morton felt that the remains belonged to the NWC South Branch House II and the HBC Carlton House II, he could not tell which was which. Morton wrote:

> As no journals of the HBC's post here, which of these two posts belonged to that company and which to the North West concern. The very large stones used to make the chimney's, such as are seen at the English Company's Hudson House and at Gardepuy's Crossing [HBC South Branch House, FfNm-1], suggest that the lower post here is the English one [Morton 1928-1945a:455].

Morton drew a brief sketch map of the remains (Figure 7). He noted that one of the two posts had no visible chimney remains and felt it was similar to Belleau's Post (Morton 1928-1945a:418). For this reason, he identified these remains as the NWC post. Morton felt that the post with chimney remains belonged to the HBC.

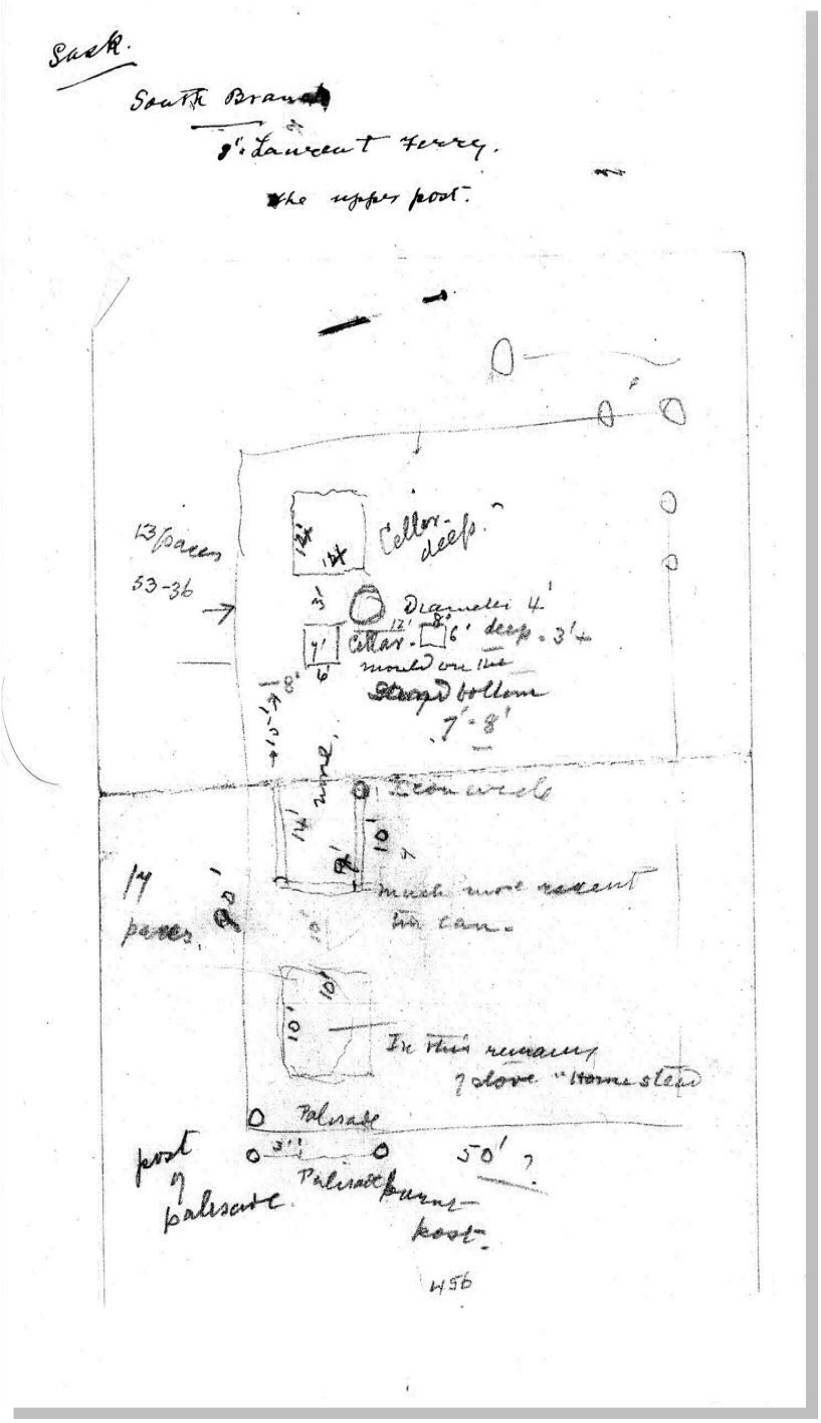

Figure 7: Morton's sketch map of NWC SBH II and Carlton House II (Morton 1928-1945a, permission to use from SAB A.1.Vol. X).

Morton's identification of Forts des Isles, Belleau's Post, NWC South Branch House II and the HBC Carlton House II demonstrates how he went about locating trading post remains

and how he associated the remains with specific fur trading companies. Morton was able to locate Forts des Isles and Belleau's Post by relying on Peter Fidler's records and the remains of the NWC South Branch House II and the HBC Carlton House II using Daniel Harmon's work. In addition to Fidler's records, Morton also was able to consult contemporary trading post journals for additional information with regard to the location of Forts des Isles and Belleau's Post. Once Morton had all the relevant information he could find, he set off to locate cellar depressions along with chimney remains that remained hidden along the South Saskatchewan River. Once he located remains in the area he was searching, he carefully examined these sites and made comparisons with previous finds in which he was able to recognize similar characteristics associated with either the HBC or the NWC.

Arthur S. Morton laid the framework for commemorating and promoting western Canada's fur trade history. While Morton did not necessarily influence the role of fur trade archaeology, he did have an impact on how it was done. During the height of fur trade archaeology during the 1960s and 1970s, historical archaeologists commonly relied on Morton's identifications and never felt the need to challenge his work. There has been very little archaeological work at fur trade posts since the 1970s. In fact, archaeologists have started to reanalyze some of the early work that was not properly reported. As a result, new information is continuously being published. The current archaeological investigation at South Branch House (FfNm-1) is the only recent excavation of a trading post site in Saskatchewan. Therefore, FfNm-1 offers an excellent chance to re-evaluate Morton's identifications for future trading post research.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 The Identification of South Branch House (FfNm-1)

Recent archaeological investigations at what is assumed to be the HBC's South Branch House (Markowski and Cyr-Steenkamp 2008, 2009; Wutzke et al. 2005), identified by Morton in 1944, have stirred debate about this site's identification. The Saskatchewan Archaeological Society (SAS) employed me for two field seasons (2007 and 2008) to conduct archaeological excavations at this site as part of an on-going research project. In addition, I chose to use the archaeological investigations of FfNm-1 for my thesis research in the initial belief that it was the site of the HBC's South Branch House 1786-1794. During my first field season, Tam Huynh (project assistant) and I realized that there might be problems with the site's identification. After the 2007 field season Dale Russell, a retired archaeologist, contacted Talina Cyr-Steenkamp, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, and arranged to set up a meeting with Talina and me. A few weeks later, during our meeting, Russell pointed out that there were major problems with the site's identification. I had realized that there were problems with the site's identification but not to the extent that Russell suggested. At this point, it became evident that a critical examination of the identification of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1) would make a significant research topic.

The logical place to start this research was to examine the procedure that had led to this site's identification as the HBC's South Branch House. I had known that Arthur Silver Morton identified the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1) but knew little about his heritage activities. Thus, I began to investigate his notes, maps and letters stored in both the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Archives collections. Also, Joan Champ (1990, 1991) had compiled an extensive biography of Morton's activities in Saskatchewan. These resources

helped shed light on how Morton had identified the site known to archaeologists as FfNm-1 as the HBC's South Branch House.

4.1 Morton's Identification

Morton's interest in the South Branch Houses began while he was locating sites related to the Métis uprising in 1885. Morton relied on historical evidence, primarily J. B. Tyrrell's works (1888, 1913, 1916) since Tyrrell had began to compile the fur trade history along the South Saskatchewan River prior to Morton's arrival in Saskatchewan. In addition to Tyrrell's works, Morton relied on the knowledge of local priests and farmers to locate the sites once occupied by fur trade posts. The first post that Morton recorded in this area was the site he would later identify as the HBC South Branch House I.

It appears that Morton's first visit to the South Branch House area took place on October 11th 1929. Fortunately, Morton kept detailed notes of his visits and they are available for perusal at the Saskatchewan Archives Board (Morton 1928-1945a). It is from these notes that we are able to determine the evidence Morton utilized to identify FfNm-1 as the HBC South Branch House I.

On Morton's first visit he met Father Myre, a local priest, and a resident, La Batisse, who lived near the St. Laurent ferry (Morton 1928-1945a:433c). Father Myre and Batisse were familiar with the local history and geography and took Morton to Gardepuy's [Gariepy's] old farm (Morton 1928-1945a:433c). A survey map from 1886 indicates Philip Gariepy's homestead and the crossing to the east of Gariepy's land (Figure 8). It appears that James Short initially operated a raft with oars at the crossing in the early 1870s (St. Louis Historical Society

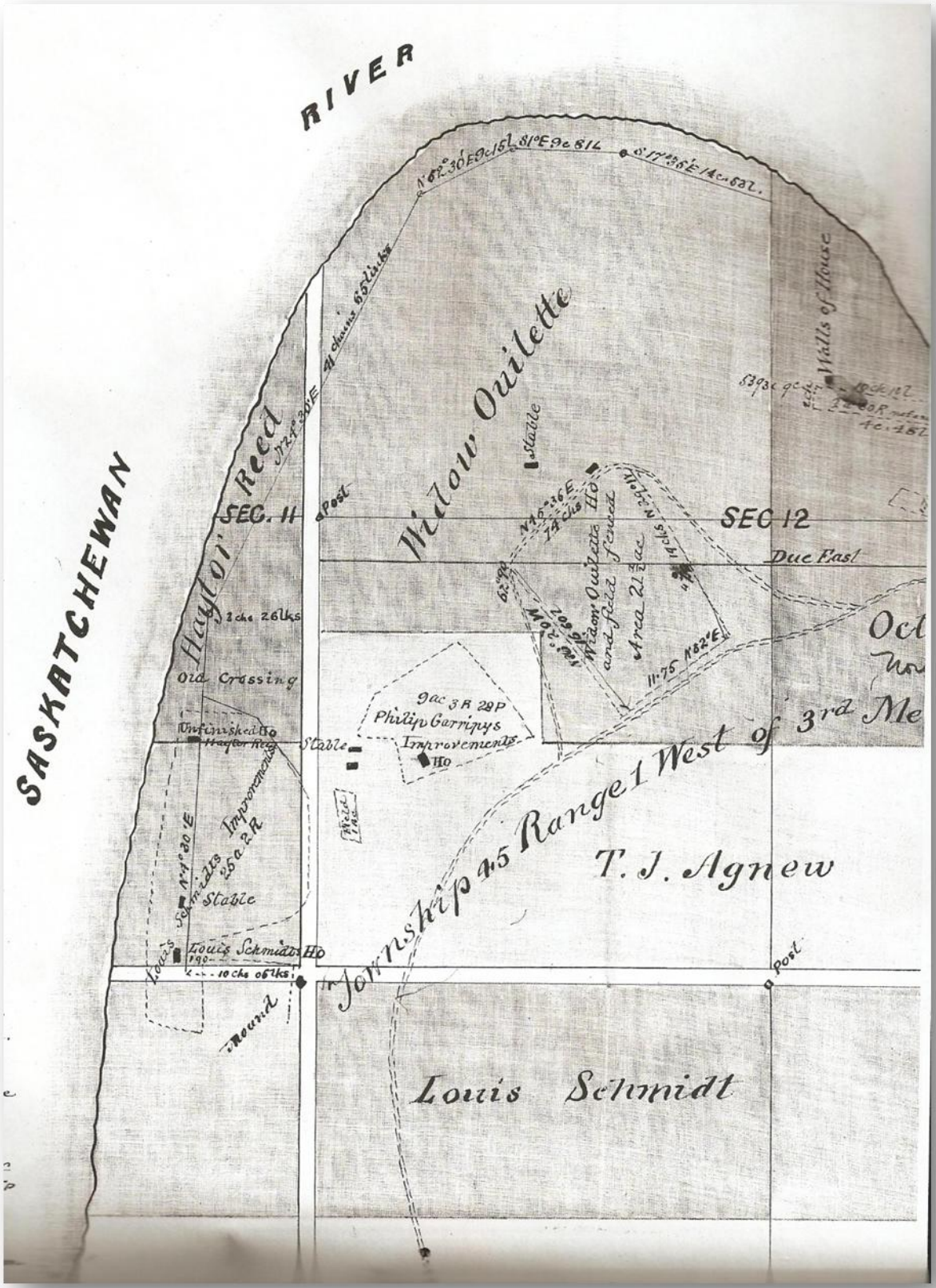

Figure 8: 1886 Land Agent Map (permission to use from SAB S-A28/52).

2005) and by 1873 Philip Gariepy operated a ferry at this location (SAB Homestead File #99195).

> "At the river we found the present farm houses on the left, and the remains of previous barn and possibly house (irregular cellars with stones in them on the right). We walked down a field southward fence with the house and found two well-defined cellars ["and" crossed out] each with a chimney. The one in the wheat field the other across the wire fence and in the woods. Other cellars have probably been ploughed in. The stones of the cellars showed definite signs of fire" [Morton 1928-1948a:433].

Although Morton noted the presence of irregular cellars with stones in them at Gariepy's Crossing he failed to provide an explanation for them. Were these remains from early Métis homesteaders or could they be the remains of an earlier trading post on which the Métis resettled? To Morton, therefore, the irregular cellars filled with stones were of little significance. Father Myre and La Battise were more interested in the remains to the south of Gariepy's. It was at the latter site that Morton discovered two cellars and a chimney. Morton must have missed the third chimney mound visible on the site today due to the thick vegetation at the time of his visit. Morton was quick to observe that the extant stones showed signs of burning, which convinced him of the site's identity as a fur trade post. Morton explained:

> We agreed by the fire and the large flattish stones such as we saw two days after at Lower Hudson's House that this was the H.B.Co's post" [Morton 1928-1945a:433].

It is important to point out that the HBC's Lower Hudson House was also identified by Morton based on the presence of cellar depressions and chimney mounds (Clark 1969). Even though Morton did not note any historical significance to the cellars filled with stones at Gariepy's Crossing, the presence of burning on the chimney stones along with large flat stones at the site south of Gariepy's Crossing gave him greater confidence in the identification of these remains as belonging to a HBC post. While Morton mapped all the remains he found, no sketch map of South Branch House could be found in the archives.

Morton was not in agreement with J. B. Tyrrell's suggestion concerning the location of the HBC South Branch House. Tyrrell indicated that this post was located further up-river. Unfortunately, Tyrrell was not actually in the area and therefore relied solely on Fidler's coordinates (to be discussed in Chapter 6). In Tyrrell's first edition of Thompson's narrative he noted that South Branch House was probably somewhere near Batoche (Tyrrell 1888). In a later edition of Thompson's narrative, Tyrrell mentioned that South Branch House was situated somewhere near Gariepy's Crossing (Tyrrell 1916). Morton remarked:

> Tyrrell says that Fidler gave the lat. of South Branch Fort as 52° 53′ and believes he meant the H.B.Co's post than [sic] by Harmon's. The discovery of those posts at the St. Laurent ferry, shows that he [Fidler] meant the earlier forts. Arrowsmith's map seems to confirm. As 52° 58′ on the survey map was south of the above cellars [the cellars Morton identified as belonging to the HBC South Branch House (1786-1794)], Macdonald and I searched the bottom till it narrows down and ends at the spur of high ground but found nothing" [Morton 1928-1945a:433b].

Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Morton often disagreed with Tyrrell's interpretations. Another example of such disagreement is found in Morton's records. Morton commented, "Tyrrell is all wrong here (Morton 1928-1945b:250)" when Tyrrell identified remains approximately 9km upstream from Fort a la Corne I as the NWC's Fort St. Louis II, or the HBC's Carlton House I (Russell 2007). However, Tyrrell was very knowledgeable about the history of the fur trade, often writing to the HBC Archives for information (Morton 1928-1945a [copy of Tyrrell's letter]). During Tyrrell's numerous expeditions, he noted the location of posts which he would research once he returned to Ottawa. Despite his doubts, Morton most likely consulted Tyrrell's books (Tyrrell 1888, 1913, 1916) in order to locate trading post sites and as well to learn their background history.

Morton took his research seriously and often criticized people who identified trading post sites with no schooling in history. Aside from criticizing Tyrrell, Morton often was more critical

of Campbell Innes. Innes took a keen interest in the history of the Battleford area and often searched for remains of trading posts (Robert Clipperton, personal communication 2009). "Innes certainly regarded Morton to be the expert on trading posts and would get Morton to come up and 'verify' what he had found" (Robert Clipperton, personal communication 2009). Like Morton, Innes was active in publishing his findings but Morton frequently was critical of these publications. Morton's criticisms are apparent in a letter to William Smith, the Acting Deputy Minister of the Public Archives of Canada, with regard to Innes establishing the North West Historical Society.

> I know Innes well, am familiar with his operations and have considerable knowledge of the manuscript material he has. His society began as the Battleford group in our proposed Saskatchewan Historical Association. We have groups in Regina, Prince Albert and Saskatoon, and it has been our purpose all along to get representations from them associated with distinguished men like President Murray, Principal Oliver and Sir Frederick Haultain to form a committee directing the gathering of material through the province. Until recently Innis [sic] has refused cooperation. Instead of devoting himself to the history of his region Innis [sic] got the publishing mania and started collecting funds when and where he could – hence the change of name to 'North West Historical Society.' His publications, so far three in number, include some [Morton initially wrote 'very' but crossed it out in his draft copy] good material but [sic] Innis [sic] has neither the historical knowledge nor the sense of value […] [Morton 1923-1938].

Morton had little respect for people like Tyrrell and Innes in so far as their scholarship was concerned (Robert Clipperton, personal communication 2009) and therefore felt that he was the one with the authority to accurately identify sites.

After the trip referred to above where Morton visited South Branch House with Myre and La Battise, the same group proceeded to the nearby town of St. Louis. While at St. Louis they visited Louis Schmidt, Louis Riel's secretary during the uprising (Morton 1928-1945a:433b). Morton recorded:

> He told us that his first farm in these parts was at Gardepuy's [Gariepy's] crossing [north of FfNm-1; Figure 8] and that the second fort was on the west side; its chimneys could be seen from the door of his house, within 100 yards of the road leading up from the river [Morton 1928-1945a:433b)].

After a failed attempt to locate this site, Morton got the son of Patrise Fleury who was familiar with the area to guide them through the forest and on November 11th 1929 they located the remains that Schmidt had told him about.

Unfortunately, Morton's records do not discuss this site in much detail. Morton (1928-1945:434b) did write, "[…] found the road leading up the bank and our fort as Louis Schmidt had indicated just by it to the north. We made a rough plan of the post" (Figure 9). Morton identified these remains as the NWC South Branch House I (FfNm-2). Based on his (1928-1945a) notes it appears that Morton wanted this site protected, rather than the HBC's post, due to the re-routing of the road that was to take place on the west side (Morton 1928-1945a:441b, 1937-42). Even though there was little information available at the time, especially with regard to the NWC, Morton was somehow able to determine that the remains Schmidt told him about belonged to the NWC. It is important to point out that Schmidt lived in the area nearly one hundred years after the site was abandoned, yet Schmidt told Morton that he could see the chimneys from his front door (Morton 1928-1945a:433b). This statement is rather odd because the HBC South Branch House journals (HBCA B.205/a/1-8) indicate that their chimneys were in continuous need of repair. If the HBC were repairing and re-building their chimneys nearly every year, how is it possible that the NWC's chimneys were still standing nearly one hundred years later? Although this evidence is based only on the HBC's post journals, since there are no surviving journals from the NWC South Branch House, we have to take into consideration that both posts would have had access to the same resources to build their chimneys. Therefore, the

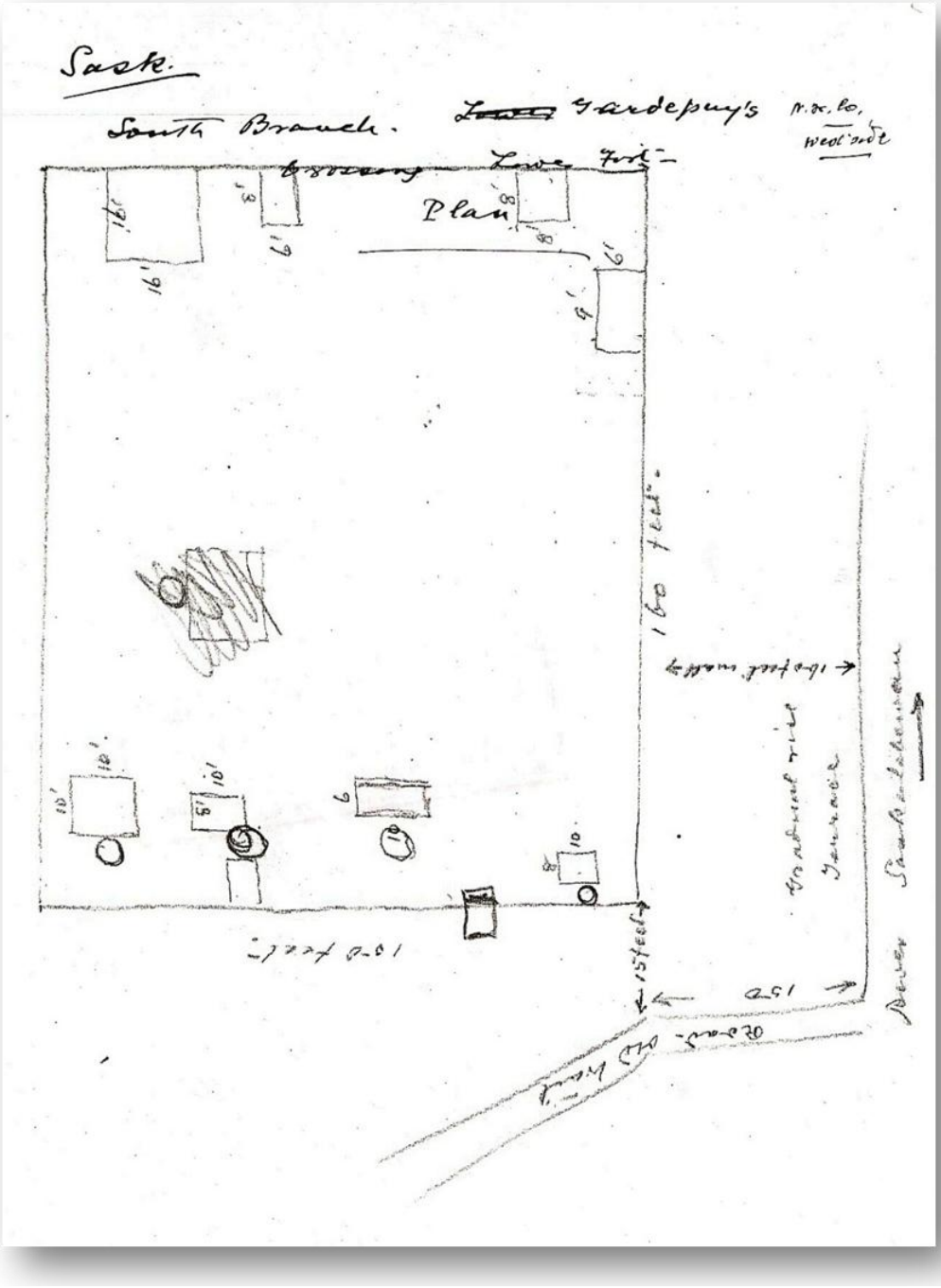

Figure 9: Morton's sketch map of the NWC South Branch House FfNm-2 (Morton 1928-1945a, permission to use from SAB A.1. Vol. X).

descriptions of the HBC's chimneys should accurately reflect the chimneys located at the NWC post unless the NWC had better materials, techniques or just better builders. Unfortunately, no archaeological work has been done at the site on the west side, aside from the Fort Carlton Survey in 1978 during which the site was recorded and mapped (Figure 10). Regardless of the evidence presented, Morton's identification of both sites stood unchallenged until recently.

Rocky Mountain House provides a useful comparison for how long chimneys might remain standing. Rocky Mountain House is located along the North Saskatchewan River near the present day city of Rocky Mountain House. The stone chimneys were still standing at Rocky Mountain House when photographed by J. B. Tyrrell in 1886 (Tyrrell 1916:89) (Figure 11). Tyrrell believed that these were the remains of the early nineteenth century Rocky Mountain House (Tyrrell 1916) where David Thompon, Duncan McGillivray and McDonald of Garth had worked (Smythe 1968:219). However, Tyrrell was wrong. There was a total of three Rocky Mountain Houses. Rocky Mountain House I was initially operated by the NWC ca. 1799 while the HBC followed by building another post which was known as Rocky Mountain House II (Smythe 1968:219). After the companies merged in 1821 Rocky Mountain House continued to be in operation until it was closed permanently in 1861(Smythe 1968:219). Rocky Mountain House III was opened in 1866, closing in 1875 (Smythe 1968:219).

> In the twentieth century Rocky Mountain House III has attracted more attention than the two previous sites because it has the only standing remains, the two chimneys of the big House. Tyrrell saw and photographed this House in 1886, when bastions and one cabin were standing, as well as the chimneys. Largely because of the notes in Tyrrell's edition of Thompson's Narrative [Tyrrell 1916], this site became associated in the popular mind with the Rocky Mountain House of the early nineteenth century […]" [Smythe 1968:219-220].

Therefore, the remains Tyrrell photographed were not from the first Rocky Mountain House. Tyrrell's photo is actually of Rocky Mountain House III, which was abandoned in 1875.

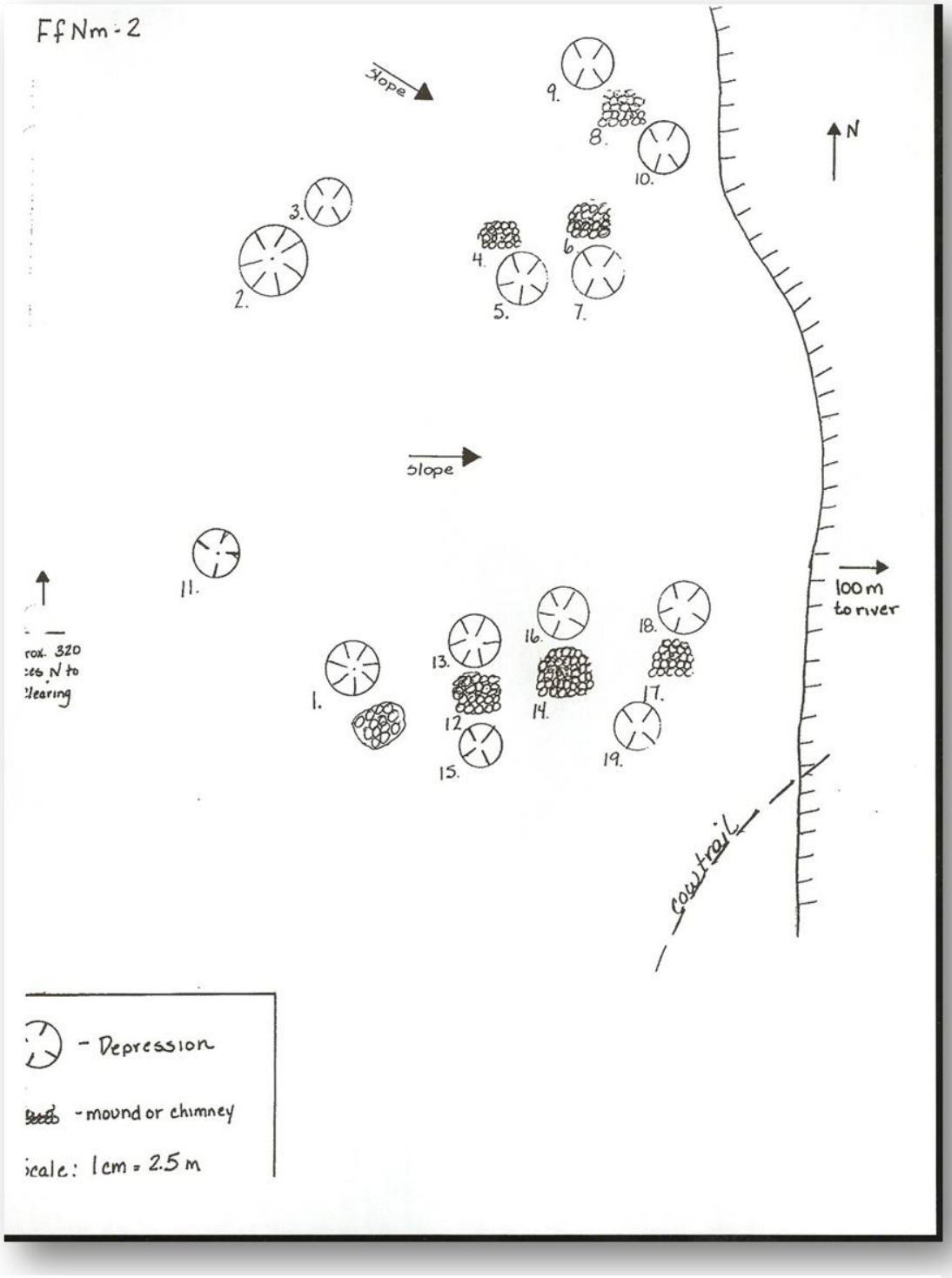

Figure 10: The NWC South Branch House FfNm-2 (Saskatchewan Archaeological Resource Record 1978).

Although the chimney remains are still standing in Tyrrell's 1886 photograph (Figure 11) the post had only been abandoned for eleven years. It is rather hard to determine, but one wonders how long these chimneys would have remained standing if they had not been stabilized in the 20th century. It is doubtful that the remains Schmidt told Morton about on the west side of the river belonged to the NWC South Branch House. It is more probable that these chimneys were the remains of the more recent NWC's 1816 post.

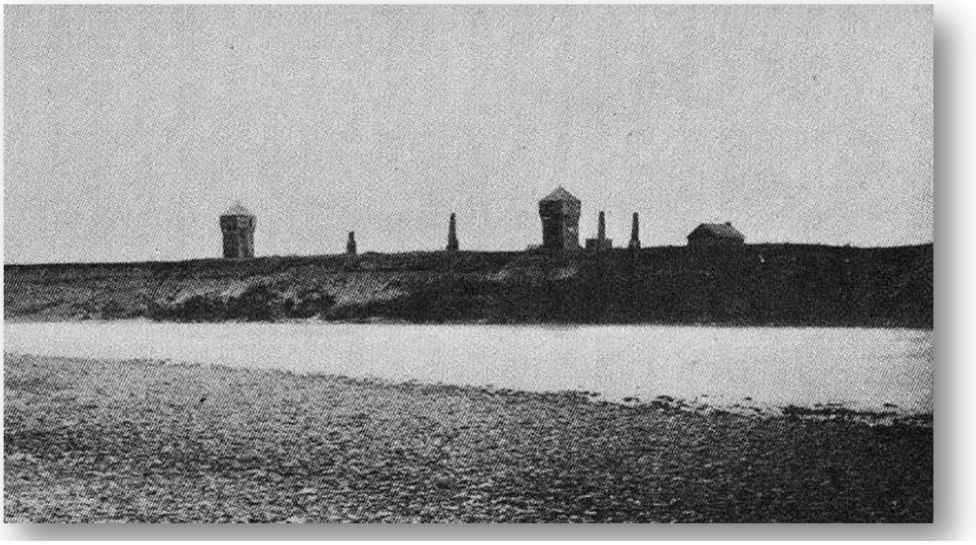

Figure 11: The remains of Rocky Mountain House photographed by Tyrrell in 1886 (taken from Tyrrell 1916:89).

Although Morton was thorough with his research, he identified the HBC South Branch House I and the NWC South Branch House I prior to accessing the HBC's Archives. Prior to the 1970s the HBC Archives were located in London, England. Morton was actually the first historian that had full access to the journals.

> […] Morton was granted unrestricted access to the HBC Archives in London. The first scholar to be allowed such access, Morton went to London on sabbatical in 1933, and spent every summer from 1934 to 1937 working on the company's archives […] [Champ 1990:76].

While Morton was working in the archives he meticulously recorded journal entries and in some cases the journals challenged his previous identifications such as Fort à La Corne (Champ 1990:76).

> Morton may have come across new evidence in Matthew Cocking's log which led him to correct his earlier mistake [identification]; it is likely, however, that it was this very source that threw him off course in the first place. Morton points out in a paper presented to the Royal Society in 1944 that Cocking's statement concerning the Francois-Finlay Fort contained several contradications [Champ 1990:76].

Morton realized problems with some of his former identifications after reading the journals in the archives. Unfortunately, this was not the case for the South Branch Houses.

As mentioned previously, Morton identified the South Branch Houses (1786-1794) four years before he had access to the archives. Therefore, his identifications had to be based on secondary sources rather than primary sources. After reading the South Branch House journals for the first time in 1933, he wrote a letter to his neighbour in Saskatoon:

> The Archives of the HBC are really wonderful. They consist of the correspondence and journals. You remember that fort the Father Lamire [confused with Father Myre] took us to six miles north of St. Laurent, partly in a wheat field and partly in the woods. We decided that is must be the Company's post because of the marks of fire all over the chimney. All the journals of the post i. e. from 1786 except that of the year in which it was plundered and burnt are here [Morton 1908-1945].

Clearly, Morton was not looking to the HBC records to confirm or reject his prior identification of South Branch House (FfNm-1) but simply appears to have accepted the association of the journal description with the site he had so confidently called the HBC South Branch House south of Gariepy's Crossing.

Morton's research resulted in creating the first provincially recognized historic site. The HBC South Branch House was protected in 1944 after the landowner, Adrian Legare, donated the land (Figures 12 and 13). The site has been left relatively untouched since 1944 with the

exception of new signs being erected that commemorate the site and the recent archaeological excavations conducted by the SAS. While the excavations have raised some interesting issues (discussed in Chapter 7), Morton's identification of FfNm-1 also appears to be somewhat of a concern. While this chapter has thoroughly examined Morton's records for the reasoning behind his identification, there appear to be major problems: 1) Morton identified FfNm-1 prior to accessing the HBC's South Branch House journals; 2) Morton identified this site primarily on the basis of burned rocks and Peter Fidler's coordinates of South Branch House which do not match with FfNm-1. In order to flesh out the problems with the identification of FfNm-1 it is important to reconstruct the history of the fur trade in this area aside from an examination of the historical evidence associated with the HBC's South Branch House (Chapter 6). Once the documentary evidence has been evaluated, we can compare these findings with the archaeological evidence (Chapter 7) after which conclusions can be made.

Figure 12: Arthur S. Morton and Adrian Legare at South Branch House (permission to use from St. Louis Historical Society photograph collection).

Figure 13: Protecting and commemorating HBC's South Branch House in 1944. Left to right: J. W. Grant MacEwan, Bud Estey, A. S. Morton, Harrison and Lewis Thomas (permission to use from SAB A535 accession number 175).

CHAPTER 5

5.0 The Historical Background of the Fur Trade and Trading Posts Along the South Saskatchewan River

The following chapter will consist of a brief historical overview of the fur trade along the South Saskatchewan River. Although the fur trade certainly extended beyond this waterway, the reader is referred to respected historical works by Morton (1973), Innis (1970) and Rich (1967) for this wider context. In order to place the HBC South Branch House in the context of the fur trade along the South Saskatchewan River a brief chronology of the various traders and trading posts is going to be the focus of the discussion in the following paragraphs. An understanding of the fur trade in that area is of the greatest importance prior to addressing specific problems in the identification of the HBC South Branch House.

The fur trade in Canada developed primarily as a response to Europe's demand for fashionable furs. The wide array of fur-bearing animals, especially the beaver, initiated the fur trade. While furs were popular for clothing, beaver felt was the most sought after for fur hats. Innis (1970:3), a well-known Canadian historian, explained, "[t]he history of Canada has been profoundly influenced by the habits of an animal which very fittingly occupies a prominent place on her coat of arms. The beaver (*Castor canadensis*) was a dominant importance in the beginnings of the Canadian fur trade." As noted in the paragraphs to come, the beaver encouraged trading companies such as the HBC to send employees such as Henry Kelsey, Anthony Henday and Matthew Cocking into regions where no Europeans had been before. The work of these early travellers would lead to the establishment of fur trade posts along the major river systems.

Although the beaver is commonly identified as the grounds for the fur trade, other factors such as exploration were also responsible for the establishment of inland trading posts. Marjorie Wilkins Campbell noted:

> [f]or the early Montrealers, French or English by ancestory, the northwest was both the land of potential big business and the stuff of dreams. In the northwest a man might make his fortune; he might also discover the mythical Northwest Passage. Somewhere beyond Lake Winnipeg, beyond the shining mountains described by the Natives, lay the Western Sea […] [Campbell 1957:6].

While Campbell's statement stands for all interests involved in the fur trade, it pertains more so to the early traders commonly recognized as Montrealers, Canadians or pedlars. Due to their interests in exploration and finding the route to the western sea, it is no surprise that the Canadians were the first Europeans to establish trading posts along the Saskatchewan River.

England's response to Europe's ever-growing demand for fashionable furs was the creation of a company known as *The Governor and Company of Adventures of England Trading into Hudson's Bay*, better known as the HBC. "The original charter of the HBC was granted by King Charles II in 1670" (Voorhis 1930:25). This charter allowed the newly created company control of trade, commerce, waters, and lands lying within the entrance of Hudson's Straits (Davidson 1967). Past explorations such as those by Radisson and Groseilliers resulted in the discovery of not only Hudson Bay but an awareness of the numerous fur bearing animals that existed in the interior. The discovery of Hudson Bay and the creation of the HBC was the framework that would impact the history of Canada.

Although the HBC became active around the shores of Hudson Bay in 1670 it would take the next twenty years before the Company felt the need to send employees into the interior known as Rupert's Land. In 1690, the HBC assigned Henry Kelsey the task of going inland to

promote trade. He travelled with a group of Nakota in the summer of 1690 primarily to encourage the native people to come to trade at the Bay (Whillans 1955). At this stage the HBC wanted their trading business to remain along the shores of Hudson Bay and therefore felt the need to reach out to native groups to promote trade.

Historians have accepted Henry Kelsey as being the first European to reach the Saskatchewan River. Although Kelsey kept a journal, his entries are difficult to decipher due to his poetic writing and lack of notes. While various attempts have been made to reconstruct Kelsey's route (Whillans 1955:87; Morton 1973), Meyer and Russell's article (2007) presents the most up-to-date information. Meyer and Russell's evidence indicates Kelsey most likely took an overland route from the mouth of the Sipanok Channel, following the Greenbush Trail. "The Greenbush trail led south from the Carrot River at Shoal Lake across the Pasquia Hills to the mouth of the Fir River on the Red Deer River (Red Deer Forks)" (Meyer and Russell 2007:175). Although Kelsey was in the interior from 1690-1692, he did not follow the stretch of the South Saskatchewan River where the South Branch Houses would be built nearly 100 years later. Therefore, we have no documentary evidence for trading activities along the South Saskatchewan River during the 17th century.

5.1 The Early Fur Trade

While the HBC was stationed at the Bay, French fur traders began to penetrate the interior of Western Canada. The La Vèrendryes, a famous family of explorers and fur traders, are associated with the opening of the Western Canadian fur trade through the establishment of inland posts. Klimko explains, "La Vèrendrye [Pierre Gaultier de Varennes et de La Vèrendrye] and his sons established a series of inland posts stretching from present day northwestern Ontario

to The Pas in west central Manitoba" (Klimko 1987). Meyer and Thistle (1995) note in 1739, La Vèrendrye sent his son, the Chevalier, to explore the Saskatchewan River valley. As the French moved west, a series of fur trade posts began to spring up.

Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre took over La Vèrendrye's command following his death in 1749 (Klimko 1987). Fortunately, the majority of these early French posts are documented and there general locations known; however, the location of Fort la Jonquière remains a mystery. Historians have disputed the location of Fort la Jonquière for decades. The location of this fort is such a mystery that it has yet to be determined if it was located east or west of the forks or even as far west as the Rocky Mountains. Klimko suggests Fort la Jonquière was built upriver from The Pas, most likely somewhere in the Nipawin region (Klimko 1987) while it also has been suggested to have been located a dozen miles east of the Forks" (Friesen 2001:53). E. E. Rich, a prominent Canadian historian, explains, "[…] in 1750 a French party was sent up to The Pas on the Saskatchewan, to follow the river to the Rockies in the spring of 1751. A short-lived post, Fort la Jonquière, was then set up somewhere on the upper reaches of the Saskatchewan River, but whether it was on the north branch or south branch is not clear" (Rich 1967:94). Innis points out that this post was in sight of the Rocky Mountains and thus may have been located near present day Calgary, Alberta (Innis 1970:95). Perhaps the best evidence of the location of Fort la Jonquière is found with the fur traders themselves. J. G. MacGregor editor of *Peter Fidler* makes a valid point:

> Fidler, who was very conscious of the remains and sites of old fur trade-posts built before his time and who always noted them in his journal whether they were French, NWC, or HBC posts, never mentions Fort La Jonquière, which some have said was built near modern Calgary in the year 1751. If Fort La Jonquière had been built above Saskatoon on the South Saskatchewan, Fidler and David Thompson, who were careful observers and knew the country and its history, or HBC men, such as Anthony Henday,

> who visited the area in 1754, and James Gaddy, and other company men who were continually travelling back and forth, would have mentioned it [MacGregor 1998:125].

As to whether the location of Fort La Jonquière will ever be solved remains questionable. The one fact that we do know is that if it was located on the South Saskatchewan River we likely would have known about it through Fidler's and Thompson's travels.

The French were setting up trading posts along the major river systems as they moved west and deeper into the interior of Rupert's Land. "In 1753, the Commandant of the Posts of the West, the Chevalier de la Corne, set up Fort a la Corne, or Fort St. Louis des Prairies, near the Forks of the Saskatchewan, consolidating French control over the Saskatchewan and of the river system which brought trade down from the west" (Rich 1967:94) (Figure 14). The French now had total command of the fur trade. The HBC, still positioned at the Bay, would soon feel the effects of the French and their trading activities.

The establishment of French trading posts in the interior slowly began to alter trade networks. The native groups that used to make the annual trip to the Bay to trade with the HBC now had a new competitor with which to do business. The French posts literally cut off native access to the Bay that would in turn affect the amount of furs the HBC would receive. The HBC soon realized that they needed to respond to the decline in trade.

Although the HBC had a policy in place of no inland trading they had no choice but to react against the decline in trade. The Company responded by sending an employee inland to encourage native people to come trade at the Bay. In 1754, "the HBC sent Anthony Hendry [Henday] from York Factory to explore the situation" (Morton 1929:xxiv). Henday would be the first HBC employee to reach the interior since Henry Kelsey in 1691.

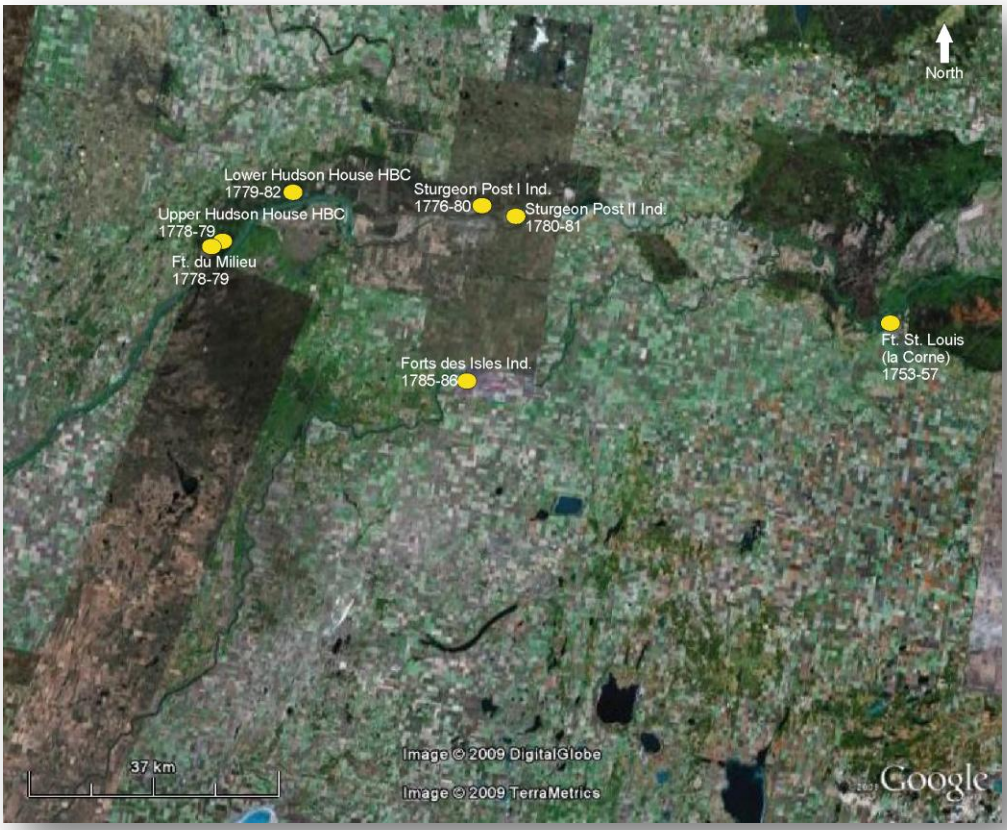

Figure 14: Google Earth image of the early fur trade (1768-1785).

Henday, like Kelsey, made his way west into the interior. It was not long before Henday realized the problem. As he paddled down the Saskatchewan River with a large group of natives, "the enticements of French brandy proved stronger than all the promises to go down with Hendry [Henday] to the factory at the bay, and the Indians traded many of their finest furs" (Morton 1929:xxiv-xxv).

A few years after Henday's travels into the interior an important event would take place that would transform the fur trade. War broke out in Europe and North America in 1756. The Seven Years War, 1756-1763, crippled French trading operations, with the English cutting them off entirely (Friesen 2004; Russell 1990). As a result, the English took control of the entire trade of Rupert's Land. Although the French fur trade had come to an end we do not know if all the

French traders left the interior, including the Saskatchewan River, and returned to Montreal or if they remained inland trading privately and thus illegally.

Following the elimination of French trading in the interior, the HBC still felt the need to remain active in the fur trade. Thus, additional HBC employees were sent inland to encourage trade at the Bay. Throughout the 1760s no organized competition would pose as a threat to the HBC's monopoly. As a result, the HBC sent servants such as Joseph Smith (Rich 1967), Joseph Wagner (Rich 1967), William Pink (Tyrrell 1934) and Matthew Cocking (Burpee 1908) to explore the interior. The 1760s appears to have been a relatively quiet time in the fur trade and very little is known about what was going on along the Saskatchewan rivers.

Despite the HBC's control, it was not long before the French from Montreal slowly began to penetrate inland. "The river routes out of Montreal to the west were soon being re-used by French canoe men and interpreters" (Klimko 1982:118). As to where the French fur traders were going remains unclear. However, Russell suggests, "[t]here is evidence to indicate that there were French traders in the Saskatchewan Rivers area during this time period" (Russell 1982:118). Therefore, it is quite possible that the French fur traders remained inland during Britain's control over Rupert's Land. Furthermore, Klimko provides evidence (Champagne 1968:454) that French fur traders were pushing west from Montreal during this time period (Klimko 1982:118-120).

Although there is little documented evidence of Quebec-based traders trading inland during the HBC's control of Rupert's land, there is evidence that suggests at least one such trader was operating along the Saskatchewan during the latter half of the 1760s. In fact, William Pink and Matthew Cocking, the HBC servants who were sent inland, documented the presence of

Quebec traders located along the Saskatchewan River. According to Stewart Wallace (1954), William Pink noted that a trader by the name of James Finlay (working for the early NWC) was trading along the Saskatchewan River. "The first English trader from Canada to penetrate to the Saskatchewan was James Finlay, who wintered at what came to be known as Finlay's House in 1768-1769" (Wallace 1954:7). Unfortunately, James Finlay is the only documented trader along the Saskatchewan River during this time. Thus, Finlay is recognized as being the first British trader trading along the Saskatchewan River.

A few years after William Pink's trip, Matthew Cocking noted the presence of yet another trader named "Mr. Currie" located along the Saskatchewan River (Morton 1929:xxvi, Burpee 1908:115). Like Finlay, little information exists about Currie. Morton records in his footnotes, "Cocking mentions Currie as being at Cedar Lake on the Saskatchewan in the year of his journey up that river, 1772, and his Chief, Andrew Graham, added this note on the manuscript: 'Mr. Currie's encroachment was the reason I sent Mr. Cocking inland'" (Burpee 1908:99; Morton 1929:xxvi). Andrew Graham learned of Mr. Currie's presence through William Pink's travels. If it were not for Cocking and Pink's travels, we would not have evidence of James Finlay or Mr. Currie trading along the Saskatchewan River. Perhaps if the HBC had sent employees inland during the first half of the 1760s we might have a more complete historical record.

Matthew Cocking also provides us with the first glimpse as to what was occurring on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River. Based on Cocking's journals we know that he was near the location at which the HBC, years later, would establish South Branch House (FfNm-1). Morton also feels that Cocking was near this location. Morton explains, "he [Cocking] reached the South Saskatchewan, either at Gardepuy's [Gariepy's] Crossing or at St. Laurent le Grandin

of modern times; probably the former" which is in the immediate vicinity of South Branch House (FfNm-1) (Morton 1973:257). Cocking noted on August 23rd 1772, as he was nearing the area of the site in question, "[…] the Natives all promise faithfully to go down to the Forts next year, & not to trade with the Pedlars: but they are such notorious liars there is no believing them" (Burpee 1908:103). The HBC servants often referred to the English and French fur traders from Montreal as pedlars (Morton 1973:257). Unfortunately, Cocking's reference to pedlars is vague and he does not mention anything more about them. However, the one thing that we do learn from Cocking's entry is that the native people were well accustomed to trading with pedlars prior to his arrival in 1772. Based on Cocking's account we can assume that pedlars were well established in the area prior to 1772.

On a side note, Joseph Frobisher established the first Cumberland House in 1772. This post was in operation prior to the well-known HBC Cumberland House, usually considered the first move inland by the HBC. Samuel Hearne for the HBC would build Cumberland House near Frobisher's post in 1774 (Froehlich 2001). In 1805 Daniel Harmon, a NWC employee, mentioned while stopping at Cumberland House, "[t]his place was first established thirty-three years ago [c. 1772] by Mr. Joseph Frobisher" (Brown 2006). Another well-known trader, Peter Pangman, who will come in to play later, also arrived here in 1772 (Wallace 1954:12). Based on the evidence Pangman was trading along the Saskatchewan as early as 1772.

No additional posts are known to have existed at this time except for a vague reference by Peter Pond. Pond indicates a 'Fort Eturgeon' on one of his maps (Davidson 1967:45). According to Pond's map Fort Eturgeon was situated on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River above the Forks. Unfortunately, there is no exact date for Fort Eturgeon due to Pond

drawing this map after his travels. However Pond's notes on the back of this map indicate that this post must date between 1773 and 1787 (Davidson 1967:45).

It is probable that this is simply an error made by Pond's transcribers. Dale Russell (1990:59) noted that Sturgeon Post was located along the North Saskatchewan River near modern day Prince Albert from 1776-1778 (Figure 14). It is almost certain that Pond's Fort Eturgeon is actually that of Sturgeon Post (Barka and Barka 1976). In fact, Eturgeon [etsturgeon] is the French equivalent of Sturgeon. Furthermore, Pond's Empress of Russia Map (Wagner 1955) indicates Fort Eturgeon on the North Branch. Therefore, one can assume that Pond's Fort Eturgeon on what appears to be the South Saskatchewan River is actually the Sturgeon Post located on the North Saskatchewan River. Aside from Pond's map, no other posts are known to have been established along the South Saskatchewan River during the early 1770s.

Although the HBC established Cumberland House to compete against the pedlars they soon realized that more posts were needed. Pedlars such as William Holmes and Charles Paterson who were active along the Saskatchewan in 1774 (Wallace 1954:14) were among a small number of the traders who were pushing further into the interior. Once again, the HBC's competition was getting ahead of them and thus cutting off trade to Cumberland House. Additional trading posts were needed.

Matthew Cocking can be credited with having the insight to establish additional posts. "During the winter 1776-77 Matthew Cocking, serving at Cumberland House, urged that posts should be set up even further inland" (Rich 1967:155). Once a site was chosen, Robert Longmoor sent out a group of men in 1777 to establish (Upper) Hudson House (Rich 1967:155) (Figure 14). In 1779, Robert Longmoor and William Tomison of the HBC went further up river

and established (Lower) Hudson House about 23 kilometers further upstream from the first Hudson House (Rich 1967:158) (Figure 14). The HBC continued to push further and further west in order to remain competitive.

Up until this time, the fur traders had ignored the south branch of the Saskatchewan River. They genuinely believed that the beaver and other high quality furs would not be found in abundance along the South Saskatchewan River and therefore never felt the need to establish posts along its shores. However, they were wrong.

> Subsequent history shows that peltry would not be lacking. The prairie to the east led to the bush country of the upper valley of the Carrot River. Moreover, the Wood Crees of the Thickwood Hills appear to have crossed the North Branch near Upper Hudson House, and to have met the Indians of the plains at what was later called Gardepuy's [Gariepy's] Crossing to trade their furs for the provisions and other products of the prairies [Morton 1973:337]."

The lower one hundred kilometers of the South Saskatchewan River would prove to be ideal for trade. The fur traders would soon learn the benefits of building along the South Saskatchewan River.

No posts are known to have existed along the South Saskatchewan River prior to the 1780s. However, we do know that the Canadians were certainly in the area prior to the 1760s. Previous traders sent inland by the HBC failed to mention or record the presence of trading posts along the South Saskatchewan River. We have to take into considerations that these traders travelled by both land and water, which leaves the possibility that they may have missed trading posts that were located along the South Saskatchewan River.

The HBC continued to move deeper into the interior along the North Branch and consequently ignored the South Branch. A trader by the name of Peter Pangman would be the first trader to situate a post along the banks of the South Saskatchewan. "Peter Pangman's

special sphere was the Saskatchewan. Here he took a surprising course; he built on the South Saskatchewan. The South Branch, as it was called, had hitherto been ignored by all the traders" (Morton 1973:337). Pangman was considered an independent trader by some since he was known as the founder of the Pangman Company [Pangman-Mackenzie-Gregory-McLeod] which was established in 1784 (Voorhis 1939:23).

In the meantime, a new trading company was about to be created which would intensify the competition. "As traders flourished on the Saskatchewan River, competition and rivalry intensified, a situation exacerbated by the 1781-82 smallpox epidemic" (Klimko 1987:6). Due primarily to increased competition and the onset of disease, opposing trading companies had little choice but to combine their resources (Klimko 1987). Various traders merged interests and created the NWC in 1783-84. There were now three major competitors: The HBC, Pangman-Mackenzie-Gregory-McLeod and the NWC.

The first post known to be built along the South Saskatchewan River was Peter Pangman's Fort des Isles (Figure 14). Morton describes Pangman's post as being located approximately 64 kilometers up-river from the Forks (1973:337). Pangman established this post in 1785 and, according to Morton (1973:337), was joined shortly afterwards by Holmes, a competitor of the NWC. There appears to be some uncertainty as to whether Pangman was followed by Holmes or if Pangman followed Holmes. According to Klimko (1982:130), "The NWC established Fort des Isles on the south bank in 1785. A rival post was immediately established by Peter Pangman for the Pangman-Mackenzie-Gregory-McLeod concern" (HBCA B.205/a/1). Whatever the case may be, we do know that there were two posts established on the South Saskatchewan River in 1785.

It was not long until the HBC became aware of their competition building along the South Branch. According to the Hudson House journals, William Tomison sent out two men, "to the other River to look for a place to build a House" (HBCA B.87/a/8) on March 3rd 1786 […]. A few weeks later, March 17th, Tomison sent men to the South Branch to begin felling wood at the site at which they had decided to build a post (HBCA B.87/a/8). In the meantime, the competition downstream, Pangman and Holmes, decided to abandon their posts so they would not get cut off by the HBC.

5.2 The Fur Trade from 1786-1810

In the early fall of 1786 Robert Longmoor, having arrived at Cumberland House, instructed Mitchel Oman to establish a trading post along the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River. It is at this point that the South Branch House post journals begin. It appears that Oman was illiterate because a young David Thompson was employed to go with Oman to serve as writer (Jenish 2004:37). As Oman and his brigade left Cumberland House Thompson wrote:

> Spr [September] 13th Wednesday Wind NE by E fine Clear weather at 1 PM Mr Longmore dispatched Mr Mitchel Oman with 5 Canoes & 13 men besides myself with a Cargo of Mbeaver to erect a Settlement in some convenient place up the South Branch of the Saskatchewan. there to trade with the Natives as seems best for your Honors [sic] Interest. At Sun set put up about 2 miles above the mouth of the little River. Musketoes very troublesome [HBCA B.205/a/2].

It remains unclear if Oman built on the spot that Tomison had instructed the men to clear earlier that spring or if the competition had beat them to Tomison's spot.

In response to the HBC's intentions up stream, Pangman and Holmes responded by building nearby. On March 24th Tomison (HBCA B.87/a/8) reports, "William Flett came home from the other River to inform me of the Canadians having come there to cut down wood for Building a House." Based on the Hudson House journals, it is unclear if the HBC decided to

continue preparations on this site or if they abandoned it and moved further up-stream. This is part of the controversy surrounding the location of the HBC South Branch House. However, we do know that by September 26th 1786 the HBC under the direction of Mitchel Oman were residing at a South Branch House (HBCA B.205/a/2) (Figure 15).

As mentioned above, it is uncertain where exactly Pangman and Holmes built. Due to vague references in the South Branch House journals and no journals being kept by Pangman or Holmes, it is rather difficult to pin-point the location of their posts. Morton notes, "Pangman and Holmes immediately abandoned their newly-built forts, and built on a slope on the left bank about four hundred yards below" (Morton 1973:338). However, Morton's description is based primarily on the work he did in locating these sites, which will be addressed in more detail in the following chapters. Aside from Morton's description, very little is known about the posts of Pangman and Holmes.

On the journey upstream to South Branch House, David Thompson recorded passing Holmes' and Pangman's post (Fort des Isles) on May 24th 1786 (HBCA B.205/a/2). Although Thompson noted Pangman's and Holmes' posts he did not realize that they had been abandoned in favour of a spot where the HBC were planning to build. The next day, May 25th 1786, Thompson wrote a letter notifying Robert Longmoor, who was now at Hudson House, of their safe arrival, "[t]he Canadians here have erected two houses well stockaded one of which belongs to Mr Peter Pangman the other to Mr Nicholas Monture […]" (HBCA B.205/a/1). It is unclear as to where Holmes moved although Montour could have replaced him. Aside from what happened to Holmes, Thompson indicates that both Pangman and Montour were residing nearby.

Figure 15: Google Earth image with trading post locations, 1786-1810.

The situation changed yet again when the NWC and other trading concerns amalgamated in 1785 (Morton 1973:454). "Pangman's post on the South Branch was closed, leaving a fort on either side of the river in opposition the one to the other" (Morton 1973:454). The South Branch House journals support Morton's theory since the HBC does not refer to any other traders aside from Nicholas Monture and Pangman. Therefore it has been accepted that the NWC operated a trading post known as South Branch House on the west bank or left side of the South Saskatchewan River while the HBC operated their South Branch House on the east bank or right side of the river (Figure 15).

D'arcy Jenish, author of *Epic Wanderer,* a biography of David Thompson, suggested that there was yet another trader located along the South Branch. Jenish's biography of Thompson appears to be accurate since he relies primarily on *David Thompson's Narrative* (Tyrrell 1916), which Thompson wrote prior to his death in 1857 (Jenish 2004: preface). Thompson, who resided at South Branch House, compiled a narrative about his travels throughout the Canadian West after he retired. We must consider the possibility that some of Thompson's information may be inaccurate due to the length of time between the events he was recalling and their portrayal in written form. In any case, Thompson wrote, based on his recollections from South Branch House, "[s]everal times, after the river froze up, the Montreal traders, Nicholas Monture, who was French, and William Thorburn, a British naval vetern, came across with their men" (Jenish 2004:38).

Prior to Jenish's biography of Thompson (Jenish 2004), Richard Glover published a narrative of David Thompson's travels in 1962 and Tyrrell in 1916. Glover's version of Thompson's narrative differs from Tyrrell's version because Tyrrell was missing Thompson's Saskatchewan chapter. The Saskatchewan chapter was located by Victor G. Hopwood at the University of Toronto in 1957 (Dale Russell, personal communication 2009). Hopwood's find was first published in Glover's (1962) version while Hopwood included Thompson's missing chapter in his version in 1971 (Hopwood 1971). Interestingly, Glover's account, based on Thompson's original version, paints a different picture of the arrival at the location where the HBC was to build South Branch House.

> With the tracking line we followed up the left bank of the River, every hour appeared to bring us to a better country, instead of dark pine forests the woods were of well grown Poplar, Aspen and white Birch and for the first time saplings of Ash. The whistling and calls of the Red Deer echoed through the woods, and we often heard the battling of Staghorns [sic] battling which should be lord of the herd of Does, for these Stags are all

> Turks. On the evening of the third day up the River we came opposite to where houses were building for the furr trade and next morning crossed over and placed ourselves eighty yards above them. These houses were on account of two companies from Canada; one of them of the firm of McTavish and company; under the charge of a Scotch gentleman of the name of Thorburn. The other was of the firm of Gregory and company under the care of a French gentlemen [Glover 1962:40].

Glover's transcription of Thompson's narrative mentions the presence of a number of companies in the vicinity of the spot where the HBC chose to build South Branch House. Thompson noted that McTavish and Company and Gregory and Company were in operation in this area. Jenish's version, discussed above, has Thompson explaining that a Montreal trader, Nicholas Montour, and a British trader, William Thorburn were operating near the HBC South Branch House (Jenish 2004:38).

The two versions, Glover (1962) and Jenish (2004), appear contradictory. Yet, based on these versions we can assume a few things. Jenish's mention of a Montreal trader by the name of Monture (2004:38) is essentially describing the same thing as Glover's description of a French trader in charge of the Gregory and Company post (Glover 1962:40). Voorhis, discussed above, mentioned that Pangman was the founder of the Pangman-Mackenzie-Gregory-McLeod company (Voorhis 1939:23) which corresponds with Jenish's (2004) and Glover's (1962) accounts. Similarly, the two descriptions of the British trader mention Thorburn as being in charge. According to Rich, McTavish and Company (mentioned by Glover [1962:40]) w as instrumental in the formation of the NWC in 1779 (Rich 1966:74). To put everything in perspective, the British trader was affiliated with the more commonly recognized NWC. Although the two versions appear to differ from each other, they are describing essentially two different trading posts: the NWC's and Pangman's Post. The following year, Pangman's Post was absorbed into the more powerful NWC.

The South Branch Houses were occupied from 1786-1794 at which point they came to an unfortunate end. Both companies were successful at trading along the South Saskatchewan. However, it was through this very trade that they altered the way of life of the native groups with whom they dealt. Tensions between the Cree and Gros Ventre peaked in 1794. Both the HBC and the NWC posts were attacked by the Gros Ventre in 1794 resulting in the abandonment of these posts.

Fortunately, the HBC kept journals in which the Master recorded the daily activities at the post. The journals from 1786-1794 are available for consultation via the HBC Archives. It is from these journals that we are able to learn of the vibrant history of the South Branch Houses. These posts hosted a variety of well-known fur trade personages throughout their short histories (Table 1). Some of these individuals include David Thompson, Peter Fidler, Mitchel Omen and William Walker at the HBC's post while Louis Chastellain and Nicholas Montour resided at the NWC post. Although the journals can be vague, we are able to learn of diet, trade, competition, and the various native groups in the area. Aside from these topics, the journals also provide evidence to suggest the reasons behind the Gros Ventre attack (see also Flannery 1953 and Fowler 1987). Unfortunately, the ideal location of HBC South Branch House was also partly responsible for its demise. The Cree and Gros Ventre both occupied lands in the immediate vicinity of South Branch House. The Cree used the area to the north of the trading post, while the Gros Ventre occupied the area to the south. Numerous reports from fur traders document the Cree/Gros Ventre rivalries and the numerous attacks on one another. The Cree had greater access to the highly sought-after beaver and various other high quality fur-bearing animals in their territory to the north. The Cree were able to trade more of the highly valued furs, for which the HBC provided higher quality goods, including guns (Milloy 1988).

Table 1: People Mentioned at the South Branch Houses 1786-1794
(HBCA B.205/a/1-8, HBCA B.121/a/4, HBCA A.11/117:163-165, Morton 1929)

Men at HBC SBH: David (Davey) Allen, Magnes Annell, John Ballenden, James Bird, Hugh. Brough, David (Davy) Copeland, Andrew Davey, William Duncan, Wm. Fea, Peter Fidler, Wm. Folsert, William Groundwater, John Irvine, Alexander Johnsten, Jas. Johnston, David Knarston, James Linklator, Nicholas Listt[er?], James Merwick, James Morrowick, James Oman, Mitchel Oman, James Sanderson, Jas. Sandison, Peter Sibeste[o]n, George Short, John Sibeston, William Sibbeston, James Spence, Thomas Stayner, Mr. Thomas, David Thompson, Magnes Twatt, Cornelius Van Driel, William Walker, Edward Wishard

Natives at HBC SBH: The Black Indian, Man'to'a'pow, Anuch'a'sheep'pan'nan, Pa tha sew athin nue (one of William Walker's hunters), The Hat Man, The Stand by Four Legs, The Gost (hunter), Slave Indian, the Flute Indian

Known burials at SBH: James Oman, William Walker, an Indian man

Names of deceased (Gros Ventre attack on HBC SBH 1794): Hugh Brough, Wm. Fea, Magnus Annell and his wife and two children,

Men at NWC SBH: Nicholas Montour, Peter Pangman, Louis Chastellain, [Jaco?] Finlay, Jacques Raphael

War Chief of Gros Ventre (1794), killed by NWC men: L'Homme de Callumet

The favourable conditions for the Cree trade damaged trade between the Gros Ventre and the HBC. The acquisition of guns also meant that the Cree now had an advantage over the Gros Ventre. As a result, the Gros Ventre believed the only way they could compete with the Cree was to cut off their access to the trading goods. The Gros Ventre attacked and burned South Branch House in 1794 leaving only one survivor, Cornelius Van Driel. The sole HBC employee to survive the attack, Van Driel, provided the only first-hand account of the tragic day in 1794. A letter written by Van Driel found in the York Factory Corresponsendence 1794 (HBCA

A.11/117:163-165) provides a vivid narrative (Appendix A). A few excerpts from Van Driel's account are presented below:

> -I then went on top of the House and to the best of my Judgement discerned near 100 Indians […].
> -[…] the Indians rushing in through the burning stockades and in at the other end of the house, making a frightful noise, made me run out a back window on which some blood spilt […].
> -[…] I ventured my head above ground it being now between 6 & 7 PM, and about 10 AM when I got in/and looked into the Cellar where Fea was, laying on his back, with his shirt off & scalped […].
> -[…] [Chastellain] visited the remains of our house, where he found Annals wife and the two youngest children, cut and hacked in a shocking manner.

Following the destruction of the HBC's post, the Gros Ventre turned their attention to the NWC post.

However, unlike the HBC, the NWC was able to defend the post. According to Van Driel, the NWC's fort was well stockaded with two bastions and log houses impenetrable to musket balls (HBCA A.11/117:163-165). Even though the NWC successfully fought off the Gros Ventre, they felt it was necessary to abandon their post. Therefore, due to the attacks, both posts were abandoned. Allegedly, trading posts ceased to operate along the South Saskatchewan for many years.

Despite the common view that no posts were built along the South Branch following the attacks, it remains a possibility that there were trading posts again in the area as early as 1795. While researching the fur trade history of the South Saskatchewan River Morton raised the idea of these additional posts (Morton 1928-1945a:303). Klimko consulted Morton's documents when reviewing the trading post history for the Nipawin Reservoir Heritage Study. Klimko (1982:131) noted, "[w]ith the possible exception of three 'Canadian' houses used for a single winter in 1795(Morton n.d.b:303), no additional posts were established on the South Branch until

the 1800s." Morton apparently based his evidence for the Canadian houses on statements Fidler made in 1800, when the latter was sent into the interior to establish Chesterfield House. While traveling upriver along the South Saskatchewan River Fidler mentioned on August 17th 1800, "[…] stopped for rain at 10 2/3, and rain over and got off again at 2 ¾ and sailed SSE 2 ½ a large poplar island where three Canadian houses was [sic] built fall 1795" (Johnson 1967:254). On the bottom of the page, the editor (Johnson 1967:254) noted that Fidler wrote in a later version (HBCA E.3/2p.123), "but left the following spring." It is unfortunate that no other explorers documented these posts. Therefore, it appears Fidler left the only account of the three Canadian houses.

Aside from Fidler's comment we know that the HBC and the NWC moved further downstream after the attacks on their posts. Morton noted that, "[a]fter the attack of the Gros Ventre on the South Branch Houses substitute forts for these parts were built in the La Corne region – the NWC's Fort St. Louis, near Peonan Creek in 1795 and the HBC's Fort Carlton, the first of that name on this river, miles below it" (Morton 1928-1945a:449). The HBC's post is commonly referred to as Carlton House I (1795-1801) while the NWC's post is known as Fort St. Louis II (1795-1801) (Figure 15).

Very little is known about either of these posts. However three journals, for the years 1795-96, 1796-97 and 1797-98, exist from the HBC's Carlton House I. Unfortunately, there are no journals from Fort St. Louis II. Although Morton believed he had identified these sites, in opposition to J. B Tyrrell's opinions, his information was primarily based on a letter Tyrrell received. Tyrrell had written the HBC archives in 1933 with regard to information about Carlton House I. A copy of the archivist's response to Tyrrell is found in Morton's records (Morton 1928-1945a – a copy of Tyrrell's letter). In this letter the archivist explains the history of

Carlton House. The archivist noted, "Carlton House was established by James Bird for the HBC in 1795. […] [I]t is difficult to state with certainty the precise date when Carlton House was abandoned in favour of the South Branch mainly owing to the fact we have no journals of either Edmonton or Carlton for the period in question" (Morton 1928-1945a – a copy of Tyrrell's letter). Although Morton failed to recognize Tyrrell, Tyrrell's letter is what Morton used as a primary source while writing about the history of these posts in his famed *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*.

An interesting development took place while both Carlton House I and Fort St. Louis II were nearing their last years of operation. Due to conflicting interests amongst shareholders of the NWC a new company was created. The New NWC was formed as an outcome of Sir Alexander Mackenzie being pushed out of the McTavish-Frobisher firm in 1799 (Morton 1973:510). Morton explained, "the goods of the old Company were marked NW; the new Company chose to mark its bales XY Company" (Morton 1973:510). As a result, the new NWC began to be recognized as the XY Company. The creation of a third company within the competitive sphere of the fur trade resulted in increased violence amongst companies.

The competition became dangerous between the NWC and the XY Company. In order to escape the escalating violence among the companies, the HBC sent Peter Fidler even deeper into the interior to establish Chesterfield House ultimately at the junction of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer rivers. In 1800 Peter Fidler conducted the first expedition upriver along the South Saskatchewan River. Fidler recorded his course mileage, took coordinates and documented the locations of trading posts along with the recording of sites where posts had once stood while he paddled and tracked along the South Saskatchewan River. Fortunately for historians and

archaeologists, Fidler's travels played a major role in documenting the history along the South Saskatchewan River.

In fact, were it not for Fidler's journey in 1800 (see Johnson 1967) we would have a rather incomplete historical record of the fur trade along the South Saskatchewan River. For example, Fidler provides the only evidence for Belleau's Fort, also known as Belleau's House or Belleau's post (Figures 5 and 15). While Fidler failed to mention this post in his first version of his journal (B.34/a/1) he wrote in a later version (E.3/2), "[…] on the North side a Canadian House built by Mr Belleau a Canadian in the Fall" (Johnson 1967:254n). Apparently this post only lasted one year and was abandoned in 1802 (Morton 1928-1945a:451). Although Fidler's journals are more detailed than others, it is possible that he may have missed recording additional abandoned trading post sites. However, Fidler's mention of Belleau's House provides evidence that there was at least one trader on the lower South Saskatchewan at the beginning of the 19th century.

It appears that the internal problems between the NWC and the newly created XY Company ended as of 1804. "After the union of these two companies in 1804 the same rude and even bloody methods were resorted to by the men from Montreal against the HBC […]" (Morton 1973:508). Once again there were two major companies competing for furs. Interestingly, the tensions that once existed between the NWC and XY Company carried over to create aggressive competition between the HBC and the now reformed NWC.

Despite the tension between the two companies, they took a rather surprising, yet strategic, move and established posts side by side along the South Saskatchewan River. In 1805, the HBC and the NWC set up posts upriver from the South Branch Houses that were attacked in

1794. As far as we know this was the first time these companies reappeared on this branch of the river aside from Chesterfield House which was a considerable distance up river.

These posts are also referred to as the South Branch Houses. However, the HBC's post is also recognized as Carlton House II while the NWC's post is known as South Branch House II. These posts were occupied from 1805 to 1810. Unfortunately, no post journals exist from either post. However, Daniel Harmon, a prominent NWC trader, kept a detailed personal journal recording his daily activities during his stay at the NWC South Branch House II. Aside from Harmon's journal, little is known about either post.

Harmon's journal entries provide descriptive accounts of the geography, animals, Native groups and vague references to both the HBC's and the NWC posts. It is through his journal that we realize how close these posts actually were. After arrival at his company's post, Harmon wrote:

> Sept. 21st, 1805 – Mr. William Smith & I along with two Interpreters & fifteen laboring Men &c. are to pass the ensuing Winter here, and at a few hundred paces from us the Hudson's Bay People have a Fort in charge of Mr. Joseph Howse [Brown 2006:84].

Based on Harmon's account we are able to get an idea of how many men were wintering at the NWC post while we also learn that the HBC post was literally right beside them.

Although there was tension between the two companies, it is fair to assume that they built side by side for safety rather than for friendship. On another note, trading companies commonly built near their competitors in order to monitor trading activities. However, the memory of the Gros Ventre attack on the earlier South Branch Houses downstream was probably still strong. The attitudes of the traders at the two posts are evident in Harmon's journal:

> Aug. 28th, 1806 [Brown notes: Mistakenly dated June 28 in the manuscript] – The Hudson's Bay People are returned from their Factory, and if they have news of consequence from England they are determined to keep all to themselves for they give us none [Brown 2006:86].

Despite living side by side, it appears that the men from either post did not associate with one another.

We have to take into consideration the probability that these men had concern for their safety. Although the NWC South Branch House successfully defended itself against the Gros Ventre in 1794, the attack on the HBC South Branch House was exceptionally brutal and many lives were lost. It is almost certain that the men, woman and children were living in fear at these posts. Harmon's journal supports this view:

> April 19th, 1806 – The grater [sic] part of our Indians [ie. Cree] have gone to wage War upon the Rapid Indians [Gros Ventre], their inveterate enemies – with whom they often patch up a Peace, but is never of a long duration [Brown 2006:85].
>
> April 28th, 1806 – A few Days since a small War party of Rapid Indians, came & killed several Assiniboins, who were encamped within fifteen Miles of our Fort. They also Scalped and stabbed an old Woman in several places, who notwithstanding is still alive and to all appearance will recover of her wounds [Brown 2006:85].

Harmon provides evidence that the tensions between the Cree and the Gros Ventre were no different than they were in 1794. Therefore, the hostile native groups were most likely the main reason why the HBC and the NWC choose to build side by side.

Both Carlton House II and South Branch House II were abandoned in 1810 in favour of posts along the North Saskatchewan River. The HBC constructed Carlton House III which at the time was referred to as the Montèe, or the Crossing Place (Klimko 1982). Carlton House III would eventually become known as Fort Carlton (1810-1885) (Figure 15). There is also

evidence that the NWC built nearby the HBC's Carlton House III (HBCA B.27/a/5). Thus, the stretch of the South Saskatchewan River from the Forks to the abandoned Carlton House II and South Branch House II appears to have remained unoccupied for at least a few years.

5.3 The End of an Era

A few years later, in 1816, the NWC decided to move back to the area in which the first set of South Branch Houses (1786-1794) had once stood. Unfortunately, there are neither journals from this post nor any traders that recorded their daily activities here. It seems that very few historians or archaeologists know about this post and therefore have failed to locate it. Thus, the location of this post remains a mystery today.

The Carlton journals, recorded at the time by James Bird, provide the only evidence for the existence of this NWC post. In the Carlton journal of 1816 and 1817 (HBCA B.27/a/5) Bird made a few references to this post.

> Dec 25th, 1816 – Last spring the Canadians determined to abandon this place [Carlton House III], partly from apprehensions of the Stone Indians and partly from an opinion that a Settlement in the South Branch would be more beneficial to them.
> -The Canadians accordingly left this place last May and built a House near the mouth of the South Branch. When their Canoes arrived in the fall they built another House, exactly opposite the old House in the South Branch formerly occupied by Mr. Walker […].
>
> April 3rd, 1817 – Joseph Rocque accompanied by an Indian lad set off for the Canadian House at the South Branch to fetch his Woman who is residing there.
>
> April 6th, 1817 – Joseph Rocque arrived from the South Branch with his Wife and family. He says that Mr McLean gave up his Family without hesitation […].
> -[…] Rocque says further that the Canadians at McLean's house […].

Based on Bird's entries it appears that the NWC operated a post for a single season 1816-1817. This post has been recognized by Klimko (1982:136) as the NWC 1816-1817. According to Bird's journal, it looks as if this post was known as McLean's House (Figure 16).

Figure 16: The End of an Era – Google Earth image of trading posts from 1811-1885.

The year 1817 marks the end-point of what we know about the fur trade along this stretch of the South Saskatchewan River. Although Carlton House III, also known as Fort Carlton (Figure 15), was in operation from 1810-1885 there are no post journals from 1839 (HBCA B.27/a/20-23) to 1855 (HBCA B.27/a/24) nor Correspondence Books from 1817 (HBCA B.27/b/1) – 1872 (HBCA B.27/b/2). Based on the available records it is apparent that there are significant gaps in the historical record.

In fact, the Prince Albert District Report from 1888-1889 indicated the presence of two outposts in the area of the site in question. The report vaguely mentioned the decline in trade at two posts: Boucher Post and the South Branch Outpost (HBCA B.332/e/5). Very little information exists on these posts aside from the notes that indicate Boucher Post was only occupied in the winter while the South Branch Outpost was abandoned in 1889 (HBCA B.332/e/5). The St. Louis History Book mentions Boucher's Post but refers to it as the post office:

> […] as early as 1876, about nine miles West of Saint [sic] Louis at a place called Flat Lepine, a raft equipped with oars was operated by a Métis named James Short. A post office was opened with Mr. J. B. Boucher as postmaster: Boucher Post Office, Saint [sic] Louis de Langevin [St. Louis Historical Society 1980:32-33]

J. A. Boucher, a pioneer of the St. Louis district, mentions that St. Louis was actually referred to as the Boucher Settlement (St. Louis Historical Society 1980:68) prior to being formerly recognized as St. Louis in 1914 (St. Louis Historical Society 2005). However, it appears that the name St. Louis was in use as early as 1897 since the town name is visible on an 1897 Prince Albert sectional map (St. Louis Historical Society 2005). Based on the map compiled by the St. Louis Historical Society, J. B. Boucher homesteaded on Riverlot 12 approximately 2 km west of the present town of St. Louis. Therefore, we can assume that the Boucher Post Office was also located here. With the arrival of more settlers to the area, it became known as the Boucher Settlement. It is also quite possible that the Boucher Outpost was also located here or in the immediate vicinity. However, it is unclear where the South Branch Outpost was located. While scientific observers such as Henry Youle Hind, John Palliser and J.B. Tyrrell were in the surrounding areas, they were not in the immediate vicinity of the South Branch Houses (1786 -

1794). They also failed to mention the presence of Boucher Post (c. 1889) and the South Branch Outpost (c. 1888-1889).

Although many fur trade historians tend to focus their attention on the Saskatchewan River and the Northern Branch into the boreal forest, the South Saskatchewan River north of Saskatoon to the Forks certainly had a rich, vibrant history. Perhaps a scarcity of records have impeded historians in reconstructing the entire history of this area. Therefore, I have attempted in this section to piece together the history of the South Saskatchewan River with special attention paid to the stretch of river from the Forks to the location of Carlton House II and South Branch House II. An understanding of the history of the Saskatchewan River, and more importantly, of what we know about the South Saskatchewan River, is basic to demonstrating the problems with the identification of FfNm-1.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 Examining the Historical Evidence

In many fur trade archaeological reports, it is commonplace to find reference to Morton having identified the post under examination. While Morton's identifications may be accurate, a critical re-examination of the evidence he used is certainly necessary. A re-evaluation of the historical evidence is crucial to the archaeologist's interpretation. An example, such as the HBC South Branch House, can illustrate the potential problems of relying solely on the identification of the site made in 1929.

While Morton's interpretations are important to consider, it is essential to review the post journals along with the observations of various fur traders who described South Branch House while passing by on the South Saskatchewan River. Unexpectedly, the historical accounts actually contradict the historical literature, making the task of identifying Morton's South Branch House particularly challenging. The goal of this section is to demonstrate the various issues surrounding Morton's identification. While we are fortunate to have historical evidence, it does not necessarily support Morton's position nor identify South Branch House.

Both David Thompson and Peter Fidler, arguably the most skilled map makers of the early 19th century, were stationed at the HBC South Branch House. Unfortunately, none of their surviving maps clearly depicted the location of any of the South Branch houses. Their early maps, in which we are most interested, were never returned to the HBC and their continued existence remains questionable. The HBC turned over a number of maps, which most likely contained significant detail with regard to the location of the HBC South Branch House, to the prominent map maker Aaron Arrowsmith (Ruggles 1991). The first Arrowsmith map depicting

the general location of the HBC South Branch House was produced in 1795 and reproduced in 1802 with no changes being made for the location of South Branch House (Belyea 2007:34; Luebke et al. 1987). Ruggles (1991) notes that various elements of some of the earlier maps would have been integrated with other features to produce more detailed and complete versions of early North American maps. This can be seen in additional Arrowsmith maps published in 1814 (Figure 17) and 1818 (Figure 18) and up to at least 1832 (Merk 1931). Unfortunately none of these maps clearly pin point the exact location of the HBC South Branch House

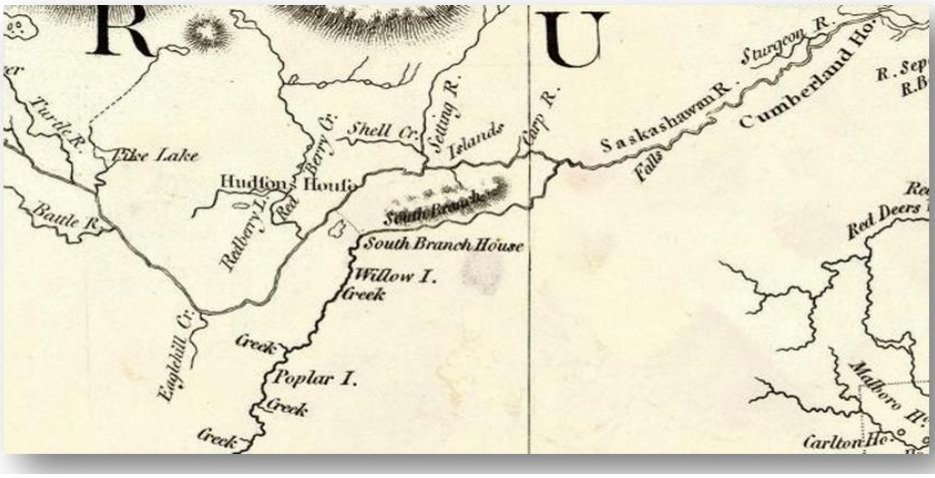

Figure 17: New Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America, 1814 (permission granted by website for non-profit use - Cartography Associates 2003).

· **Figure 18**: North America, 1818 (permission granted by website for non-profit use - Cartography Associates 2003).

A number of maps exist that document the general locations of HBC trading posts in the interior of North America. However, these map makers would have been using information borrowed from other cartographers such as Fidler and Thompson. The earliest map that potentially refers to the location of the HBC's South Branch House was published in 1791 by Edward Jarvis and Donald McKay (Ruggles 1991: Plate 14; Wood 2001: Plate 11b). This map indicates "Comp. Settlement" in the general location of South Branch House and suggests that this post is on the east side of the river. However, neither Jarvis nor McKay were ever in this area and therefore the accuracy of their location of "Comp. Settlement" remains a question. A 1794 map by Philip Turnor records South Branch House in the general area; however, Turnor does not designate an exact spot for the post (Belyea 2007:42-43). John Reid's map published in 1796 (Figure 19), most likely borrowed information from Jarvis and Mackay since their 1791map and Reid's 1796 map both place South Branch House on the east side of the river. Despite these references to the location of the HBC South Branch House, the exact location remains a mystery. It is important to recognize the biases inherent in these maps in order to assess their accuracy. In addition to the issue of accuracy with respect to the representations of the HBC South Branch House in the maps discussed, we must closely examine the historical evidence.

The numerous traders who passed through the area, such as Peter Fidler (1800-1801) (HBCA E.3) and John McDonald of Garth (Green 1999a and b), after South Branch House's abandonment in 1794 also failed to indicate the post in their maps and only vague references were recorded in their journals. This is the case with David Thompson's 1793-1795 journals (Morton n.d.). In 1793, David Thompson set out from York Factory for Buckingham House. His trip included a brief stay at the HBC South Branch House. While Thompson was recording

his course from York Factory he indicated that on October 15 1793 he left the canoes at the Saskatchewan River forks and travelled overland by horse to the HBC South Branch House (Morton n.d.). Unfortunately, neither Thompson's journals nor Fidler's or McDonald of Garth's provide additional evidence with regard to the location or set up of South Branch House.

Figure 19: The Map of North America, 1796 (permission granted by website for non-profit use - Cartography Associates 2003).

6.1 Fidler's Journals

Although the Fidler maps passed on to Arrowsmith have been lost, his journals may contain important information with regard to the location of the HBC South Branch House. While examining Fidler's journals it soon became apparent that there are problems with Morton's ad hoc identification. Although Fidler was stationed at the HBC South Branch House in 1789-90, there are problems inherent in his Chesterfield House journals 1800-1801 (Johnson 1967) which record his passage by the HBC South Branch House. These problems are not detectable without an understanding of the geography of this stretch of the South Saskatchewan

River. An understanding of Fidler's coordinates are also crucial in order to understand and to recognize the problems with some of his journal entries.

As competition increased, the HBC had to expand their presence further inland. Peter Fidler was given orders to establish a trading post at the confluence of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer rivers (see previous chapter). Aside from the HBC South Branch House, the remainder of the South Saskatchewan River remained largely unexplored. Given his surveying and trading abilities, it was no surprise that Fidler was chosen to establish Chesterfield House in 1800 (Ruggles 1991).

For the purpose of my analysis, Alice M. Johnson's version of Peter Fidler's journal (Johnson 1967) will be utilized primarily because of the accuracy of her transcription. J. G. MacGregor also compiled a book based on Fidler's surveys; however it reads as an edited narrative (MacGregor 1966) rather than as Fidler's actual accounts (Johnson 1967). In order to be confident that Johnson, when transcribing, did not miss anything of importance I also have reviewed numerous journals on which Johnson based her transcription.

Even in Johnson's transcription, there is apparent confusion with Fidler's records. It is important to clarify these problems prior to looking at some rather odd statements by Fidler. Johnson's version of Peter Fidler's journal is based primarily on Fidler's original journal (HBCA B.34/1/2). This journal is part of the collection of Chesterfield House post Journals. Johnson transcribed the Chesterfield House journal from 1800-1801. This section of Fidler's journal includes his journeys along the South Saskatchewan River during which he mentioned the abandoned HBC South Branch House. Aside from Fidler's original version found in the Chesterfield House post journals, two additional versions also exist. It was not uncommon for

fur traders to copy their notes prior to sending them off to London. While recording these notes traders would often insert additional detail into various accounts. One would assume that additional notes would be helpful for interpretation. However this is not the case with Fidler's journals. Fidler's rough version (HBCA B.34/a/11) was copied by Fidler prior to sending to London and it is this version (HBCA B.34/a/2) on which Johnson relies (Johnson 1967:253). Aside from these two versions Fidler had his own personal copy (HBCA E.3/2). While Johnson's version (Johnson 1967) is based on Fidler's official copy that was sent to London she includes additional footnotes from the other two versions (HBCA B.34/a/1 and HBCA E.3/2). The combination of these three versions adds confusion with respect to the exact location of the HBC South Branch House.

While on his trip in 1800 to establish Chesterfield House, Fidler mentioned passing the abandoned HBC South Branch House. Fidler worked here in 1789; therefore his information should be reliable. While he was passing South Branch House he made the following observations after recording his course:

> […] barren hills on N side and the pines opposite the South Branch House appears SSE1 and passed the old South Branch House that was burnt down by the Fall Indians after plundering it in June 1794 [HBCA B.34/a/2, Johnson 1967:255].

Fidler's account is his final version which was sent to London. It is important to understand that Fidler's "N side (HBCA B.334/a/2, Johnson 1967:255)" is what we would refer to as the west side of the river. While facing downstream on this stretch of the river, the west side of the river is also known as the left side or north side while the east side is known as the right side or south side. The mention of pines opposite South Branch House suggests that the HBC's post was located on the South or east side – the side of the river where Morton located South Branch House (Figure 20). Although this statement does not suggest any contradictions as to what side

of the river South Branch House is located on, it is from another version of Fidler's writing (HBCA E.3/2) that confusion arises.

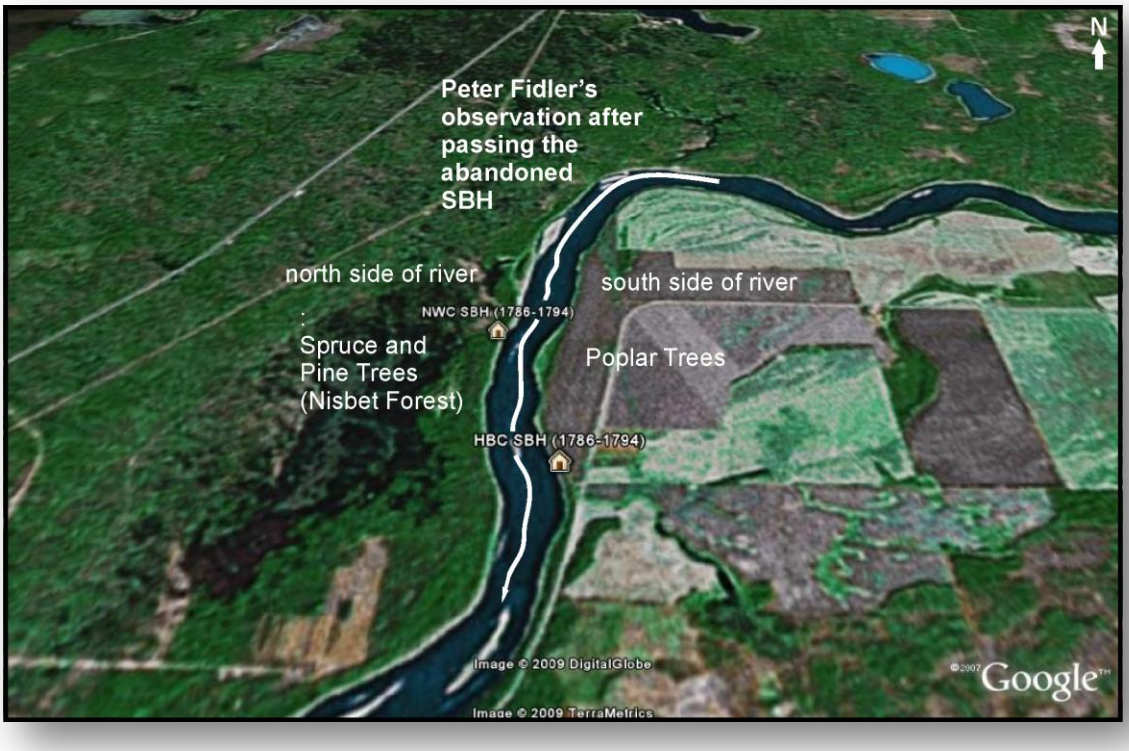

Figure 20: Google Earth recreation of Peter Fidler's route in 1800.

In this later version, Fidler mentioned passing the old South Branch House (HBCA B.34/a/2, Johnson 1967:255), he inserted a note which Johnson also includes in her footnotes (Johnson 1967:255). After documenting astronomical observations, he wrote:

> […] stopped here from 1 to 3 ½ p.m. & collected a few nails from the old Houses Tracked on N side (the House is on the same side) [HBCA E.3/2, Johnson 1967:255].

Fidler's comment differs from his first version (HBCA B.34/a/2, Johnson 1967:255) and implies that the HBC South Branch House is actually located on the north, or west side of the river. While this observation may be a simple error on Fidler's part, we have to consider it. Fidler is

often praised for his detail and accuracy and yet we have two contradictory statements. Despite the discrepancy, it is possible that Fidler wrote this while he was retired, and this small detail may have been an unintentional error. Despite Fidler's peculiar statement (HBCA E.3/2, Johnson 1967:255) the rest of the evidence points to the post being on the east side.

Unfortunately, Fidler does not record the coordinates of the HBC South Branch House on his first trip past the abandoned post. However, on his return trip he did. On May 16th 1801 Fidler recorded the latitude of South Branch House as 52°53´2´´ (HBCA E.3/2, Johnson 1967:291). Traditionally numerous observations would make for a more accurate measurement, but Fidler's single latitudinal measurement can be supported on the basis of his additional geographical observations.

Peter Fidler, like David Thompson, was a trained surveyor, and both were trained by the well known surveyor Philip Turner (Ruggles 1991). Peter Broughton feels that we can expect Fidler's measurements to be very reliable (Broughton personal communication 2009). Broughton has done extensive research in the area of early surveying techniques with a special interest with Peter Fidler's works. The *Annals of Science* has accepted and will soon be publishing one of Broughton's articles titled, "The Accuracy and Use of Sextants and Watches in Rupert's Land in the 1790s." The *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* will publish another of Broughton's articles, "Astronomical Observations of Peter Fidler and others in North America from 1790-1820."

During a conversation with Broughton he raised a few interesting points with regard to Fidler's observation of South Branch House.

> Assuming Fidler used a double meridian altitude of the Sun at noon, and the Sun was fairly high in the sky (spring or summer, say), one can be 95% certain that a single

> latitude observation is accurate within plus or minus 20 arcseconds, so you can investigate what that does to the location by using 52°53´22´´ or 52°52´42.´´ [Peter Broughton, personal communication 2009].

Given Broughton's suggestion along with Fidler's single observation, 52°53´2´´, with the error of plus/minus 20 arcseconds factored in, a map was created to demonstrate the approximate location of South Branch House (Figure 21). Interestingly, Fidler's latitude of South Branch House is located approximately 850 meters south of the present archaeological site of Morton's HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1). It is rather interesting that Fidler's latitude with the expected range of error factored in does not even encompass Morton's South Branch House (FfNm-1).

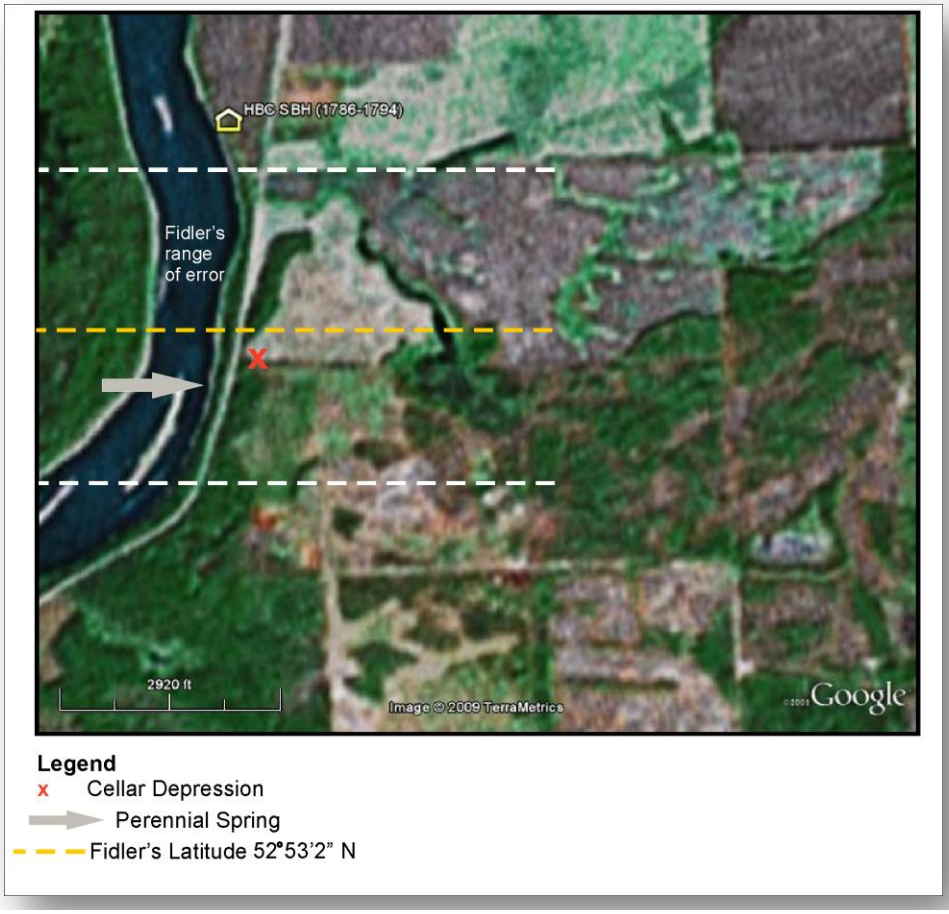

Figure 21: Google Earth image indicating cellar depression with Peter Fidler's latitude. Fidler's range of error is indicate within the white hash marks

6.2 The South Branch House Journals

The South Branch House post journals include various clues that hint at its general location, although they do not provide definitive evidence for it. Nine journals exist and these have been copied to microfilm by the HBC Archives. Unfortunately, the post journal from the summer of 1794 has never been found. The journal most likely was destroyed when the Gros Ventre attacked and burned the HBC's post. All the post journals, with the exception of one, are located under the HBC Archives post title *South Branch House* (HBCA /a/1-8). The South Branch House journal from 1789, which includes the months of May to November, can be found under the HBC Archives post title *Manchester House* (HBCA B.121/a/4). This journal is in this category because the master of the South Branch House, William Walker, was transferred to Manchester House in November of 1789, consequently taking the post journal with him. While it is next to impossible to address all the citations related to the location of South Branch House a few of the more significant ones will be discussed in some detail, including excerpts from contemporary trading post journals in the area. The first South Branch House journal is probably the most interesting for the purpose of this thesis. The excerpts that will be addressed include minute details that hint at the side of the river the HBC chose to build on and on the side their competition was located.

Prior to analyzing the South Branch House journals, we must take a brief look at the Hudson House post journals. In the mid 1770s, the HBC had no inland posts aside from Cumberland House. The decision was made to expand their presence in the interior by building (Lower) Hudson House along the North Saskatchewan River in 1778. A year later, this post was abandoned for another (Upper) Hudson House. The second Hudson House was located further upriver from (Lower) Hudson House and operated from 1779-1787. The Hudson House journals

are significant is because they contain important information with regard to the establishment of the HBC South Branch House.

William Tomison, master at Hudson House, was given orders to establish a post along the South Saskatchewan River in order to remain competitive with their competitors who were already in the area (see Chapter five). The Hudson House journal of 1786 provides clues concerning the location that the HBC chose to build South Branch House. On March 3rd Tomison made the first mention of building a post:

> […] sent George Rofs and Magnus Annel to the other River to look for a place to build a House [HBCA B.87/a/8].

George Rofs and Magnus Annel must have picked an area to build on because by March 17th 1786 Tomison sent six men to the South Saskatchewan River to cut wood in preparation for building (HBCA B.87/a/8) (Magnus Annel was killed along with his wife and two children while in charge of the HBC South Branch House when it was attacked in 1794 [HBCA A.11/117:163-165]). William Tomison made the trek overland to the South Saskatchewan River on March 21st 1786. Whether Tomison accepted Rofs' and Annel's selected site remains a question. However, we do know that Tomison made the final decision as to where the post would be built. He described this site in his journal:

> I have fixed on a place for building a House there is one inconvenience that attends to it being too far from the River, as to water there is a creek where Beaver has been formerly within 100 yards of where the House is to be erected, have left the other six Men to fall more timber [HBCA B.27/a/8].

Tomison's statement provides two important characteristics of the site he chose for the construction of the HBC South Branch House. Tomison mentioned that there was one inconvenience – being too far from the river – while he noted the presence of a creek within 100

yards. FfNm-1 is immediately adjacent to the river. Tomison's statement simply does not fit the present location.

The mention of a creek within 100 yards of the site is also of some interest. There is a creek located approximately 135m (150 yards) south of FfNm-1. Earlier researchers at FfNm-1 assumed that this creek was the creek Tomison mentioned in the Hudson House journal (Wutzke et al. 2005). Assuming Fidler was correct with his latitudinal observation, there is also a creek almost exactly 100 yards to the south of the location at 52°53´2´´. This latter creek is actually a spring which runs year-round. A spring of this type would be useful to the occupants of a trading post, especially if they were not immediately next to the river as Tomison described.

Tomison also recorded, March 24th 1786, that William Flett had returned to Hudson House after cutting wood at their new site. Flett informed Tomison that the Canadians had come to their area to cut wood for building a house (HBCA B.87/a/8). The Canadians were from Pangman's and Holmes' Forts des Isles located downstream from the South Branch Houses. All the men sent out by Tomison returned to Hudson House on March 29th 1786, and informed Tomison that there was enough wood cut to build a house (HBCA B.87/a/8). It appears that the HBC's construction activities along the South Saskatchewan River ceased until the ice lifted which would allow men to be sent out from Cumberland House to construct the post that was started by Tomison and his men.

The South Branch House post journals began on September 13th 1786 with a group of men being assigned the task of constructing a post on the South Saskatchewan River. David Thompson, age 16, was hired as a writer for the illiterate master Mitchel Oman. As they were setting out from Cumberland House, Thompson noted that Mr. Longmore gave them instructions

to set up at a convenient place along the South Saskatchewan River (HBCA B.205/a/1). It is rather odd that in his orders to Oman, Longmore made no mention of the site Tomison had already prepared. Fortunately, Thompson recorded their journey from Cumberland House to the site where they eventually erected South Branch House (Figure 22).

Although this journal indicates on what side of the river the HBC chose to build, it also adds confusion as to where exactly they built. The journal excerpts below describe their journey up the South branch of the Saskatchewan River.

> Sept. 21, 1786 – at 5 PM put up at the mouth of the South Branch. [They are at the Forks].
>
> Sept. 22, 1786 – we began tracking on the South Side of the South Branch till 11 am then crossed over to the North Side to track about 5 PM put up.
>
> Sept. 23, 1786 – [continued upstream – several large sand bars]
>
> Sept. 24, 1786 – we Continued Paddling & Tracking on the North Side then crossed over to the South Side and took a view of two Canadian Houses, one of which was built & Stockaded last Summer by Mr Holmes the other without Stockades and built last fall by Mr Pangman. After having viewed them we proceeded on till 6 PM then put up.
>
> Sept. 25, 1786 – at 4 PM came to the Canadian Settlements about 200 Yards above which we pitched our Tents, they have here 2 well stockaded Houses one belonging to Mr Monture. The other to Mr Pangman.
>
> [HBCA B.205/a/1]

On September 21st 1786, therefore, we learn that the HBC party was at the Forks of the Saskatchewan River. As they passed by the Forks they tracked on the south side of South Saskatchewan River, crossing over to the north side later that day. Thompson did not record what side of the river they were on the following day. However, we can assume they

Figure 22: Google Earth reconstruction of the HBC party's journey in 1786.

were still tracking/paddling along the northern shore. On September 24th 1786 Thompson noted that they were tracking on the north side and then crossed over to the south side where they saw two posts (HBCA B.205/a/1). These posts were the recently abandoned Pangman's Fort des Isles and Holmes' post discussed in the previous chapter. After viewing these posts, Thompson did not indicate that they returned to the north side. It appears, therefore, that they continued up-river along the southern shore. The next day, September 25th 1786, Thompson noted that they reached the Canadian settlements and camped 200 yards above (approximately 183 m). These Canadian settlements were erected in replacement of Pangman's Fort des Isles and Holmes' post that were located less than a day's journey downriver. According to the South Branch House journals these Canadian settlements were occupied by Peter Pangman and Nicholas Montour (HBCA B.205/a/1). The following day, September 26th 1786, Oman sent a letter to Longmore informing him of their safe arrival and indicating that he had the men employed gathering building materials. It appears that the HBC built South Branch House 200 yards (183 m) above the two Canadian Settlements. The evidence also suggests that all the posts were located on the east side of the South Saskatchewan River.

A rather peculiar observation was made by Thompson on October 2nd 1786. Thompson wrote, "the people employed in Clearing a Place for to build the House on and falling of wood" (HBCA B.205/a/1). As noted previously, the Hudson House journals indicated that William Tomison had a spot already cleared for the HBC to build on. Why, then, do the South Branch House journals record the men clearing a place to build? Furthermore, the South Branch House journals indicate that their neighbours have stolen all the good wood (HBCA B.205/a/1). Supposedly, Tomison's men had wood prepared for building at the already chosen site towards the end of winter in 1785 (HBCA B.121/a/1). The historical documents imply that the

Canadians most likely stole Tomison's site including the building materials. We have to remember that Oman had no clue as to where to build nor of Tomison's already prepared site. The only instruction given to Oman was to build at a convenient site (HBCA B205/a/1). Therefore, we have to consider that the Canadians built their two settlements at Tomison's site while the HBC built 183 m up-river.

During the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society's open house in 2008, I recorded an interesting oral historical account from local resident John Boucher. John Boucher's family has lived in the vicinity of South Branch House (FfNm-1) since 1882, and possess a rich understanding of the history of the area. While interviewing John I asked him if he knew of any additional trading post locations aside from the South Branch Houses. Boucher was quick to respond:

> There was another fort, probably 200 yards from here. I don't hear anything about that fort. I don't know anything about that Fort. I think that Fort was here prior to the South Branch Fort. That's the understanding that my ancestors gave me [John Boucher, personal communication 2008].

Boucher went on to explain that these remains were destroyed once homesteaders arrived in the area. When the land was broken, the homesteaders would have thrown the rocks from the chimney mounds over the river bank's edge (John Boucher, personal communication 2008).

Boucher's indication of chimney remains about 200 yards (approximately 183 m) northeast of the present South Branch House site (FfNm-1) is interesting since I had not told him of the journal accounts. The first South Branch House journals indicate that the HBC built South Branch House 200 yards above, or in other words, up river from the Canadians (HBCA B.205/a/1). If Boucher's account is accurate than we are faced with three probabilities: 1) Morton's HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1) is actually the HBC's post while the remains

Boucher mentions were the remnants of the NWC South Branch House; 2) Morton's South Branch House (FfNm-1) is actually the NWC South Branch House while Boucher's remains are those of Pangman's independent post operated for one season prior to joining the NWC South Branch House the following year; 3) Boucher's remains are from an earlier undocumented trading post. More evidence is clearly required prior to drawing any conclusions.

The HBC South Branch House journals also imply that the post was located on the east side of the river. The first reference to verify this location was recorded on October 24th 1786 when Thompson noted that Oman sent men across the river to get boards for building (HBCA B.205/a/1). Prior to Thompson's excerpt, Oman was complaining that they had only poor poplars from which to choose. In this area the pines are located on the west side or north side of the river while poplars are on the east side or south side. In a rather rare occurrence, Peter Fidler noted the side of the river the Pine was on, "the men falling Pine upon the West side of the river" (HBCA B.205/a/4). The South Branch House journals, 1786-1794, recorded men getting wood across the river whenever building events took place. In addition to this, most of these comments occur during the winter months while there was ice on the river. The ice would allow the men to easily transport the pine across the river using dogs and horse sledges (HBCA B.201/a/1-8, HBCA B.121/a/4).

In order to be confident that the HBC South Branch House was built on the eastern shore of the South Saskatchewan River numerous contemporary trading post journals were examined for any relevant evidence. Of all the journals examined, the Manchester House (1786-1793) journals included the most significant mentions of the HBC South Branch House. The information contained therein is comparable with the South Branch House post journals.

While at Cumberland House in 1789, Thomas Stayner and a group of men were given orders to ascend the South Saskatchewan River to the HBC South Branch House. Fortunately, Stayner kept a detailed daily journal. His journal is part of the Manchester House Journals collection (HBCA 121/a/5).

> October 19th 1789 – At ½ past 7 OClock [sic] passed the Ruins of an Old Canadian House, a Short time after took our line in.
>
> October 20th 1789 – put off from the Shore continued tracking at 2 PM crossed over to the South Side at 4 OClock put up, towards Evening course air rather increased a clear star light Night. At 7 AM got underway with a moderate Breeze N sharp frost continued Tracking at 9 arrived at the South Branch House.
>
> [HBCA 121/a/5].

Shortly after Stayner passed the abandoned posts, on October 19th, he noted that they crossed over to the south side. After about an hour of tracking they crossed back over to the north side. On October 20th they continued along the north shore and in the afternoon they crossed over again to the south side. The next day they continued tracking along the southern shore, which eventually would bring them to the HBC South Branch House. Once again, the evidence points at the HBC South Branch House being located on the south shore or, in other words, the east side of the South Saskatchewan River.

Throughout 1789-1790, Stayner was employed between Manchester House and South Branch House. While working between the two posts he continued to write in his daily journal. In fact, Stayner drew a map in 1790 that indicated the route from Manchester House to South Branch House (Ruggles 1991). Unfortunately, like Fidler's and Thompson's maps, Stayner's map has also been lost (Ruggles 1991). Despite the missing map, Stayner's journal provides the strongest evidence to support the HBC South Branch House being located on the east side of the river. During his stay at the posts, he made numerous trips back and forth from South Branch

House to Manchester House. The HBC's Manchester House was located along the North Saskatchewan River almost straight west of the HBC South Branch House. Due to their locations, traders were able to travel overland from the South Saskatchewan to the North Saskatchewan or vice versa instead of using the river routes. Stayner's entry on May 20th 1790 provides primary evidence that indicates the HBC South Branch House was located on the east side of the South Saskatchewan River.

> May 20th 1790 – […] betwixt [sic] 1, 2 arrived at the Edge of the South branch. after going this a morning [sic] place the Water up to the Horses bellies for the space of 5 or 600 yds from the Edge of a ridge of woods to the side of the Sth [sic] branch River. a Birch Rind Canoe, a wooden one took our Furrs [sic] away to the house some Southern, Stone Indians on the plantations found the House but very scarce of provisions, some of our bundles being Wet, several of them were opened lay'd [sic] in the sun to dry [HBCA B.121/a/5].

Stayner was traveling overland from Manchester House to South Branch House. Once he reached the South Saskatchewan River, he wrote that the horses were crossing the river along with a canoe hauling the furs across. After crossing the horses and the furs Stayner noted he was at the house, meaning the HBC South Branch House. Although the post journals provide suggestive evidence as to what side the HBC South Branch House is situated, Stayner's personal journal confirms the location of the HBC South Branch House as on the east side of the South Saskatchewan River.

In addition to the controversy regarding the side of the river the HBC South Branch House was located on, another important question needs to be resolved. Arthur S. Morton identified the HBC South Branch House on the east side while he recognized the remains across the river, downstream from the HBC's post, as the ruins of the NWC South Branch House. The journals and the evidence discussed above suggest that the NWC and the HBC were both located on the east side of the river. To address this problem, it is necessary to begin by determining the

distance between these two posts. The historical documents appear to contradict each other, complicating the task of identifying the distance between the posts.

Prior to establishing the distance between the two posts additional evidence is needed to confirm that both the NWC and HBC's posts were located side by side along the eastern bank of the South Saskatchewan River. The South Branch House journals (HBCA B.205/a/1-8) contain numerous references to men casually going between the posts, even for breakfast (HBCA A.11/117:164), with no indication that they had to cross the river. In spite of the evidence from the journals, Morton identified the HBC South Branch House and the NWC South Branch House as being located on opposite sides of the river. Could this be a result of Morton identifying the sites prior to accessing the HBC South Branch House journals?

Perhaps the strongest evidence to support the view that both posts were on the same side of the river comes from the descriptions of the attack in 1794. A number of descriptions of the Gros Ventre attack exist and three of these will be examined closely. One account is by the HBC employee, Cornelius Van Driel (HBCA A.11/117:163-165), who survived the attack while another description is by Duncan M'Gillivray, a NWC employee. The third account was discovered by Robert Clipperton at the archives and is from a Cree oral tradition recorded by Reverend Edward Ahenekew in the early 1900s (Innes 1927-1930). On a side note, a letter has been located in the Moose Factory correspondence in which George Sutherland wrote to John Thomas of the events that he had heard about at South Branch House (HBCA B.135/b/24; Appendix D). Van Driel provided the description of the attack for Sutherland; thus Sutherland's letter corresponds with Van Driel's account (HBCA A.11/117:163-165). However, Sutherland's letter includes additional information that Van Driel failed to include.

All three accounts that will be examined suggest that the HBC and the NWC posts were situated in close proximity. Morton's version creates an almost mythological scene with his mention of the Gros Ventre war party crossing the river to the NWC's post (Morton 1973). In fact, Morton's version is entirely based on his own identifications because there is no mention whatsoever of the Gros Ventre crossing the river. Morton's version makes it appear as if the NWC South Branch House and the HBC South Branch House are located on opposite sides of the river.

Van Driel made numerous descriptions of the attack. The most complete account is found with the York Factory Correspondence (HBCA A.11/117). York Factory, the HBC's most important post, compiled numerous documents throughout the year that would be sent off to London, England. One of these accounts included a letter written by Van Driel describing the Gros Ventre attack on the South Branch Houses in 1794 (Appendix A). In his version of the attack, he describes the Gros Ventre riding on horseback between the two houses towards the river shore. Interestingly, Van Driel does not make any mention of the Gros Ventre crossing the river (HBCA A.11/117:163-165), which implies that both posts were on the same side of the river. Van Driel also mentioned that the Canadians post had an advantage over the HBC's because they were situated on a level spot (HBCA A.11/117:163-165). Van Driel's mention of the Canadians been situated on a level spot corresponds with the location of FfNm-1. In fact, the land the site is on was referred to as 'Lepine Fletts' by early settlers (St. Louis Historical Society 1980:32-33).

Once the Gros Ventre had left the area after a failed attempt at destroying the NWC's post, Van Driel escaped by jumping in a canoe and drifting down-river. While he was headed downstream he mentioned passing the NWC South Branch House (HBCA A.11/117:163-165).

Fearing for his life and assuming the NWC's post had succumbed to the same fate as the HBC's post, Van Driel continued down-stream in search of safety. Van Driel's mention of passing the NWC South Branch House is evidence that the NWC South Branch House was located downstream from the HBC South Branch House. However, the question remains, how far?

Prior to Van Driel's written account being sent to London (HBCA A.11/117:163-165), he described the attack to Joseph Colen while at York Factory. He and Mitchel Oman had arrived there, on August 11th 1794, accompanied by 23 men. Although there is vague reference to the South Branch House attack in the 1794 Cumberland House journal (HBCA B/49/a/26), it was not until the story reached York Factory that it was formerly recorded. It is important to keep in mind that Oman was the man in charge of building HBC South Branch House in 1786. As Van Driel and Oman described the attack, Colen wrote:

> The Indians carried off the scalps of the unfortunate sufferers in triumph and afterwards made an attack on the Canadian House about 300 yards distance from the Company's. The Canadians were only five men but being on their guard and having a few friendly Indians who joined them prepared for making a defense. The assailants were repulsed and a number of them killed. It is supposed that the Natives guilty of this outrage [were] the same tribe who plundered Manchester House last fall and being flushed with that easy conquest induced them to pursue their depredations which we have too fatedly experienced [HBCA B.239/a/96].

Unfortunately, Van Driel's letter which was sent to London (HBCA A.11/117:163-165) does not mention the distance between the two posts. However, the version and the story described to Colen by Van Driel and Oman does. They explained to Colen that the Gros Ventre attacked the Canadian House, "about 300 yards distance from the Company's" (HBCA B.239/a/96). Van Driel's and Oman's mention of the distance between the two posts is interesting. Since Oman was in charge of the post in 1786 while Van Driel was present during the attack in 1794 their mention of a 300 yard separation should be reliable. The first South Branch House journal

(HBCA B.205/a/1) stated that the HBC had a 200 yard separation from the Canadians. Colen does not write much more because he instructed Van Driel to write his account in a letter that would be sent to London (HBCA B.239/a/96). Van Driel's letter is the one discussed above (HBCA A.11/117:163-165).

While at the NWC's Cumberland House, Duncan M'Gillivray recorded Louis Chastellain's version of the attack. Chastellain was in charge of the NWC South Branch House when it was attacked. M'Gillivray noted, "Mr. Shaw received a letter from Chastellain containing very alarming accounts from above" (Morton 1929:13). It appears Mr. Shaw read the letter out loud while M'Gillivray recorded it in his journal (Appendix B). It is important to point out that there is no indication in Chastellain's letter that suggests the Gros Ventre crossed the river after attacking the HBC South Branch House.

Edward Ahenekew's account is a story of an old Cree woman. It is hard to say exactly how old Ahenekew's oral account is aside from the fact that he documented it on paper in the early 1900s. Ahenekew's story describes an old and deaf Cree woman who had fallen asleep along the river's edge. Surprisingly, the Cree woman did not hear the attack and awoke to find the HBC South Branch House destroyed (Innes 1927-1930). Ahenekew goes on to explain that the woman, fearing for her safety, proceeded to the NWC South Branch House where she startled the employees by banging on their gate (Innes 1927-1930). Comparable to Van Driel's account, there is no mention of her crossing the river. Therefore, Ahenekew's oral account suggests that the NWC South Branch House was on the same side of the river as the HBC South Branch House.

Now that we have established that the HBC South Branch House was likely situated upstream from the NWC South Branch House, the distance between them remains to be determined. After reviewing the historical documents there appears to be no definitive information on how far apart the two posts were. The following paragraphs will examine three accounts that describe the distances between the two posts. Unfortunately, they do not agree.

The first HBC South Branch House journal (HBCA B.205/a/1) was written by David Thompson. Although the journal has already been discussed above, it is important to point out one significant excerpt. Thompson wrote that the HBC men camped 200 yards above two well-stockaded Canadian Houses (HBCA B.205/a/1). The next day they began preparations for building. Therefore according to the 1786 HBC South Branch House journal, the HBC built their post 200 yards (approximately 183 m) distant from their competition.

The second account is also from Thompson, but written in retirement about his fur trade experiences. Despite Thompson having described the distance as 200 yards apart in the 1786 South Branch House journal (HBCA B.205/a/5), he noted in his retirement narrative that the HBC placed themselves 80 yards (approximately 73 m) above the Canadian Houses (Glover 1962:40).

The third version comes from Daniel Williams Harmon's journal. In 1805, 11 years after the attack on the South Branch Houses, Harmon was sent to work at the NWC South Branch House II. Harmon mentioned passing the South Branch Houses in his journal. Louis Chastellain who was in charge of the NWC South Branch House post at the time of the attack told Harmon of the attack. Harmon wrote:

> In coming up this River, we saw many places where Forts had stood, but some of which have been abandoned thirty years, and others of a later date, but there was one about Six

> Miles below this, which was abandoned fifteen years ago and on account of the Rapid Indians who in the Summer at a time when there were but few people at the North West or Hudson's Bay Forts came in a Band of about one hundred and fifty a Horse back and killed all the Hudson's Bay People except one Man, and after taking out of the Fort all the property they could conveniently carry away with them, they sat fire to it and consumed it to ashes, and then they went to the North West Fort (which stood only a couple of hundred Rods from the other) expecting to serve that in the like manner [Brown 2006:83; see Appendix C].

A rod is equal to 5.5 yards, thus 200 rods = 1100 yards which would place the posts over 1km apart. Despite the fact that Harmon was never at the first set of South Branch Houses, his description of the distance between the posts appears to correspond with the current accepted locations of these posts.

In addition to the historical evidence already addressed, I examined a number of homestead records at the Saskatchewan Archives Board while reviewing early survey records and maps of the area. I was particularly interested to determine if these records would indicate the presence of the HBC South Branch House remains (FfNm-1). Unfortunately, no records mention these remains. The St. Louis Historical Society's map, *Historic Points of Interest Along the South Saskatchewan River*, contains interesting information indicating settlement in the area surrounding the remains of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1) as early as 1870s. Immediately north of the site (FfNm-1) an early ferry, consisting of a raft and oars, was operated by James Short (St. Louis Historical Society 2005) and a few years later another ferry was in operation there. Pierre and Philippe Gariepy then owned the land where the ferry crossing was located (St. Louis Historical Society 2005). The ferry crossing became known as Gariepy's Crossing. Local farmers, up to the 1940s, continued to cross the river in this location especially in the winter to haul wood (St Louis Historical Society 2005). While this crossing was still

referred to as Gariepy's Crossing it was also known as "Gemess" or the "Old Ferry" crossing (St. Louis Historical Society 2005).

An early sectional map was located which dates to September 1st 1889 (SAB A12, Figure 23). The Dominion Lands office surveyor, Rudolf Rauscher, indicated on the map the presence of homesteads and cultivated fields immediately north of the remains of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1). While Rauscher does not indicate any trading post remains on either side of

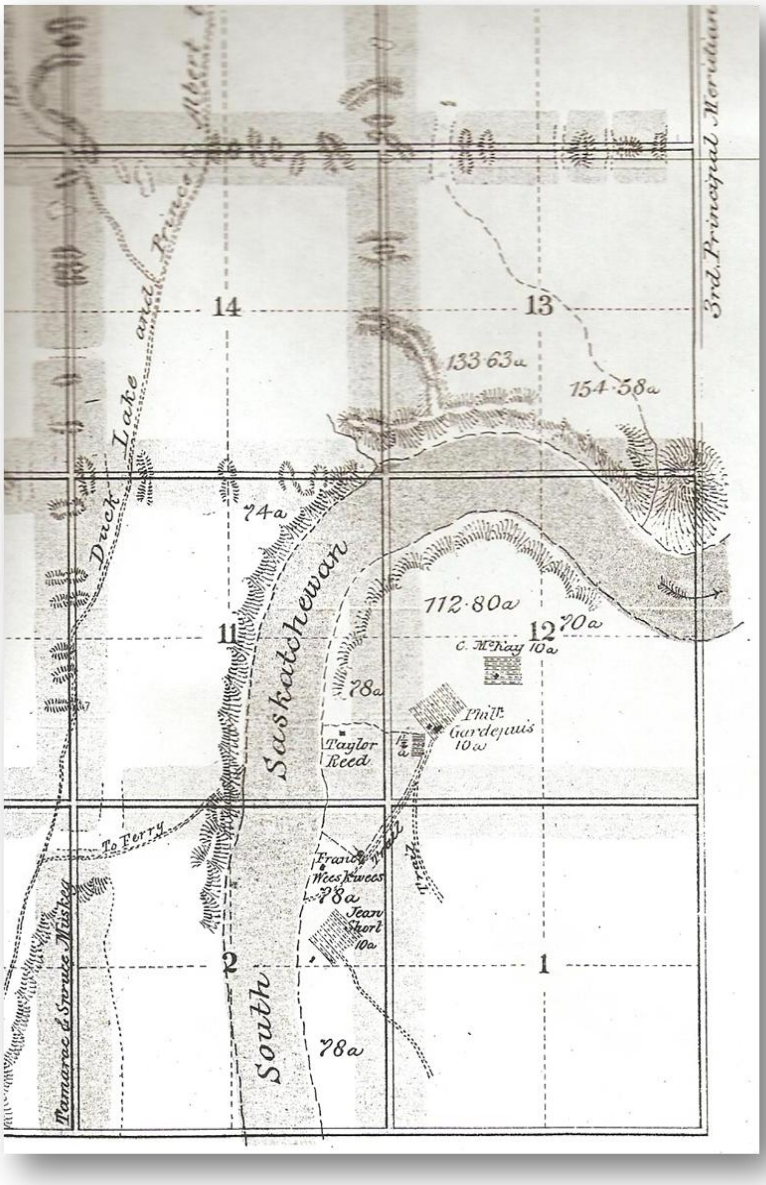

Figure 23: 1889 Dominion Lands Office Sectional Map (permission to use from SAB S-A12 Twp. Plans Map Collection: Sectional Maps).

the river, we do learn that there were a few homesteaders in the vicinity. The earliest map dates to 1886 and was prepared due to homesteaders' land disputes. As a result, a detailed map of the area was drawn by Frank Clayton, the land agent (Figure 8). Unfortunately, the remains of FfNm-1 are not indicated on this map because the latter's coverage is the area immediately north of the site. Could the homesteaders have destroyed additional trading post sites through cultivation, or during the construction of their houses and barns?

6.3 Surface Survey

While numerous sites in the general vicinity were recorded during the Fort Carlton Survey in 1978, no additional trading post remains were located. Lithic materials and tools were recorded at numerous spots along the river's edge. These sites, FfNm-6, FfNm-7, FfNm-8, FfNm-11, have been recorded as campsites with an undetermined cultural affiliation. As well, FfNm-23 is recorded as a find spot with an undetermined cultural affiliation. The Fort Carlton survey also recorded FfNm-9 but this appears to be a site already recorded as FfNm-2. Archaeologist Butch Amundson examined this area in the summer (2008) and is also quite confident that a mistake has been made here. Therefore, it has been suggested that the Saskatchewan Heritage Branch remove the FfNm-9 Saskatchewan archaeological resource record, from its archaeological site database, in order to avoid future confusion.

Despite the findings of the Fort Carlton Survey in 1978, I felt it was important to survey specifically for trading post remains because the historic record has left the possibility that more posts were located in the area besides the South Branch Houses (1786-1794). Although the 1978 Fort Carlton Survey visited or observed sites on both sides of the South Saskatchewan River, the investigators were primarily interested in evaluating the condition of already known

Figure 24: Google Earth image indicating extent of 2008 surface survey around South Branch House. Surveyed area is within the white hash marks.

sites such as FfNm-1 and FfNm-2 and did not extend their survey to additional locations within the Nisbet Forest. A surface survey of the area surrounding FfNm-1 was done in the fall of 2008 (Figure 24). The survey was conducted in 2008 by myself along with Tam Huynh, Peter and Verna Gallén and Alan Korejbo. Homestead-era artifacts were recorded immediately north of South Branch House (FfNm-1) in the cultivated field. Since the survey, additional research has been done at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, focused on early homesteads in the area. As a result, a number of homestead records have been located along with informative maps (Figures 8 and 23). Based on the number of settlers to this area it appears that the area around South Branch House has been utilized throughout the late 19th century and well into the early 20th century.

Our surface survey was also conducted on the west side of the river. Access to the west side of the river was via the abandoned South Branch Nursery (years of operation 1976-1987) (John Thompson, personal communication 2008) (Figure 24). From here, we followed an old trail towards the river's edge. Our survey covered approximately 3 km using the trail as our southern boundary and the NWC SBH (FfNm-2) as our northern boundary. No sites or artifacts were observed or collected. However, on our return trek we noticed a scapula and humerus eroding out of the trail. We recorded this location and removed the faunal remains for identification and to determine if they had been culturally modified (ie. cut marks, smashed etc.). The remains were identified as *Equus caballus* (Horse) and no cultural modifications have been observed.

In addition to the survey, a feature was explored south of South Branch House on the east side of the river. A single cellar depression (52°52´ 57"N 106" 1´55.81"W) is visible approximately 900m to the south of the site (Figures 24). This feature is on the valley top, about 20 m above the lower terrace on which site FfNm-1 is located. The cellar measures 2.5m (north-south) X 4m (east-west) and ranges up to 1m in depth. A metal detector was used around the cellar in order to locate any potential metal artifacts. A few shovel tests were placed within and around the cellar. Unfortunately no artifacts were recovered. The identification of this feature remains unanswered. However, it has been suggested by David Meyer that the depression may be a Métis rifle pit rather than a cellar. While the depression is strategically located on a height of land, it appears to be located too far back (208 m) from the river's edge to be of any use as a rifle pit.

It is rather interesting that this depression falls within the margin of error of Fidler's coordinates for South Branch House (Figure 21). Could this be what remains of the HBC South

Branch House? The few descriptions of South Branch House seem to best suit this location rather than FfNm-1. Van Driel mentioned that the Canadian's post was situated on a level spot (HBCA A.11/117:163-165) while Tomison described the site he chose as being too far from the river but within 100 yards (91.44m) of a creek. Interestingly, the depression is not located on level ground, is relatively far from the river, and is within 100 yards of a perennial spring located to the south. However, despite this suggestive evidence it is a rather odd place to build a post when there are extensive river flats to the north of FfNm-1.

It is possible that additional cellar features could have been destroyed during road construction since a portion of this extended bank has been cut back in order to make the roadway. Furthermore, cultivation could have also filled in additional features leaving no signs of a trading post on the surface. The amount of homestead era artifacts observed north of FfNm-1 was relatively scarce which is rather surprising considering the number of settlers indicated on the maps (Figures 8 and 23) within the last 140 years. Therefore, what evidence would be visible of 18th century trading posts? Another surface survey was conducted by the SAS in April 2009. While the survey was successful in locating the site of Gariepy's Homestead (as indicated in Figures 8 and 23) no additional features or artifacts were observed that would indicate remains of a trading post.

6.4 Summary

After a critical evaluation of the historical evidence, problems are apparent with Morton's identification of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1). While Morton's identification may be right, the previous discussion reveals the inherent problems with the site's identification. The

crucial evidence responsible for this controversy comes from Morton's evidence, Peter Fidler's coordinates, trading post journals and oral histories.

Unfortunately, the historical evidence has not provided any clear answers as to the identification of Morton's South Branch House (FfNm-1). If anything, the historical evidence raises more problems that further complicate the task of identifying this site. Yet despite the obvious problems with the historical evidence, there are certain points which emerge. We can quite confidently state that the HBC South Branch House and the NWC South Branch House were both located on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River. Furthermore, the posts could not have been less than 200 yards (approximately 183 meters) (HBCA B.205/a/1) or no more than 300 yards (approximately 274 meters) (HBCA B.239/a/96) apart. If these findings are correct, there is yet another major problem: what are the remains across the river identified by Morton as the NWC South Branch House? Are these the remains of McLean's House mentioned by Bird in the Carlton Journal (HBCA B.27/a/5; see Chapter 5), or are they the remains of an early Métis hivernant settlement? While the historical evidence has been extensively examined, there is one additional line of inquiry that can be pursued. Chapter 7 will focus on the archaeological evidence recovered from FfNm-1. Does archaeological evidence hold the key to the identification of Morton's HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1)?

CHAPTER 7:

7.0 Archaeological Investigation

In the early 2000s the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society (SAS) began searching for a site that would be appropriate to use for an archaeological research project. The SAS had initially planned to excavate, interpret and authentically reconstruct the former site of the HBC South Branch House (FfNm-1). The initial archaeological excavators in 2005 and 2007 assumed that they were working on the HBC South Branch House and thus the field season reports reflect the archaeology and/or history of the 18th century HBC. Unexpectedly, a number of visitors to the site in 2007 asked a similar question after the archaeologists explained the complex fur trade history of this stretch of the river, inquiring, "how do you know that this is the site of HBC with all the other trading posts in the area?" Oral histories from local residents also began to raise questions about the identification of the site. Prior to any further interpretation and the possible reconstruction of the site a crucial question had to be answered. What site was the SAS excavating?

7.1 Spatial Layout

The site of South Branch House (FfNm-1) consists of five visible surface features. The features are clustered in the northern and southern portions of the site. A single chimney mound and a cellar depression are visible in the northern half while two chimney mounds and a single cellar depression is found near the southern boundary of the site. There are also three clusters of rocks in the northern half of the site that may have been associated with chimneys. The South Branch House journals indicate that a minimum of four cellars were dug along with at least five chimneys during the occupation of the trading post (HBCA 205/a/1-8, HBCA B.121/a/4).

However, we have to take into consideration that cellars may have been filled in and chimneys may have been taken down and rebuilt elsewhere. As well, additional features may have been lost due to cultivation.

It is noteworthy that Morton's Forts des Isles, as mapped in recent years, consists of a total of fourteen cellars and six chimney mounds (Figure 5). If Morton's identification is accurate, his map suggests that there were a total of twenty visible features. Forts des Isles was established in 1785 and was abandoned either later that year or in the early months of 1786 (Morton 1973:337). Morton's map of the NWC South Branch House (Figure 9) indicates that there were four chimneys and ten cellars visible at the time of his visit. The NWC would have occupied this post for the same time period as the HBC South Branch House. Why, then, does the one-year Fort des Isles consist of twenty features and the NWC South Branch House of fourteen features when the contemporary HBC post has only five visible surface features? The visible surface features at South Branch House (FfNm-1) do not support a trading post that was occupied for nine years.

After reviewing numerous trading post excavation reports and Scott Hamilton's PhD thesis dissertation, *Fur Trade Social Inequality and the Role of Non-Verbal Communication* (1990), the great variability in the structure of trading posts was appreciated. However, there is one example that coincides with the structure of South Branch House (FfNm-1). There are striking similarities between South Branch House (FfNm-1) and the Grant and McLeod post (c.1793-1795) situated along the Saskatchewan River. The Saskatchewan Research Council determined that these remains belonged to the NWC and independent traders David and Peter Grant and A. N. McLeod (Klimko 1987) (Figure 25).

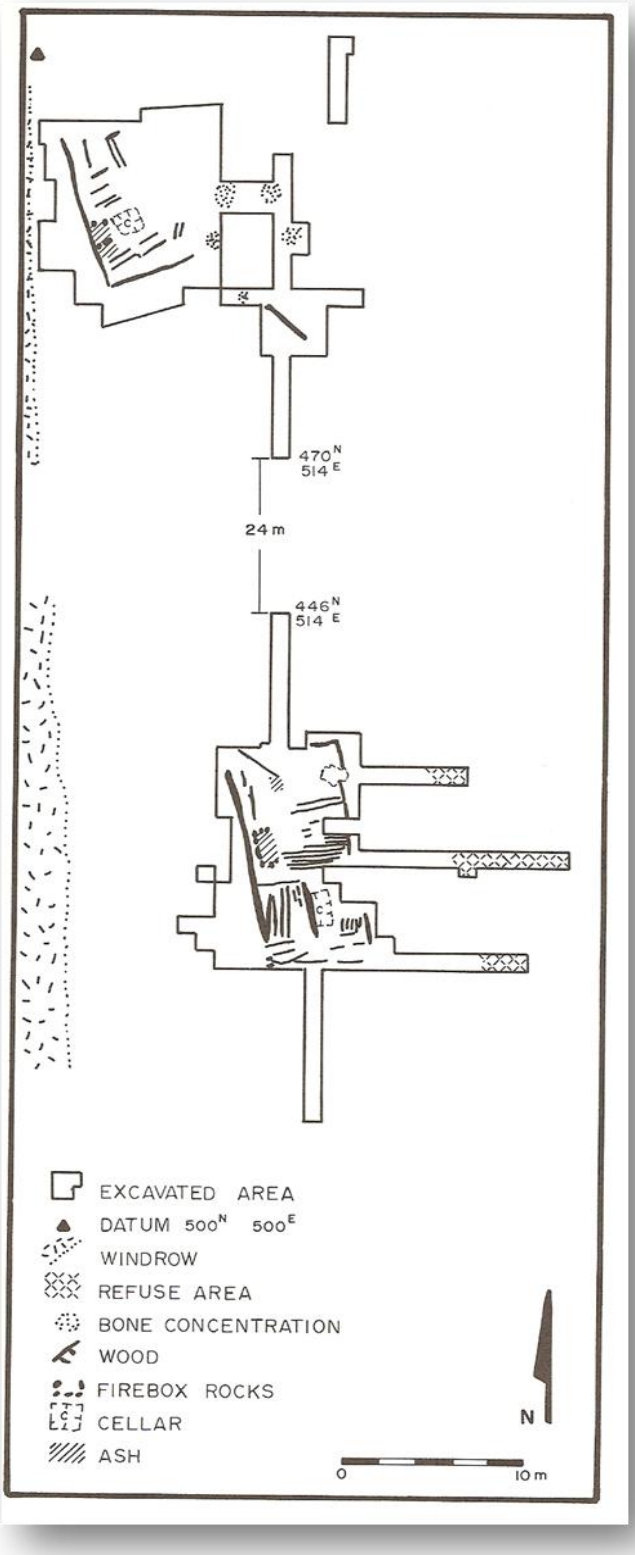

Figure 25: Grant and McLeod Post Site Map (Klimko 1987: 22).

The site was comprised of two sets of features occupying the northern and southern portions of the site. According to Klimko's map (Figure 25) the buildings are between 40 and 45 m apart, with their long axes parallel with the river bank. Each building cluster (north cluster and south cluster) is equipped with a cellar and at least one fireplace composed of rocks and clay. The number and positioning of the features at the Grant and McLeod site shares many similarities with South Branch House (FfNm-1).

7.2 2005 Field Season

The initial field work at South Branch House (FfNm-1) was conducted in 2005. This project was under the direction of the SAS, in partnership with the One Arrow First Nation (Wutzke et al. 2005). The field season was organized by permit holders Tim Jones, the former Executive Director of the SAS and Dr. David Meyer of the University of Saskatchewan. The SAS hired Kim Wutzke as field supervisor along with three crew members: Michelle Manchur, Trevor Paul, and Angus Baldhead.

The first major task of the 2005 field season was clearing the site in preparation for excavations. With the relocation of the main gravel road east of the site, the site had fallen into neglect. The site was virtually abandoned, covered in thick brush, dead trees and tall grass. Once the site was cleared, a detailed map of the site was made. This map recorded all the visible features of the site. A grid system based on the orientation of the surrounding fence was established to record the excavations. Due to the extent of the site, shovel testing was seen as the most practical and efficient method of excavating. Trowels were also used in appropriate areas. Shovel tests were excavated in 10cm arbitrary levels. The screens consisted of both 1/4 inch and

1/8 inch wire mesh. This method of excavating was also used during the 2007 and 2008 excavations.

The goal of the 2005 field season was to determine the extent of the trading post by locating the stockade walls. Numerous 1 x .5m trenches were excavated and a portion of the grader windrows along the access road was screened. Excavations revealed the southeast stockade wall corner along with eastern and southern portions of the stockade wall (Figures 26 and 27). A brief summary of the findings is provided in the executive summary of the *Final Report on the 2005 Investigations of South Branch House*.

> A total of 9087 artifacts were recovered from the subsurface excavations as well as the sceened road fill. The most prolific types of artifact are faunal remains consisting of 61.6% of the total assemblage followed by chinking artifacts at 33.1%. The remaining assemblage contains artifacts consisting of metal with a 0.7% of the assemblage, ceramic artifacts with 0.1%, glass artifacts with 1.0%, lithic artifacts with 2.0% and other artifacts with 1.4%. The excavations also revealed a precontact occupation below the former trading post. However, no diagnostic artifacts were recovered to suggest a likely time period for the pre-European use of the site [Wutzke et al. 2005].

The 2005 field season was a success, aside from determining the extent of the trading post. Additional excavations were needed to answer this question.

Figure 26: Southern stockade wall 292N 165E (taken from Wutzke et al. 2005).

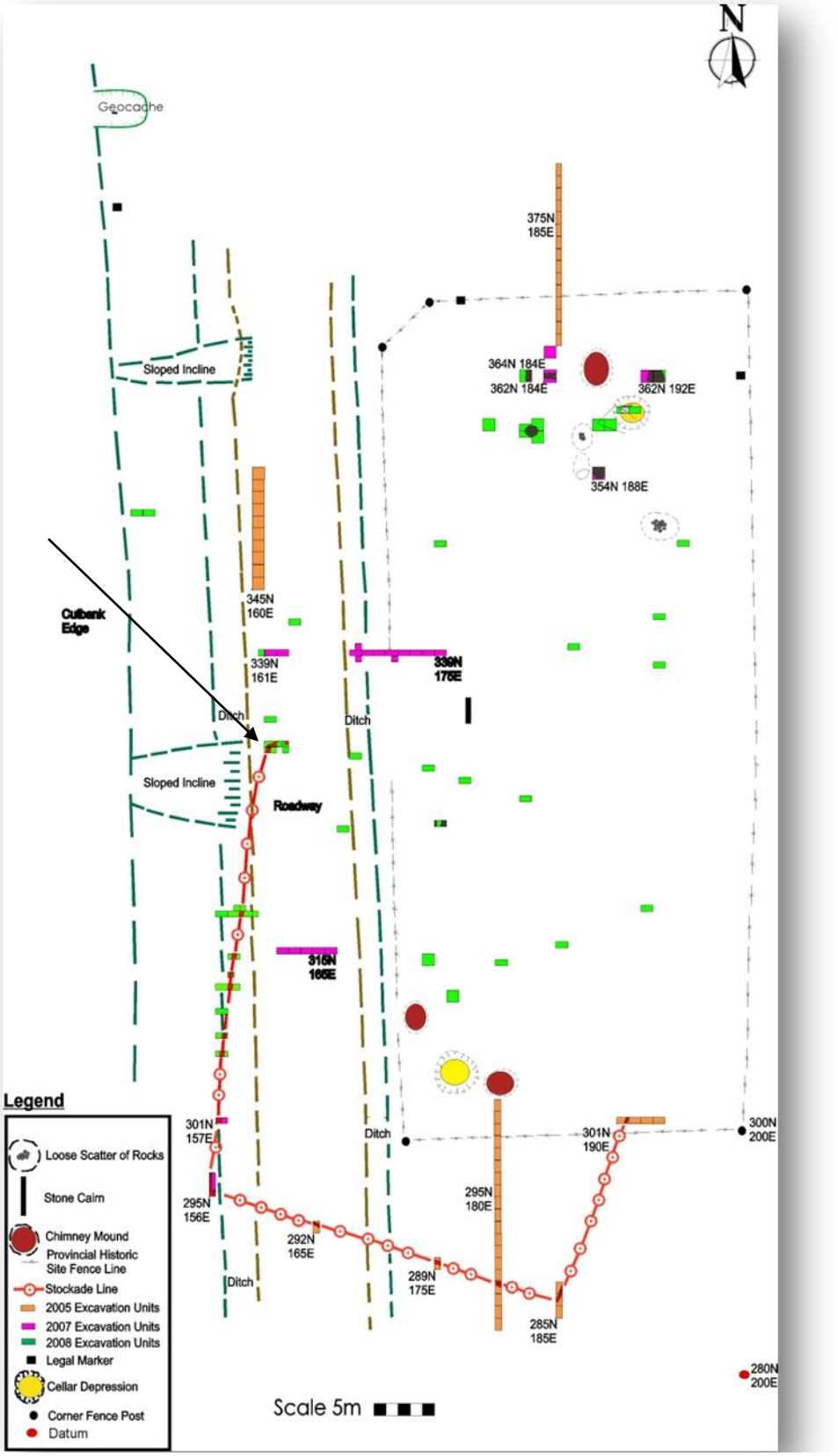

Figure 27: South Branch House (FfNm-1) Site Map. Note: the arrow indicates the turn in the stockade wall.

7.3 2007 Field Season

Due to the extent of the site, the 2005 field season was only able to identify a small portion of the stockade wall while the majority of the time was spent preparing the site for excavations. The SAS decided that additional excavations were needed. The SAS hired myself and Tam Huynh to conduct the excavations. The main objectives of the 2007 field season were to continue locating the stockade walls to determine the size of the trading post and to identify the remnant building structures presumably located within the trading post. A total of 1995 artifacts was recovered (excluding chinking). The low number is likely a result of our objective of locating the stockade wall. The majority of the shovel tests were placed either immediately inside or outside the stockade wall, which is not an artifact rich activity area.

As stated previously the southeast corner of the stockade wall along with portions of the eastern and southern walls were located in 2005. Unfortunately, no descriptions of the dimensions of the stockade walls, nor of the post, had been recorded in the South Branch House trading post journals (HBCA B.205/a/1-8). Various contemporary trading post journals such as Hudson House (HBCA B.87/a/8), Manchester House (HBCA B.121/a/1-3, HBCA B.121/a/4-8) and Buckingham House (HBCA B.24/a/1-2) journals were also examined for additional evidence. No evidence of the size or layout of those posts was found.

Despite the lack of documentary evidence, we were able to work from the known orientation of the southern stockade wall. In order to locate the southwest corner of the stockade brush was cleared on the west side of the access road directly in line with the known location of the southern stockade wall. Prior to excavating, a profile was made of the western riverbank edge in order to determine if the south wall trench appeared there. The stratigraphy appeared to

be uniform, with no evidence of human disturbances, indicating the stockade wall had turned north before this point. The first 2 x .5m shovel test trench (295N 156E, 296N 156E) was placed on the west side of the ditch adjacent to the access road. The southwest corner of the stockade wall was located here approximately 42cm below the surface (Figures 27 and 28). After numerous failed attempts a portion of the western stockade wall was also located which confirmed that the western stockade wall did not parallel the eastern stockade wall as we had assumed (Figure 27). The southwest corner along with a portion of the western stockade wall suggested that the stockade wall was wider in the northern extent of the site.

Figure 28: Southwest corner of stockade 295N 156E and 296N 156E (photograph by Michael A. Markowski).

The SAS also held its first field school at this site and four 1m x 1m units were randomly placed around the most northern visible chimney mound. The field school volunteers excavated by trowel in 5cm arbitrary levels using 1/4 inch and 1/8 inch wire screens. Excavations

recovered numerous fur trade related artifacts along with several sub-surface features associated with the trading post (Figures 27).

7.4 2008 Field Season

The first two field seasons (2005 and 2007) raised numerous questions, most of them left unresolved. In fact, more questions were raised than answered. Due to the success of the previous field seasons, the SAS decided to hold a third field season at South Branch House (FfNm-1). I was hired again by the SAS to supervise the excavations. Nadia Smith and Gabrielle Legault were hired as project assistants. The project took place from July 7th to August 15th. The SAS held another field school at South Branch House from July 19th to July 22nd. The 2008 field season consisted of over fifty volunteers along with members of the St. Louis Historical Society. The site was visited by nearly 200 people.

The SAS laid out the objective of the 2008 field season as follows. The investigations were to be a continuation from the 2005 and 2007 field seasons, focusing primarily on the testing of anomalies identified by an electromagnetic (EM-38) survey along with the identification and dimensional attributes of the stockade, which surrounded the trading post. Senior archaeologists David McLeod and Butch Amundson of Stantec Consulting Ltd. volunteered their expertise, prior to the field season, with the EM38 survey.

The site was divided into six grids and the survey transects were spaced at 1.0m intervals (Figure 29). The total survey area measured 80m north-south and 48m east-west (McLeod 2009:11). This area formed a rectangle consisting of the outer limits of the chimney features and cellar depressions. A primary objective of the survey was to determine the potential locations of intact building remnants (McLeod 2009:14). McLeod explains, "[t]he earth's electrical

conductivity at any specific location is determined by soil type, structure (porosity) and moisture content. Disturbances significantly affecting these properties produce a measureable local increase or decrease in the conductivity of electricity, termed an anomaly (McLeod 2009:1). The geophysical survey (EM38) identified numerous anomalies which David McLeod suggested testing (McLeod 2009). Numerous 1 x .5m tests were placed throughout the site along with additional 1m X 1m units (Figure 27). The EM38 survey was successful in identifying anomalies, though the nature of all the anomalies is not clear. Nevertheless, a few additional features were identified through testing. A greater quantity of artifacts were also recovered this past field season, which is in part due to the identification of anomalies and/or features.

The SAS field school opened up five new 1 x 1m units which were placed within anomalies identified by the EM-38 survey. These units contained significant data. Various fur trade era artifacts were recovered which helped with the interpretation of the site. A total of 9423 artifacts was collected and catalogued from the 2008 field season. The success of the field season is a result of four factors: 1) EM-38 survey; 2) the hiring of two additional crew members; 3) countless volunteer hours and 4) the identification of culturally rich features.

The 2008 field season produced new data pertaining to the dimensions of the trading post and identified a number of features along with the expansion of the refuse pit excavation unit within the stockade itself. Further excavations will be required to locate the remainder of the stockade wall in order to determine the dimensions of the trading post or even the possibility of two trading posts. Future excavations are highly recommended in order to confirm this latter theory. If the stockade does turn south of the northern features, it would have split the site in half, which may indicate the presence of two trading posts. This fact, in itself, would mean that FfNm-1 is not the site of the HBC South Branch House (1786-1794).

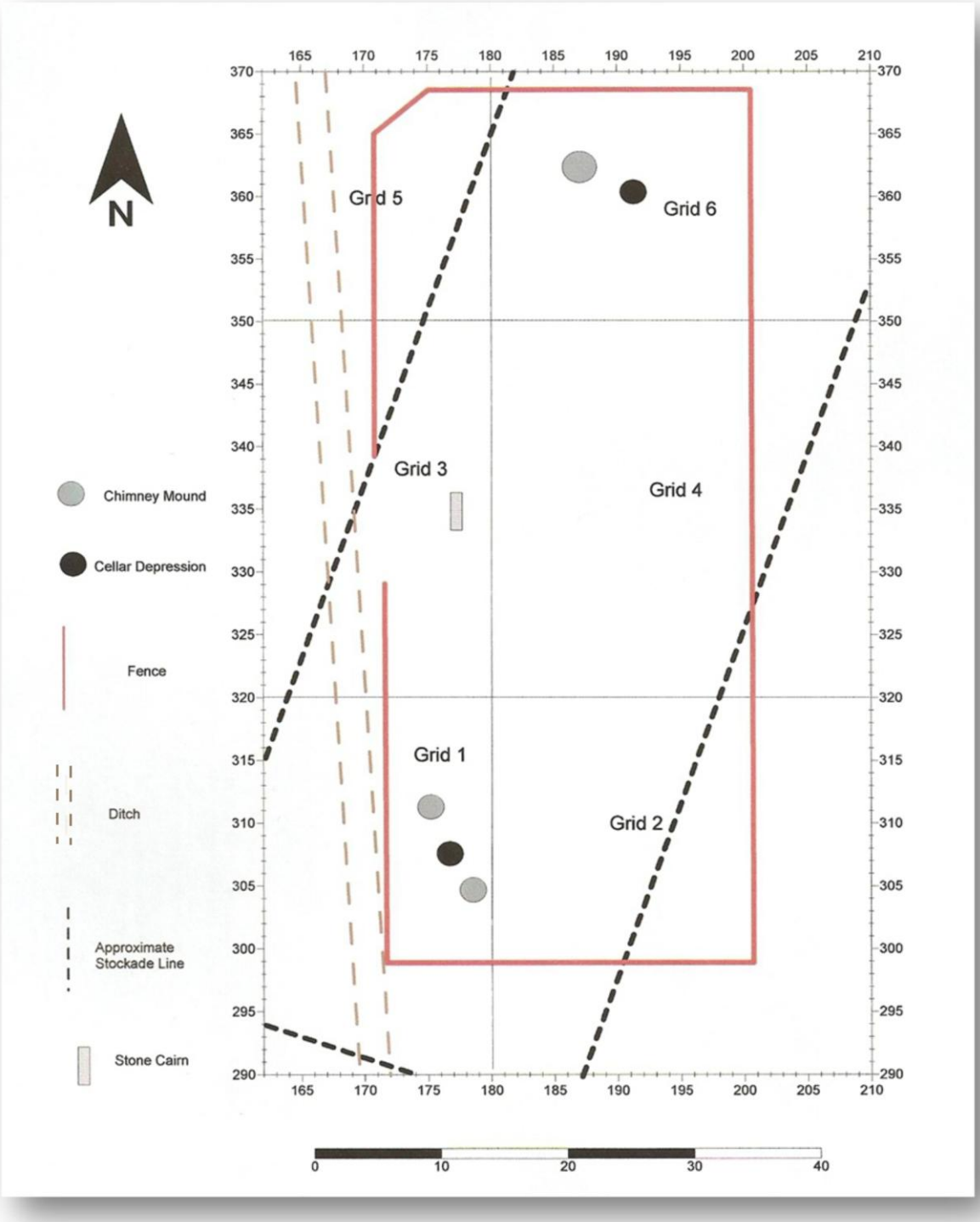

Figure 29: EM38 Survey Grid. Note: the stockade line was projected on this angle based on the data from the 2005 and 2007 field seasons (taken from McLeod 2009).

7.5 Summary of Field Work

Additional information on the field seasons can be found in the appropriate permit reports (Markowski and Cyr-Steenkamp 2008, 2009; Wutke et al. 2005,). Rather than a discussion of the total 20,505 artifacts, the discussion will focus on site abandonment, spatial layout, features and unique artifacts that may provide information on the age of the post and company affiliation. The three field seasons (2005, 2007 and 2008) will be grouped together in order to provide a holistic interpretation.

As noted above, testing was conducted on anomalies detected by the EM38 survey and a number of new features were uncovered. These produced new data with regard to the interpretation of the trading post. The refuse pit (Unit 362N 192E; Figures 27 and 30) was identified in 2007 during the SAS field school (Markowski and Cyr-Steenkamp 2008). The decision was made to expand east from this unit due to the rich deposit encountered. Interestingly, the EM38 survey failed to identify this feature. Unit 362N 192E indicated that the refuse pit extended to the east; therefore we were quite confident that we would be able to locate it. The feature was confirmed at Level 6 Unit 362N 193E (Figure 31). The placement of this unit appears to have captured the east-west extent of the refuse pit.

Based on the results of the EM-38 survey, a 1m X 1m test unit, 357N 183E was opened up to test an anomaly. The anomaly was identified beginning in Level 7 (60-70cm DBS) and continued through and ended near the bottom of Level 8 (70-80cm DBS). The feature was exclusive to the NW ¼. As a result additional units were opened up in order to identify the purpose and extent of this feature. Another 1m X 1m unit, 358N 183E, was opened up during the field school. The feature identified in 357N 183E was located in the SW ¼ of unit 358N

183E, at a depth of approx. 57-70cm DBS. Additional units were needed to identify the size of the feature so two additional 1 x .5m tests were opened up. The feature was encountered in both test units, 357N 182E – NE ¼ and 358N 182E – SE ¼. These additional tests captured the extent of the feature. Based on the artifacts and location of the feature it has been identified as a personal storage space most likely located beneath the floorboards of one of the cabins.

Figure 30: Refuse Pit 362N 192E – 2007 field season. Note: scapula with holes drilled out for bone buttons (photograph by Michael A. Markowski).

Figure 31: Refuse Pit 362N 193E – 2008 field season (photograph by Michael A. Markowski).

Unit 358N 189E was opened up during the 2008 field school. The EM38 survey identified an anomaly in this area, which was not surprising considering the visible depression on the surface. It was quite evident that this unit was in the midst of a cellar depression. Unit 358N 188E was also excavated and captured the western boundary of the cellar while 358N 189E captured the extent of the cellar. Unit 358N 188E was 'stepped' in order to safely excavate the bottom, 140 cm DBS, of 358N 189E (Figure 32). Various artifacts were found throughout the cellar along with detailed stratigraphy that illustrates flood deposits from the South Saskatchewan River.

Locating the stockade was an important objective in all the three field seasons. Unfortunately, the EM38 survey failed to identify the stockade wall partly due to not surveying further west where it was eventually located. However, the EM38 survey included a portion of the cultivated field along with known areas of the line of the stockade wall and surprisingly failed to identify this feature. In order to continue tracing the outline of the stockade wall a unit,

306N 157E, was placed 5 m to the north of the excavated stockade wall as identified near the end of the 2007 field season.

Figure 32: Excavated Cellar 358N 189E (photograph by Michael A. Markowski).

The stockade wall was identified in a total of 16 1 x .5m tests (301N 190E; 285N 185E; 292N 165E; 290N 175E; 301N 157E; 295N 156E; 296N 156E; 306N 157E, NE and NW ¼'s; 308N 157E, SE ¼; 312N 158E, SW ¼; 313N 158E, SW ¼; 314N 158E, NE and NW ¼'s; 318N 158E, SE ¼ and 318N 159E SW ¼; 331N 161E, NW ¼; 332N 161E SE and SW ¼'s; 332N 162E, SE ¼). Once we confirmed the location of the stockade wall, additional tests were placed within 2-5m of the previous test based on the orientation of the stockade. Interestingly the majority of the tests that confirmed the location of the stockade wall were in the middle of the access road ditch (west side). Fortunately, the stockade wall was not entirely destroyed when the

ditch was constructed. The top of the remaining stockade posts and stockade trench were typically located within the first two upper levels (0-20cm DBS) of tests while the base of the trench averaged 40cm DBS.

The stockade wall appears to turn east within the 331N 161E NW ¼ (Figure 27). This may explain why the initial attempts failed to locate the stockade wall during the 2007 and 2008 field seasons. The presence of post holes along with a change in soil verified the change in direction of the stockade wall. In order to confirm this conclusion additional tests, 332N 161E and 332 162E, were opened and confirmed that the stockade wall turned east within these units. Unit 332N 162E SW ¼ produced a square soil stain which may indicate the location of a gate post.

Based on the present evidence, it may be assumed that the northern extent of the stockade wall along with the NW corner have been identified. Interestingly if this is the case it appears that the site (Figure 27) is split in half. Therefore, the southern features (two chimney mounds and one cellar) and the northern features (one chimney mound and a cellar) may be part of two separate trading posts. More excavations will be required to settle this issue.

Surprisingly, there have been few features discovered throughout the three field seasons. The EM38 survey identified numerous anomalies that were tested which has resulted in an adequate sampling of the site (Figure 27). Of course, excavations might simply have been taking place in the wrong spots but one would assume more features should have been located if this site was occupied for nine years. Furthermore, there is little evidence of burning to suggest this post was burned to the ground in 1794. The placement of the stockade wall also raises questions since the HBC's South Branch House journals indicate that their buildings were built within the

stockade (HBCA B.205/a/1, HBCA A.11/117:163-165). The three most significant features that have been located are all associated with the northern features, outside the stockade wall. Aside from the stockade wall, no sub-surface features have been located in the southern portion of the site. The northerly features discussed above, excluding the stockade wall units, produced 30.3% of the entire artifact assemblage and yet, only a few artifacts can provide clues to the possible company affiliation and age of the site. The features thus far suggest a brief occupation of this site (FfNm-1) rather than the nine year occupation of the HBC South Branch House.

7.6 Site Abandonment

Prior to examining the artifacts identified at FfNm-1, a brief discussion of site abandonment is needed. Archaeologist Michael Schiffer has done extensive work on how the abandonment of a site affects the archaeological record (Schiffer 1976:88). Site abandonment can typically be defined in terms of three situations or patterns: episodic, seasonal or permanent (Schiffer 1976). Each form of abandonment leaves behind unique characteristics that archaeologists can use to interpret their sites and site abandonment should be reflected in what types of artifacts are recovered. Given the history of South Branch House (FfNm-1), archaeologists should be able to determine that a form of episodic abandonment took place at this site.

The destruction of the HBC South Branch House in 1794 should be obvious in the archaeological record. Van Driel describes the HBC's post as being reduced to ashes (HBCA A.11/117:163-165). According to Van Driel's account, we should see definite signs of burning. Burning evidence in the archaeological record includes charred wood, burned artifacts, and dense ash deposits. Interestingly, the site of South Branch House (FfNm-1) contains little evidence that

suggests this degree of destruction. If the fort was reduced to ashes, one would assume that burning evidence would be visible throughout the site. While there are some signs of burning, it is not consistent throughout the site. Burning evidence can also be associated with forest fires or intentional burning once the site was abandoned. Gabriella Prager's research raises a few interesting theories in this regard:

1) Periodic clean-up of the compound would have substantial effects on the distribution of artifacts, with some effect on quantities; the location of all refuse dumps should theoretically result in recovery of all artifacts deposited at the fort [Prager 1980:86].

2) The gradual abandonment of forts combined with the high value of trade items and scarcity of most industrial remains, should have resulted in few, if any, useable objects being left behind [Prager 1980:55].

If we take the archaeological evidence from FfNm-1 and apply Prager's theories, there is absolutely no indication that this site underwent the vicissitudes of the HBC South Branch House (1786-1794). According to Prager's first theory, periodic cleanup should be visible in all refuse dumps because these 'dumps' should reflect all artifacts deposited at the site. Therefore, the refuse pit (362N 192E and 362N 193E) should demonstrate periodic cleanup. Besides the refuse pit, the personal storage pit and cellar depression should also be taken into consideration since these features should also reflect the site's history. Interestingly, these features contain very few artifacts aside from faunal remains, suggesting a rather short occupation of the site. Furthermore, the artifacts from FfNm-1 appear to have been either lost or discarded because the objects were unusable. The absence of useable objects being left behind implies that this site was gradually abandoned (Prager 1980:55) or permanently abandoned (Schiffer 1976).

7.7 Material Culture

A new database was introduced in 2008 in order to maintain museum standards in the event that the South Branch House collection is one day on display. The database was modelled on the *Nomenclature* cataloguing system (Chenhall 1978). The database breaks down the artifacts into ten primary functional categories which are used as the basis for interpretation. The functional categories are then broken down into sub-categories and then finally the artifacts themselves. Figure 33 depicts the numerical distribution of artifacts and faunal materials from the 2008 season at FfNm-1.

Functional Categories:
1. Structures
2. Building Furnishings
3. Personal Artifacts
4. Tools and Equipment
5. Transportation Artifacts
6. Recreational Artifacts
7. Societal Artifacts
8. Packages and Containers
9. Unclassifiable Artifacts
10. Faunal

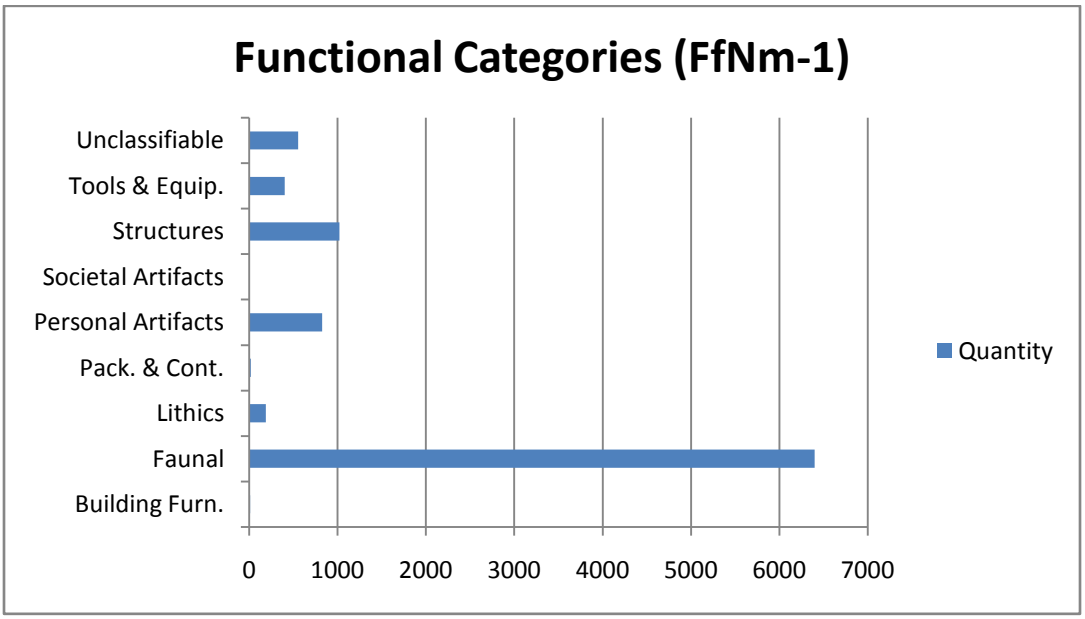

Figure 33: Functional Categories – 2008 field season FfNm-1

7.7.1 Artifacts

Of all the categories of information found on fur trade post sites, artifacts yield the most potential for providing information on the company affiliation and age of a site (eg. Barbeau 1945; Klimko 1987; Klimko and McKeand 1998; Nicks 1969; Prager 1980; Saxberg et al. 2000; Saxberg and Reeves 2000). Gabriella Prager, in her 1980 M.A. thesis, *Behavioral Implications of Cultural Transformation Processes: An Example from Fur Trade Archaeology* (1980), attempted to identify the differences in material culture associated with the NWC and the HBC. Prager explained, "[s]everal investigators have attempted to "discover" differences between the two companies, both in construction techniques and in trade goods, which would allow a trading post site of unknown affiliation to be identified" (Prager 1980:46). Despite the common attitude that differences should exist in the archaeological record, especially when different groups have occupied sites, it is surprisingly frustrating to differentiate artifacts when dealing with 18th century fur trade posts. The following discussion is focused on potentially diagnostic artifacts found at FfNm-1that may provide important clues as to company affiliation and the age of the site.

7.7.1.1 Mic Mac Pipes

Throughout my research careful attention was paid to all artifacts that could potentially provide information with regard to who was occupying FfNm-1 and when. Mic Mac pipes are one example of potentially useful material culture. There has been some suggestion that these pipes were affiliated with traders out of Montreal (eg. Barka and Barka 1976;Wallace and Brown 1963). During the 2008 field season two Mic Mac pipes were found associated with features at FfNm-1(Figure 34).

Figure 34: Mic Mac pipe blanks.

The Mic Mac pipes that were located at FfNm-1 differ in size; otherwise, they are very similar to one another. The smaller pipe blank on the left in Figure 34 was located in the refuse pit (362N 193E) while the larger pipe blank was found in the cellar depression (358N 189E). The pipes appear to be made of a soft rock such as steatite or limestone which corresponds with other descriptions of stone pipe materials (Wallace and Brown 1963:167). Similar stone pipes have been found along the Saskatchewan River and North Saskatchewan River at sites such as Francois Finlay (Klimko and McKeand 1998, 1998b), Grant and McLeod (Klimko 1987) and Sturgeon Fort (Barka and Barka 1976). Barka and Barka state that Alexander Henry the Elder explained that these pipes were made by both the Indians and Canadians (Bain 1901:24 in Barka and Barka 1976:84-85). Wallace and Brown (1963) also suggest that these types of pipes originated in eastern Canada. Hamilton (1990:215) and Pyszczyk (1989b:223) also support a French Canadian affiliation based on the presence of stone pipes at trading post sites. They do note, however, that these pipes have been found in small numbers at a few HBC posts. For instance, Froehlich (2001:98) notes in her M.A. thesis that a Mic Mac pipe was found during excavations at the Old Cumberland House site (1774-1794). It appears that Mic Mac pipes were likely distributed through trade and the traders out of Montreal, which suggests that the two

examples recovered from FfNm-1 were likely associated with either the NWC or independent concerns. Admittedly, as noted above, Mic Mac pipes have also been found at HBC posts.

7.7.1.2 Clay Tobacco Pipes

Pipe stems and pipe bowl fragments are probably the most common artifact type found by archaeologists at fur trade posts. Furthermore, clay pipes are useful to archaeologists when attempting to date a site. Clay pipe typologies have been studied since the 1950s. Ian Walker (1977) has done the most extensive research on clay pipes to date. Walker explains Lewis Binford's work in developing a formula to estimate a median date of the pipe stem assemblage:

> Binford subsequently took Harington's [another expert on clay tobacco pipes] data and produced form it a strait-line regression formula Y=1931.85-38.26x where Y is the desired date, 1931.85 the theoretical date when the bore diameter would reach zero by the formula, 38.26 the slope of the line (the average number of years between each increment – the bore diameters are measured in 64^{th} ins) and X the mean bore diameter of the sample of pipe-fragments measured [Walker 1977:9].

Binford's formula was applied to the pipe stem assemblage from FfNm-1. However, it is important to point out that Walker (1977) feels that Binford's regression formula is only accurate up to ca. 1765. Despite Walker's criticisms and the dates of the HBC South Branch House (1786-1794) I felt that Binford's formula offered yet another avenue of inquiry that may indicate the date of the site.

The entire pipestem assemblage from South Branch House (FfNm-1) was included in this study. The bore holes of the pipe stems were measured using 4/64" and 5/64" and 6/64" drill bits. The three drill bit sizes represent three date ranges: 4/64" = 1750-1800, 5/64" = 1710-1750 and 6/64" = 1680-1710. It is important to point out that some stems were refitted. In these cases the calculation is taken into consideration with the 'pipe stem total.' For example, if there are two stems from the same element I simply counted it as one pipe stem. Interestingly the pipe

stem assemblage from FfNm-1 appears to indicate two discrete assemblages (41% = 1710-1750; 58% = 1750-1800). Based on these findings, I sub-divided the assemblages according to association with the southern or northern features. Depth was also taken into consideration. Surprisingly, there appears to be no correlation with features or depth, which suggests a mixed assemblage. Once I had the pipe stems measured and checked for refitting, the data were then plugged into Binford's regression formula as Walker explained in the above quotation. Based on Binford's formula the approximate date of the pipe stem assemblage = 1746.29.

In addition to Binford's regression formula, I analyzed the same data using Harrington's model. Similar to Binford's later formula, Harrington's model measures pipe stems using sixty-fourth of an inch drill bits. Harrington's model converts the measurements to percentages and then is compared to a graph that he created. This graph indicates the date range of the assemblage. Unlike Binford's formula, Harrington felt that the data do not demand a statistical approach (Barber 1994:150). According to Harrington's model, the South Branch House pipe assemblage fits nicely into the 1750-1800 catagory.

It is rather interesting that 99% of the pipe stem assemblage falls between 1710 and 1800 with Binford's formula. However, on the basis of this model, it is a possibility that this assemblage was made around 1750 and later and indicative of only one occupation. Time lag is important to take into consideration when dealing with land-based trading posts. Pipes would have been made, bought and shipped from England to either, York Factory, the HBC headquarters or Grand Portage, the depot for independent traders and the later NWC. Shipping pipes from England to North America would take up to a year or longer. Once the pipes arrived at the company's headquarters, they would be packed together, old and new, and then be sent inland with the fall canoe brigades. Therefore, it is possible to come across a mixed assemblage.

Another possibility is that the pipe assemblage represents an early French independent trader operating from this site (FfNm-1) in the mid 18th century; however, additional evidence is required to support either argument.

Despite the large amount of pipe stems recovered from the site only a few pipe bowls/spurs were located that indicate the manufacturer. Tobacco pipe manufacturers commonly stamped their logo on the bowl, molded initials on the spurs or created motifs that were easily recognizable and thus attributable to a specific company. Two marks, 'TD' and 'WM', have been identified thus far (Figures 35 and 36).

Figure 35: TD clay tobacco pipe spur.

The TD stamp has been identified at a number of posts dating to the late 18th and early 19th centuries along the Saskatchewan River. This motif has been found at the Francois Finlay site (Klimko and McKeand 1998:230, 310), Grant and McLeod (Klimko 1987:35, 59) and the HBC Old Cumberland House (Froehlich 2001:94). After reviewing the literature it appears that

the TD motifs from FfNm-1 were used by at least two different companies. Geiger Omwake indicates that a English pipe maker by the name of Thomas Dennies may have used his initials, c. 1734, to distinguish his product (Omwake 1955:26) while Adrian Oswald (1987) indicates that Thomas Dormer of London produced TD pipes from 1748-1770 (Heather Coleman, personal communication 2008). Recent research with regard to the TD motif found at trading posts along the Saskatchewan River indicates that the manufacturer was most likely the latter Thomas Dormer (Klimko and McKeand 1998:69; Walker 1966:86,99).

Figure 36: WM clay tobacco pipe bowl fragment.

Like the TD stamp, the WM stamp has been found at the same sites discussed above (Klimko and McKeand 1998:310). Very little information is known about the WM stamp motif although it has been found at a number of late 18th and early 19th century sites. During a

conversation with Heather Coleman, an amateur archaeologist, she informed me about a ship wreck site in England which dates to 1786. Although this information has yet to be published, Coleman was aware that the findings include clay tobacco pipes with a WM stamp. Coleman explains that the WM pipes from this marine site were most similar to the one found at South Branch House (FfNm-1) (Heather Coleman, personal communication 2008). The ship wreck site in London along with Coleman's previous finds suggest that the WM stamp motif was not produced earlier than c.1740 nor later than 1786.

Therefore, given the dating of the TD (1748-1770) and WM (c.1740-1786) stamp motifs, the date produced by Binford's regression formula is not too early. Based on the average date of pipe stems and the earliest production dates of the two manufacturers present at FfNm-1, it appears that the pipe assemblage was produced around the mid 18th century. Now, the almost impossible question to answer involves determining the lag from production to use and discard. How long would it take clay pipes to get to FfNm-1? If an accurate lag time could be established, we would have a good estimate as to the date of the site. To date, analysis suggests that the pipe stems and bowls indicate that FfNm-1 was occupied anywhere from the mid 18th to the early 19th century.

7.7.1.3 Brooches

Two silver brooches have been found at FfNm-1 associated with wall features. The brooches were identified as a hair brooch and a heart brooch (Figure 37). The hair brooch was identified during the 2007 field season in unit 362N 184E while the heart brooch was found nearby in unit 361N 182E during the 2008 field season. The units where the brooches were found are associated with the northern features of the site.

Figure 37: Heart brooch (left) and hair brooch (right).

The hair brooch is also known as a breast or shirt buckle brooch although these types of brooches were fastened in almost every imaginable place on both males and females and on a number of objects like jackets, dresses, headdresses and sashes (Fredrickson and Gibb 1980:49-52). Identical brooches have been found at the Francois Finlay sites (Klimko and McKeand 1998:151-152, 304), a Native burial (Meyer 1973) and the NWC Fort George (Kidd 1970:167,183). These types of brooches were a popular trade item, manufactured and traded by the thousands (Kidd 1970:167, 183 in Klimko and McKeand 1998:151-152). Unfortunately, the single hair brooch found at FfNm-1 did not have any diagnostic maker's marks. While it is difficult to determine where these unmarked brooches originated, researchers have come to a consensus that these types of brooches are representative of the NWC or other independent traders (Fredrickson and Gibb 1980; Meyer 1973).

While similar brooches have been found at HBC's posts (Nicks 1969), Prager believes that trade silver is one of the most distinguishing artifacts for determining NWC affiliation (Prager 1980:47). A number of silver artifacts from the Red Deer River grave were stamped

with the letters 'RC' (Meyer 1973:23). Aside from these diagnostic artifacts, there were silver brooches exactly like the one found at FfNm-1. Based on the context of the artifacts, Meyer suggested that the brooches were manufactured by the same manufacturer as the marked silver objects (Meyer 1973:23). The 'RC' maker's mark indicates that the object was produced in Montreal by Robert Cruikshank. "While both Cruikshank and Roy [Narcisse Roy was Cruikshank's apprentice] produced silver goods for a lengthy period, both appear to have supplied the greatest numbers of pieces to the NWC during the late 1700s and the first decade of the 1800s" (Meyer 1973:23).

Another silver brooch in the shape of a heart was found at FfNm-1. Despite there being no maker's marks on the heart brooch, Fredrickson and Gibb (1980) explain that these types of brooches are typically associated with the same silversmiths as the silver brooches discussed above.

> The design is thought to have come from Scotland, where it was a popular love token and betrothal symbol. The "Lukenbooth" brooch, as it was known in Scotland, may have been introduced by British trained silversmiths such as Robert Cruikshank or James Hanna. Another possibility is that the Indians requested the brooch after seeing it worn by Scottish traders and settlers [Fredrickson and Gibb 1980:53].

According to Meyer's (1973) findings, the silver brooches were most likely representative of Cruikshank's or Roy's works while Fredrickson and Gibb (1980) also suggest the same manufacturer for the heart brooch.

Trade silver was an important trade good throughout the late 18th century and early 19th century. In fact, trade silver dominated the market from 1760 to 1830 (Karklins 1992:93). According to a "Standard of Trade" list for 1795, one beaver pelt could be traded for six small silver brooches (Karklins 1992:93). The 1830s are recognized as the end date of silver trade

goods because they became an unprofitable commodity (Karklins 1992:93). The only silver objects to be found at FfNm-1 consist of one silver brooch and one heart brooch, and the evidence suggests that these types of brooches were most likely associated with traders out of Montreal.

7.7.1.4 Trapezoidal Pendants

Two copper pendants (Figure 38) were found *in situ* in the personal storage pit feature (357N 183E). The pendants are both made of copper and have holes drilled out near the narrowing end. One of the pendants was found *in situ* with beads. The context of the pendant with beads indicates that these types of pendants were either part of a necklace, earrings or worn as some type of adornment. Although trapezoidal pendants have been found at a number of sites, their significance has yet to be determined.

David Meyer and then graduate student Patrick Young, authors of *The Pendant Stones of Pasquatinow*, offer an informative description of stone trapezoidal pendants found at Pasquatinow in east central Saskatchewan along the Saskatchewan River (Meyer and Young 2004:353). Trapezoidal pendants made of either copper, silver or iron have been found at a number of trading posts in Saskatchewan (Meyer and Young 2004:361). For instance, they have been found at the Francois Finlay sites (Klimko and McKeand 1998:153, 224), the Grant and McLeod site (Klimko 1987:56), Sturgeon Fort (Barka and Barka 1976:181) and Fort George (Kidd 1970:169-170, 184). "All of these fur trade posts were operated for varying periods in the last three decades of the 18th century either by independent traders out of Quebec or the NWC" (Meyer and Young 2004:361-362). Meyer and Young suggest that these metal pendants were most likely based on earlier stone and shell pendants like those found along the Saskatchewan

River. It is probable that these pendants were made and traded at posts and were used as a form of adornment or were rolled into tinkling cones (Meyer and Young 2004:362).

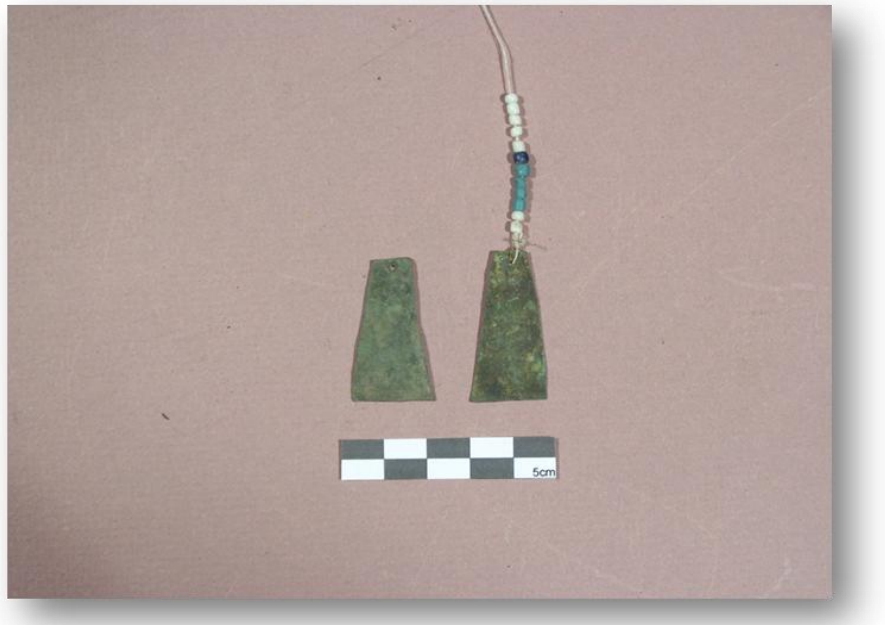

Figure 38: Trapezoidal pendants.

7.7.1.5 Gunflints

A total of three gunflints, dark grey (n=1), light grey (n=1) and blond/brown (n=1) have been recovered from FfNm-1(Figure 39). The dark grey flint was recovered in the northern portion of the site in the feature identified as the personal storage pit (357N 183E), while the remaining two flints were found in the same unit (301N 180E), south of the southern chimney mounds. While these artifacts are recognized as gunflints the two specimens on the left (Figure 39) can be more accurately described as gunspalls, which are flaked from a core (Barka and Barka 1976:72), while the blond/brown flint on the right (Figure 39) is recognized as a blade flint. All three flints are wedge-shaped with signs of secondary chipping on their sides while the light grey gunspall exhibits a bulb of percussion near the junction of the bevels.

Initially it was suggested that gunflints could provide yet another clue to the identification of a site. Past researchers believed gunflints contained unique characteristics such as colour, quality of lithic material and shape that could help source the origin of the flint (Smith 1961, Barka and Barka 1976). In a recent article in *Historical Archaeology*, Jeffrey J. Durst (2009) questioned such unscientific conclusions while introducing new methods involving comparison of trace-element chemical levels in flint that suggest that earlier colonial period flints, represented by his sample, may be identifiable. However, to date, there is no definitive way to source gunflints for a variety of reasons: 1) the same geological features that produced the flint occur in England and western Europe (Durst 2009:28); and 2) the origin (England or France) may not provide strong evidence for company affiliation since both the NWC and HBC imported goods from England throughout the 18th century (Davidson 1967; Innis 1970:128; Prager 1980:48). Despite previous theories on sourcing gunflints, Durst's methods using inductively coupled plasma mass-spectrometry and other modern techniques may provide more information in the future for sourcing gunflints of the fur trade.

Figure 39: Gun flints recovered from FfNm-1.

7.7.1.6 Buttons

Buttons, a common artifact found at fort sites and homestead sites, can also indicate the date of a site. While distinctive patterning on buttons is most often regarded as being diagnostic, plain buttons can offer valuable information as well. Aside from patterning, archaeologists seek to identify different manufacturing methods because certain methods of production have particular date ranges. As far as buttons are concerned, archaeologists tend to pay particular attention to the means of attachment (Olsen 1963:552) because manufacturing techniques changed frequently, especially in reference to the way the shank is attached to the body (Syms and Smith 1984:28).

A total of seven buttons was found at FfNm-1(Figure 40). While none of these buttons has ornate colours or patterning, differences can be found with regard to how they were made. Archaeologists commonly refer to Stanley J. Olsen's chart (1963:553; Figure 41) for identifying plain buttons. Olsen's article (1963) also provides brief descriptions of the various types of buttons. The buttons from FfNm-1 were compared to Olsen's chart and six out of the seven buttons were identified. The buttons display evidence of four different modes of production indicating four distinctive date ranges: (1) Type A – shank and buttons are one piece (n=3) (Figure 40 a, d, e); (2) Type E – plain button with heavy eye (n=1) (Figure 40 e); (3) Type G – thin eye soldered to button (n=1) (Figure 40 c); (4) and a Type J – bone button (n=1) (Figure 40 g). The four different types of buttons also have differing manufacturing periods. For example, Type A (1700-1765), Type E (1750-1812), Type G (1785-1800) and Type J (1750-1830).

According to Olsen's chart (1963:553), the six buttons from FfNm-1 that could be identified indicate a date range from 1700-1830. The range of Olsen's dates can be reduced after

examining the context of the buttons. All of the buttons, except the bone button are from the feature identified as the personal storage pit (357N 183E and 358N 182E). The buttons from this feature were located within 71-77cm DBS, indicating a mixed assemblage. The bone button was found in a 1 x .5m test unit (327N 182E) which is located approximately in the middle of the northern and southern features. Evidence of bone button manufacture at this trading post was found in the refuse pit (362N 192E and 262N 193E). Scapula identified as *Cervus Canadensis* (elk) with button-sized circular holes were found in the refuse pit (Figure 30). The provenience of all the buttons suggests that they are associated with the northern features. No buttons have been found in the southern half of the site.

Based on the context of the button assemblage, we can assume that the earliest date of this site can be established on the presence of Olsen's (1963:552-553) Type G button. The Type G button could not have been manufactured prior to 1785. According to the type of button manufacture present at FfNm-1 the latest possible date of buttons is from Olsen's (1963:552-553) Type J botton which indicates an end date of 1830. The FfNm-1 buttons, therefore, were all manufactured after 1785 and prior to 1830. However, we have to take into consideration 'button life.' Buttons can be used and reused for years if not decades. On another note, four of the six buttons were manufactured prior to 1812. Therefore, there is a possibility that the end date could be estimated at around 1815 since bone buttons (Olsen's Type J) were manufactured from 1750-1830 (Olsen 1963:552-553). Although Olsen (1963) indicates an end date of 1830 for bone button manufacture, bone buttons are still made today. The identification of the buttons from FfNm-1 suggests that the northern features of the site date sometime between 1785 and 1815.

Figure 40: Buttons (A, D, E: Olsen's Type A; B: Olsen's Type E, C: Olsen's Type G; G: Olsen's Type J, F: undeterminate).

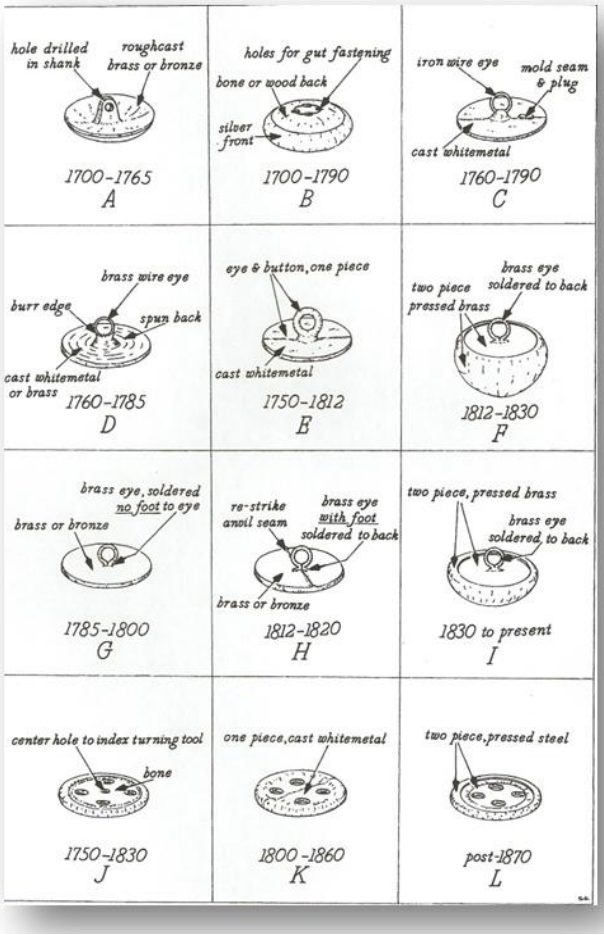

Figure 41: Button evolution (taken from Olsen 1963:553).

7.7.1.7 Nails

Nails offer yet another clue to dating a site. In fact, Adams (2002) suggests that nails are the preferred artifact for dating sites compared to glass and ceramic artifacts because the use life of glass and ceramics is much longer compared to nails. Therefore, interpreting nails can result in greater accuracy when dating sites. Although 50 nails were collected, only 32 could be accurately measured and interpreted due to heavy corrosion on the remaining 18 nails (see Appendix E).

Hand wrought nails are recognized as the earliest form of nails. Archaeological evidence indicates that hand wrought nails were used as early as the Greek and Roman periods (Fontana et al. 1962:50). Wrought nails could be formed by hammering soft metal into nail form while later wrought nails were made from nail rods or split rods of various sizes (Mercer 1924, in Fontana et al. 1962:52). Evidence from, HBC Manchester House (1786-1793), a contemporary trading post provides evidence that wrought nails were being made out of all kinds of metal including ice chisels (HBCA B.121/2/1-3). While wrought nails are diagnostic to pre-1800 they also continued to be used well into the 1850s (Mercer 1924, in Fontana et al. 1962:50).

The transition of wrought nails to cut nails is where confusion exists. Initially, it was believed that cut nails were easily distinguishable from wrought nails, and in some cases they are. Cut nails, opposed to wrought nails, were made by machines that cut iron plate into rectangular strips (Fontana et al. 1962:52). John I. Rempel, author of *Building with Wood* (1980) explains:

> The first nail-cutting machine was basically a table with a guillotine knife at one end. A strip of iron, equal in width to the desired length of the nail, was fed against this knife to a fixed stop. The knife was set at a slight angle to the line of feed so as to produce a slight taper cut. The strip had to be turned over after each cut to obtain the typically

> tapered nail with square edges and a blunt end. At first the heads were still formed by hand; later machines did all the work [Rempel 1980:100].

Early studies of nails indicate that cut nails were being made in England as early as 1790 (Fontana et al. 1962). Researchers (ie. Fontana et al. 1962) typically describe the transition from wrought nails to cut nails as being abrupt, which in this case would be easily distinguishable in the archaeological record. However, whenever technology changes it is not necessarily widely or rapidly adopted. Across the board goods, such as nails, will most often go through a transitional phase until a new form of technology is mastered and thus easily identifiable. However, it is also important to consider that not all manufacturers adopt new technology right away. If the cost of older nails was cheaper, people would tend to purchase the cheaper item. Primarily for this reason, trading companies are known to have used hand wrought nails into the late 19th century (Rempel 1980).

A number of nails (60%) from FfNm-1 assemblage appear to exhibit characteristics of both hand wrought nails and cut nails, making the task of attributing specific dates challenging. Cut nails were produced in three stages: 1) Early; 2) Transitional; and 3) Modern (Adams 2002:68). A summary of the diagnostic characteristics of these three stages is included below:

Table 2: Three stages of cut nails (adapted from Adams 2002).

Early Cut Nails	Transitional Cut Nails	Modern
-post 1790 to ca. 1820 -rectangular -2 tapered sides and 2 parallel sides -pinched under head if machine headed -hand or rose or T – head -end = round	-post 1810 to ca. 1840 -rectangular -*bevel under head (not pinched like early cut nails) -head: thicker, regular shape -end: rounded	-end: square shaped

Interestingly, the nails from FfNm-1 that have been identified as showing signs of both wrought nails and cut nails appear to match Adam's characteristics of early cut nails. Wrought nails should show signs of varying thickness throughout the nail while even early cut nails display uniform thickness as is the case from the South Branch House nails assemblage. Despite this conclusion, all nails in the FfNm-1 collection are considered to be hand-wrought (Figure 42).

While some of the nails shows signs of being early cut nails it does not affect the estimated date of the nail assemblage. Therefore, based on the dates of hand wrought nails and the overlap of the dates of early cut nails, we can confidently estimate the date range of the South Branch House nail assemblage as between c. 1780 (hand wrought) – 1820 (early cut). Given the nature of the nail assemblage, particular attention was paid to the context of where the nails were found. There appears to be no correlation between the types of nails and the northern and southern features of the site. Thus, the date of the nail assemblage appears to correspond with the date of the previously discussed artifacts.

Figure 42: Hand wrought nail (Catalogue #27; Appendix E).

7.7.2 Artifact Summary

All of the artifacts that may provide clues in establishing the date of the site along with determining company affiliation have been addressed. Table 3 indicates an estimated average date of 1793.25, while the artifacts appear to be affiliated with either the NWC or independent traders out of Montreal. Prager (1980:48) concluded that the artifacts associated with the NWC and HBC are virtually identical. However, Nicks (1969:96) indicates the most useful artifacts for this type of research are: 1) Buttons; 2) Ceramics; and 3) Trade Silver (Prager 1980:47). Ceramics and bottle glass are usually the most diagnostic of artifacts, but in the case of FfNm-1, there are so few examples and those are so fragmented that these two artifact categories are not useful for analysis of date and affiliation.

Table 3: Artifact Summary

Artifact	Date	Average Date	Company Affiliation
Brooches	1760-1830	1795	NWC/Independent
Trapezoidal Pendants	1770-1800	1785.5	NWC/Independent
Buttons	1770-1815	1792.5	No diagnostic HBC buttons
Nails	1780-1820	1800	Not Available
Mic Mac Pipes	Not Available	Not Available	NWC/Independent
Results (estimated)		**1793.25**	**NWC/Independent**

***Note: excluding clay tobacco pipes due to time lag. Gunflints are also not included in the table.**

Unfortunately, no diagnostic artifacts have found with maker's marks. The presence of maker's marks could easily distinguish both company affiliation and age of the site. For example, if buttons were located with 'HBC' or beavers stamped on them we could easily

associate them with the HBC. Furthermore, ceramics such as Spode-Copland are also indicative of the HBC. However, this type of ceramic was not in use during the 18th century nor the early 19th century (Sussman 1979). While some artifacts from FfNm-1 do provide clues to who may have occupied this site and when, there have yet to be any definitive diagnostic artifacts found. It is crucial that additional excavations build upon the artifacts discussed above and look for additional artifacts that may provide important information.

7.8 Fauna

A large quantity of faunal remains was recovered from the 2008 field season as well as those from 2005 and 2007. Faunal remains dominated the artifact assemblage for all three field seasons. The vast majority of these remains were unidentifiable. It is important to note that the unidentifiable faunal remains are not included in the "Unclassifiable" functional category but rather under the "Faunal" functional category. The unidentifiable faunal fragments vary from unburned to burned and calcined states.

Some of the faunal remains have been identified by Talina Cyr-Steenkamp and Michael Markowski using the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology's comparative assemblage. Once an element or fragment was identified, an attempt was made to determine what animal (genus and species) it represented. The following chart (Figure 43) indicates the diversity of species identified from the 2008 recoveries.

A number of species were identified. These species include *Castor canadensis* (beaver), *Cervus canadensis* (elk), *Alces alces* (moose), *Canis lupis* (wolf), *Thomomys talpoides* (northern pocket gopher), *Lepus americanus* (snowshoe hare), *Bison bison* (bison) and *Annas sp*. (duck). A large number of faunal remains were also identified under more general categories such as

LSU (large sized ungulate), LSM (large size mammal), MSM (medium sized mammal), SSM (small sized mammal), SSM (small sized bird), LSB (large sized bird), Bird, Rodent and Artiodactyla. It is also important to note that a number of these faunal remains contained cut marks which are related to butchering processes.

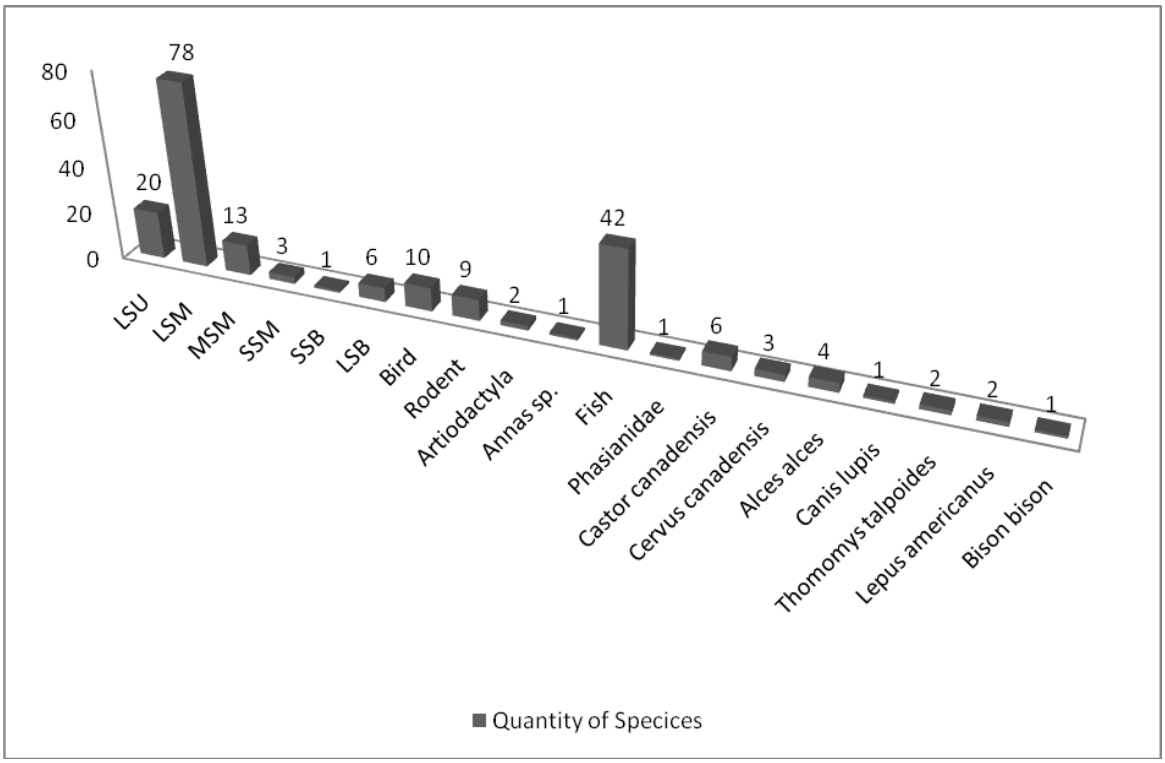

Figure 43: Quantity of Animal Species – 2008 Field Season FfNm-1(taken from Markowski and Cyr-Steenkamp 2009).

CHAPTER 8

8.0 Conclusion

The availability and combination of historial documents, maps, and oral histories in addition to physical evidence in the form of artifacts, features and stratigraphy contributes to a more precise understanding of the past. The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates the significance of documentary archaeology, or in other words, the use of a combination of history, historical evidence and archaeological evidence, in order to critically evaluate our understanding of the past. While Chapter 1 introduced the concept of documentary archaeology, Chapter 2 focused on a discussion of how the fur trade has been researched. An understanding of Morton's work and the developments within fur trade archaeology allows the reader to gain a sense of how and why fur trade posts were identified and in some cases protected. Chapters 1 and 2 provided the reader with a necessary background in order to fully appreciate the significance of critically evaluating the identification of fur trade post sites. Chapter 3 discussed how Morton identified sites while Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 addressed the evidence employed to identify the HBC South Branch House along with the numerous problems raised by this identification. Despite having exhausted the historical evidence and the archaeological evidence to date, it is still rather difficult to identify to this site.

Even though the location of South Branch House cannot be determined, even with the amount of historical documentation now available – documentation not available in Morton's time it is again interesting to consider how easy Morton found it to affiliate the site at FfNm-1 with the HBC South Branch House by relying on Peter Fidler's coordinates and the evidence of burned rocks. Based on the issues raised throughout the chapters from just this site, we must ask ourselves if we should be taking Morton's identifications at face value. I am not suggesting that

we ignore Morton's work; in fact, Morton's work should always be consulted when dealing with fur trade posts. However, archaeologists have to take into consideration when a site was identified and what information provided the primary evidence for its identification. While my argument has not proven Morton wrong conclusively, it has demonstrated the complexity of identifying a site.

I strongly believe that the post Morton was looking for is in the general area of FfNm-1. All the evidence indicates that the HBC South Branch House should be located south of a prominent bend of the South Saskatchewan River (Figure 20). Aside from Fidler's courses and coordinates, various maps (Figures 17, 18 and 19) also indicate South Branch House is in this area.

It is also interesting to point out the continued human land use in this area which is not surprising since fur trade posts are known to have been built on strategic locations to maximize trade (Meyer and Thistle 1995). The archaeological and historical evidence indicates that this area was of importance from pre-contact times through to the early 20th century. Matthew Cocking noted the presence of native people in this area during his inland trip in 1772 (Burpee 1908:103; Morton 1973:257). According to the available documentary evidence, the South Branch Houses were the first trading posts to be built on this stretch of river. Therefore, it is most likely that the HBC built South Branch House in this area given the strategic significance of this stretch of land and its geographic distinctiveness (the river bend) which included a trail system leading to a shallow crossing place in the river. Almost a hundred years later, a number of Métis settled around Batoche while a number of families continued northwards, settling in the same area where FfNm-1 and FfNm-2 had been located (Figures 8 and 23).

While the documentary evidence strongly indicates that South Branch House was located in this area, Morton's identification of the HBC post does not correspond with the historical evidence. Thus, FfNm-1 is not the site of the HBC South Branch House. The historical research undertaken for this thesis indicates that there are gaps in the documentary record, which may have consisted of trading posts. No trading posts are known to have been in this area pre-1786, 1794-1805, 1810-1815 and 1818-1870. Although the Prince Albert District Report from 1888-1889 (HBCA B.332/e/5) indicates a Boucher Post and a South Branch House Outpost in operation, they could not have been near FfNm-1 since these posts would have been noted by homesteaders who arrived in the area as early as 1870 (SAB homestead files) or by surveyors in the late 1880s.

Aside from the historical evidence, the archaeological evidence has also raised numerous problems with the site's identification. A number of aspects of the site have been examined, including spatial layout and diagnostic artifacts. Interestingly, none of these provide support for FfNm-1 having been either a HBC post or one that was occupied for nine years. In fact, the evidence thus far actually points to a rather short occupation by either independent traders or the NWC. Aside from this suggestion, I have narrowed the evidence down to six alternatives.

8.1 Alternate Scenarios

8.1.1 1st Alternative

Although a number of test units have been placed throughout the site, the northern features have been more extensively excavated. A number of sub-surface features have been identified in this portion of the site such as wall remains, a personal storage pit, a refuse pit and a cellar depression. There seems to be little evidence of structural remains. It is possible that the

remains may have decayed, leaving little physical evidence behind, or structural remains such as wood could have been removed and reused. The HBC South Branch House journals indicate numerous building phases including William Walker abandoning his insufficient old house for a new one (HBCA B.205/a/5-7). Given the low number of structural remains, could the northern features be Walker's old house? This is possible, however, the artifacts recovered from this area suggest an independent trader or a NWC affiliation.

8.1.2 2nd Alternative

It must be acknowledged that FfNm-1 could be the HBC South Branch House. Although I feel the site has been adequately tested, it is possible that our tests and units have simply failed to locate diagnostic HBC artifacts aside from other physical evidence that may indicate the occupation and abandonment of this site. However, if this was the HBC post that was reduced to ashes in 1794, one would assume that a thick ash lens along with charcoal would be present throughout the stratigraphy of the site. This is not the case.

8.1.3 3rd Alternative

There is a slight possibility that FfNm-1 is actually the short-lived Forts des Isles. Pangman and Holmes, two independent traders, occupied Forts des Isles for one season. Although the historical evidence does not necessarily correspond with this idea, the archaeological evidence would fit. If this was the case, there should be two major sites, the HBC South Branch House and the NWC South Branch House, close by. However, given Morton's numerous searches, one would assume that these sites would have been located or, perhaps been located but mistakenly identified. Could Morton's identification of the NWC South Branch House II and the HBC Carlton House II actually be the South Branch Houses we are looking for?

It is possible, but more evidence is needed. Certainly, the historical evidence does not indicate that these posts were located this far up river from the bend of the South Saskatchewan River.

8.1.4 4th Alternative

Another possibility is that the historical records have been misinterpreted. Fur traders did make occasional mistakes when describing sides of the river. If this were the case, Fidler's peculiar comment that the HBC South Branch House was located on the north side of the river could be correct (HBCA E.3/2; Johnson 1967:25) (Figure 20). Although doubtful, Morton's NWC South Branch House (FfNm-2) could be the remains of both the HBC South Branch House and the NWC South Branch House. This would make FfNm-1 the remains of the NWC 1816-1817 post, which would fit the archaeological evidence.

In addition to this argument, Walker mentioned on May 31st 1792, "Men employed making a Garden across the River" (HBCA B.205/a/7). However, he does not indicate that South Branch House was built or rebuilt on the north side of the river. Moreover, the HBC South Branch House journals mentioned crossing over to the west side to get pine for building (HBCA B.205/a/4) while Van Driel describes hiding in Walker's old cellar during the Gros Ventre attack in 1794 (HBCA A.11/117:163-165). Therefore, regardless of Walker's comment, the HBC had to have built Walker's new house on the same side of the river.

8.1.5 5th Alternative

As already discussed, there are a number of gaps in the historical record. It is possible that FfNm-1 is the remains of an undocumented independent trading post that pre-dates the South Branch Houses. The artifacts do suggest that FfNm-1 was occupied during the latter half

of the 18th century. Alternatively, FfNm-1 could also have been an independent trader's post occupied after 1800.

8.1.6 6th Alternative

The most likely scenario corresponds with the historical evidence which suggests that the HBC South Branch House was built on the east side of the river immediately up-river from the NWC South Branch House. If this is the case, there is a possibility that FfNm-1 is the remains of Peter Pangman's and Nicholas Montour's posts that Thompson mentioned in the first South Branch House journal (HBCA B.205/a/1). This would explain why the site is divided into two sets of features (north and south) exactly like the Grant and McLeod Post (Figure 25) which Klimko (1987) determined was operated by the NWC and independent traders David and Peter Grant and A. N. McLeod.

Furthermore, the archaeological evidence strongly supports a short occupation by either independent traders or the NWC. In this case, FfNm-1, would have been abandoned in 1786 because the operators amalgamated with the NWC. This joint post, NWC South Branch House (1786-1794), could have been located north of FfNm-1, since Boucher (John Boucher, personal communication 2008) indicated the presence of chimney mounds north of FfNm-1. In addition, The HBC South Branch House would have been located further up river. Could the previously discussed cellar depression and Fidler's coordinates be what remains of the HBC South Branch House?

8.2 Concluding Remarks

If this last scenario is the answer to the location of the HBC South Branch House post, then there is another problem. What are the remains across the river? Morton identified these

remains as the NWC South Branch House. Although the evidence has not proven Morton wrong, there are a number of reasons to suggest that FfNm-2 is not the NWC South Branch House. It is possible that these remains are from an undocumented post. However, the number of features indicates a rather complex occupation (Figures 9 and 10). If this is the case, one would assume that this post would have been noted somewhere in the historical record. Or, are these remains not those of a fur trade post? Could these remains be from an early Métis hivernant village? Although a number of Métis hivernant villages have been identified (ie. Petite Ville – Burley et al. 1992) along the South Saskatchewan River, it is possible that some early villages have gone unrecorded. "By 1863, a Métis band of 200 hunters, led by Gabriel Dumont, was noted to be wintering in the South Saskatchewan area around Fort Carlton" (Woodcock 1976:76). As well, Weinbender (2003:17) writes, "several wintering villages existed along the South Saskatchewan River, taking advantage of the wood, shelter and abundant bison." This description coincides with the location of FfNm-2, which incidentally included an early near-by ferry crossing. Were the standing chimney remains that Schmidt described to Morton actually from a Métis wintering village? (Morton 1928-1945a: 433b).

In addition to these scenarios, it is also possible that surface features belonging to the HBC South Branch House have simply disappeared. The maps (Figures 8 and 23) indicate that numerous settlers set up farms in the immediate vicinity of this post. Therefore, it is possible that settlers simply built on top of South Branch House, while cultivation later destroyed the evidence of settlers' houses and barns. In this case it would be next to impossible to see the remains of fur trade posts on the surface.

The 'South Branch House complex' needs to be sorted out. The answers to the various problems raised throughout this thesis will not come from excavations at one site. Archaeology

needs to be applied in all the areas described above to construct a meaningful, fuller, understanding of the past (Wilkie 2006:14). While the historical literature appears to have been exhausted, the Saskatchewan Archives Board has recently made W. M. Stewart's textual records, photographs and maps available to the public (W. M. Stewart Fonds: SAB F 517 – Regina Branch). Although Stewart was a surveyor by trade, he was actively involved with locating trading posts and even worked alongside Morton. Unfortunately, due to the recent release date and extent of this file I had no time to review it. However, I would recommend that the Stewart Fonds be consulted with respect to future fur trade research.

Additional archaeological investigations are needed in order to have any hopes of solving the number of questions raised while critically examining the identification of the HBC South Branch House. Aside from future excavations at FfNm-1, I would also strongly recommend systematic testing of the river flat north of the site. It would be useful to determine where the homesteads and Gariepy's Crossing were located. Furthermore, testing needs to be conducted at FfNm-2. Testing at FfNm-2 hopefully would help not only with its identification but also with the identification of FfNm-1. In addition to these tests, the cellar depression located south of FfNm-1 would also benefit from a small excavation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Van Driel's Account
(HBCA A.11/117:163-165)

1794

South Branch House Sunday 22nd of June 94'
Hugh Brough and the Flute our Indian hunter arrived from the Birch mountain, with a supply of meat for the House – they remained here all the next day.

Tuesday, 24th June

Early in the morning H Brough and the Flute went out to fetch in the horses, to return to the Birch mountain, between 8 and 9 A. M; Annel went over to breakfast at the Canadian house – between 9 and 10 Finlay, one of the Canadian clerks, with an Indian lad, came to our house on horseback; and asked me if our people had found their horses, and come home – I told him they were not come home and that I Supposed the horses strayed – and Immediately asked him if he had found his horses, he said No – and without giving one time to ask any more questions, he rode in immediately away towards the Plains – in less than 5 minutes I heard a galloping of horses; went outside the stockades and saw a number of horseman, stopped at a short distance from the French Fort and as many more about 300 yards distance from our house – I took them to be stone Indians, so did Wm. Fea and M. Annals wife a stone Indian woman – I desired Fea to tell the woman to save themselves, they would not leave the house and we immediately shut the gates– I then went on the top of the House and to the best of my Judgement discerned near 100 Indians, most of them dismounted from their horses, and filing off in different directions, with intent to surround the House; a party of 12 or 14 horseman passing between the two houses towards the water side– Mr. Annals wife persisted they were stone Indians, until such time as they could be heard talking under the banks edge, 10 or 15 steps from the stockades; Then she told us they were fall Indians – one of which shew himself on the bank, and advanced to the Gate gave it a kick and made a short harangue, which none of us understood we by this time had 12 or 14 Guns loaded, all that were at hand the Number of Indians being so great, I dared not fire, knowing it to be impossible for us to escape, should we kill any of them and not be able to keep them off, – directly after the harangue, a party came up and set fire to the stockades then fired a shot – I was at this time in my room by myself, Wm. Fea was in the center of the house, in a cabin with the women– on hearing the shott, I started out of my room and said to Fea; we must defend ourselves he replied to me his arm was gone; I returned to my room – not well knowing what to do – and shut the door on myself– the Indians rushing in through the burning stockades and in at the other end of the house, making a frightful noise, made me run out at a back window on which was some blood spilt – and jumped into a cellar near the bottom of the garden, there I found Fea, I got out again directly – he telling me at the same time not to leave him – and endeavored to loosen some of the rotten stockades, but in vain – I then looked up, thinking to scale them; then ran back to an open cellar where W. Walkers old house stood, and 3 or 4 steps from that where Fea was– I scratched away some of the dirt and rubbish and covered myself up with it, Fea, withdrawing himself at the same time to the bottom of the Cellar he was in – 2 or 3 minutes after I heard some indians rummaging in the Cook room or house– their they came to the cellar where Fea was, exclaiming among themselves; then shot him, and as I afterwards found, strip'd and scalped him – They then went off and ther party came up on the opposite side of the garden; broke open the meat house in which was the Powder, and were 20 minutes or half

an hour dividing it among themselves; they then returned towards the house and with the others assisted in demolishing the inside of the house & c– The instant before the house was in flames, heard the crying of women and children there and whilst it was burning, a heavy firing was kept up about the french house, which I imagined was the destruction of the Canadians, Indians, women, & Children there; a considerable time after the firing had ceased & the house reduced to ashes, I ventured my head above ground / it being now between 6 & 7 P.M., and about 10 AM when I got in / and looked into the Cellar where Fea was, laying on his back, with his shirt off & scalped; then I crawled into the meat house, where I waited awile in the garret, listening and looking about me – finding the coast clear, I walked (stooping and watching) towards the water side picking up an Indian shield on my way, and embarked in the wooden Canoe – (as I passed the Canadian Fort I imagined the bouse was burnt down & only the stockades standing, with something red hanging on a Pole in the center) I paddled and drifted with the current; about 1 ½ miles from the house, I put ashore, intending to return at midnight, not having nay thing to subsist on; about ¼ of an hour had elapsed, when I heard 3 more shots [sic]– I concluded it was the fall Indians in pursuit of some of the canadians – once more I embarked resolved to subsist on what I might find in the woods – paddled that afternoon, al night & the next day about 3 PM got to the Junction of the two branches, at which place I picked up, for provision, a piece of green buffaloe hide and bear skin; at day set I hauled the canoe ashore and endeavour'd to sleep– the 26th at daybreak, pushed off, paddling and drifting with the current– about 1 PM arrived at the Nippeway, at which place, fortunately for me, was a canadian trader and one man, left to pass the summer with the day child; a southern Indian and hunter for them here I remained until the 6th of July, chiefly through the provisions of the Indian; and about noon, Chastedelain the Canadian trader arrived safe, with all his people, & Indians & nearly all his goods baggage &c– he then told me how he defended himself, that as soon as the fall Indians &c finished with our house, they approached his, nearly in the same manner as they Did ours – part of them under shelter of the Bank & the other towards the woods– but they split at a greater distance, than at our house– circumstances not favouring the Indians so much– The canadian house being situated on a level spot, well stockaded, Bastions at the opposite corner with Ball proof log houses over each gateway, raised 10 or 12 feet from the ground – commanded By Lord Chastedelain, 4 canadians & 3 southern Indians – on the other hand our house was surrounded with stockades that the 1st gale of wind we expected would level with the ground and but myself with another man to defend it –

The indians kept up a heavy fire, under shelter of the bank, and likewise from the wood side – (which was as briskly return'd from the Log house) – a Black foot Indian bolder than the rest, got above the bank, animating the others to come on and fire the stockades, he was instantly shott from the log house by Finlay, this finish'd the Action, for they were seen to file off immediately crying and carrying off their dead and wounded, amounting to 5 kill'd and 9 wounded, by Chastedelain's account – he supposed likewise there were near 200 indians– he visited the remains of our house, where he found, Annals wife and the two youngest children, cut and hacked in a shocking manner. The Flute indian who was out looking for the horses on Company with Annal and Brough, saw the fall indians time enough to save himself – he pulled Annal by the arm telling him of his danger, but he slighting what the indian said to him, was soon surrounded, shot, scalped, & hacked – The above Indians was within a quarter of a mile of the house's at the time of action & saw most of what passed but did not show himself till next day & the day following that, he sett off with Chastedelain to the junction of the branches, where they waited several days – from which place Finlay & 2 canadians, set off on horse back from

the upper houses, keeping the North side of the River– N B James Gardy [Gaddy] arrived with the indians from the Birch hill, a few hours after Chastedelain, – July 7th we sett [sic] off together in the Wooden Canoe for Cumberland house – about [?] miles below the Nippeway met 3 Canoes, last from the Nippeway; bound for the upper houses; July 9 got to Cumberland House

Cornelius Van Driel [signed]

APPENDIX B: M'Gillivray's Account
(Morton 1929:13-16)

August 29th [1795]. – "Arrived at Cumberland House where we found all in good health. The Athabaska Gentlemen are still here having sent of their loaded Canoes in the morning. – Mr. Shaw received a letter from Chastaillain containing very alarming accounts from above. – it appears that the Gros Ventre have made a desperate attack on the Forts at South Branch on the 24th of July last, and we are sorry to learn that they have been but too successful, so far as regards the Interests of the H.B. Company. It luckily happened for the preservation of our people that Jacques Raphael an interpreter had gone out a riding in the morning, and after ascending the side of a hill to view the Country around he found himself on the summit fronting the enemy at the distance of a few yards coming in an opposite direction. – The Savages instantly gave the War hoop by which he discovered their hostile intentions and being well mounted he immediately turned about and rode full speed to the Fort pursued closely by 5 or 6 Cavaliers who instead of entering with him amused themselves with taking a few Horses without the Piquet; whilst he gave the alarm and bolted the Gates. The Men got quickly under arms and stationed themselves in the Block Houses before the arrival of the Savages who advanced boldly up to the Fort as if they derived confidence from the Success that attended their attempt on Pine Island las Winter, or wished to intimidate the People within by a shew [sic] of intrepidity which they did not possess; for the first discharge from the Fort discouraged them so much that they retired in confusion behind a rising ground, that effectually covered them from the Shot of the Besiged. From this situation they kept up a continual fire upon the Fort for half an hour, when their ammunition began to be exhausted, and their War Chief, L'Homme de Callumet a brave and undaunted Indian disparing [sic] of success from the mode of attack, which did not agree with his fiery nature, advanced a second time towards the Gates encouraging his Warriors to follow him; but he was interrupted in the midst of his harangue by a Shot from the Before mentioned interpreter which Stretched him breathless on the ground, and the miscreants after recovering his body, retreated with mournful lamentations for loss of their leader and threatening vengeance against the authors of his death. – Thus a band of 100 Chosen Men animated by the love of plunder and a desire of revenge for a former injury, suffered themselves to be repulsed by 4 Canadians and 5 Cree Indians, when a little perseverance without exposing themselves to any danger, might have put the Fort in their possession either thro' famine or want of Water. – But they succeeded better in their attempts upon our neighbours the English two of whom unfortunately went out that morning to search for their Horses in company with a Cree, who perceived the Warriors at a distance & suspecting them to be enemies, he earnestly recommended returning to the Fort to avoid the danger which threatened them: but finding they were deaf to his entreaties, he saved himself into the woods, whilst they mistaking the G.V. for Assiniboines advanced to meet them without the least apprehension of danger 'till at length they were surrounded and fell the victims of their own incredulity. – This melancholy circumstance reduced the Fort to 2 Men (one of whom was Mr. Vandriel [Van Driel]) who seeing it impossible to defend themselves barricaded the Gates & abandoning themselves to their destiny, they took refuge in their hiding places which afforded them but little protection. The Savages finding no resistance (for little would be necessary to repell [sic] them after their late defeat) broke into the Fort and began a Scene full of horror and destruction. After they became masters of the booty which amounted to 60 or 70 Ps[1]; they made a deligent [sic] search for the unfortunate people;

Butchered every soul that came in their way in a most inhuman manner; even the Women and children did not escape the merciless cruelty of the miscreants who destroyed every age and sex with the most indiscriminating fury that can actuate the mind of a savage. – Mr. Vandriel [Van Driel] was the only person that escaped the general carnage:—he was lucky enough to secure himself amongst a heap of rubbish which was overlooked by the Barbarians, but at length being almost surrounded by the flames, he was compelled to abandon his asylum and rushing out through the Fire the Smoke favored [sic] his escape to the River Side, where he threw himself into a small Canoe and committed it to the mercy of the Current which soon carried him out of danger.– The Booty which this daring Tribe have acquired from the H.B. Company this year amounts to upwards of 100 Pieces of very valuable goods, besides the loss of 3 men and 5 or 6 women & children who were killed in this unfortunate affair. – Mr. Chastillain thinking it imprudent to remain any longer at S.B. embarked for Nepawi at the end of two days with the greatest part of the baggage, leaving the rest behind en cache [end of description of the attack].

APPENDIX C: Harmon's Account
(Brown 2006:83)

September 21, Saturday [1805]. "In coming up this River, we saw many places where Forts had stood, but some of which have been abandoned thirty years, and others of a later date, but there was one about Six Miles below this, which was abandoned fifteen years ago and on account of the Rapid Indians who in the Summer at a time when there were but few People either at the North West or Hudson's Bay Forts came in a Band of about one hundred & fifty a Horse back and killed all the Hudson's Bay People except one Man, and after taking out of the Fort all the property they could conveniently carry away with them, they sat fire to it and consumed it to ashes, and then they went to the North West Fort (which stood only a couple of hundred Rods from the other) expecting to serve that in the like manner. At the time there were only three Men & several Woman & Children–a Monsieur Chatellain who had charge of the Fort at the time (and who relates me the circumstances) but he had providently shut the Fort Gates previous to the Indians approach and when they came nigh enough, the three Men who had placed themselves in the Block Houses & Bastions fired upon them, but the blood thirsty Savages soon returned the shot, which however had no effect, but the contest lasted until towards the evening when the assailants saw they were but second best, for they had lost several of their party whereas the People in the Fort had not received the least injury, therefore the Indians after dragging their Dead into the River made off with themselves, and were never seen thereafter. Yet Monsieur Chatellain &c. did not think it proper to remain there any longer–of course [in the course of] the Day following they embarked all their property aboard several Canoes and drifted down the River about two hundred Miles where they sat about building another Fort.

APPENDIX D: Moose Factory Account
(HBCA B.135/b/24)

The Melancholy Catastrophy [sic] that occurred at the South Branch House 26th of June 1794

May 27th All the Canoes left the House on their Passage for York Factory the following Men being left in care of the house, Viz. Magnus Annal Master, Mr. Vandriel Claurkn [sic], John Brough, Willm Fea, and James Gaddy Junr the latter being with the south Indians procuring Birchrind about 50 Miles from the house. On the fatal Day, Mags Annal, John Brough and a Sothern [sic] Indian young Man went to look for the horses they heard a great noise resembling the Galloping of horses which hastely [sic] approach'd [sic] them, but judging them to be Stone Indians – as they know them to be their friends were not alarmed. -the south Indian suspecting them to be fall Indians begged of them to go with him into a hammock that was just by whilst they pass'd [sic], but they were both deaf to his intreaties [sic] and paid no regard to them – however the Southd Indian hasten'd [sic] into the thicket and hid himself, – soon after to the amount of above one hundred Fall Indians made their appearance upon horse back [sic] - and riding up to our two Men alighted kill'd [sic] and scalped them which they took away, - they then proceed'd [sic] towards the house-. Mr. Vandriel & Willm Fea (the only Men then at the house) seeing a great number of Men advancing immediately Shut the Gates, and went into the house-. the Guard room door being open saw Willm Fea through the Stockades, they fired at him and break [sic] his Arm – he immediately went through the Window at the back of the house into the Garden followed by Mr Vandriel - the former laying down in the Old Cellar, and the Latter in another one about 10 Yds apart, which very fortunately was full of loose rubbish which he covered himself with-, presently the Inds [sic] broake [sic] open the Gates and enter'd the House and traced Wm Fea (by his blood) into the Cellar and Shot him dead, Mr Vandriel expecting every moment to Share the same fate, -finding no more Men about the House they plunder'd [sic] it of every thing [sic] set fire to it and reduced it to Ashes, which loss is estimated at 4000 Beaver on their quiting [sic] the House they Stabb'd [sic] Mags Annels Wife, kill'd [sic] two of his Children, which they put onto their mothers Belly, three young women belongg [sic] to the Men that went to the Factory they took prisoner with them after plundering and destroying our house they went to the Canadians about 300 Yards distant intending to serve them in the same horrid manner,- in this they were frustrated and nine of them were kill'd [sic] and five morally wound'd [sic] by the Canadians from their *Block houses – they tied their kill'd [sic] and wounded in the same manner as the Calves are carri'd [sic] to market in England & threw them acrofs [sic] their horses and made a perecipitate [sic] retreat, Mr Vandriel after hearing all quiet for several Hours, scater'd [sic] to rise and got into a Batteaux and drove down the River towards Cumberland House and were over taken by the Canadians who had packed up everything & left their house Jas Gaddy was conduct'd [sic] to a Canadian horse (by the Indians that was of the house about 100 Miles lower down the river, – the Canadian Master (Mr. Shatler) said that there were nearly 250 Horse & Foot [sic], when they attack'd [sic] them. -*These Houses is about 10foot long &Wide and supported by four posts about 20 ft high with 4 or 6 small port holes in each – the logs 8 or 10 Inches thick proof against musquit [sic] balls – Had it not been for these houses the Canadians always build over their Gates (a precaution that our people have not yet adopted) they would inevitably have shar'd [sic] the same fate as our unfortunate Men,

APPENDIX E: South Branch House Nail Assemblage

Cat. #	**Type** HW – Hand Wrought EC – Probable Early Cut N/A - indeterminate	**Measurements (width - mm)** N/A - indeterminate	**Attributes**
28	HW	N/A	square cross section, gable head
2166	HW	N/A	square cross section, flat head
1697	Wire	2.5 inch. long	modern – found on road
89	HW/EC	3x4mm	tapers to a point, applied head
416	HW/EC	3x4mm	tapers on all 4 sides
252	HW/EC	N/A	fibers run length wise, sharp tip
392	HW/EC	3.5x5mm	restriction below head, crude head
23	HW/EC	4x3mm	broken shank, restriction below head, red iron
405	HW	N/A	spatulate tip, possible rose head
27	HW/EC	5x4mm	bevel shank, messy 2 facet head
64	HW	4x5mm	restriction below head, tapers on all 4 sides
790	HW	4x3mm	spatulate tip, tapers on all 4 sides
1324	HW	N/A	broken tip, round messy head
17	HW	2 7/8 inch. long	square shank, restriction below head, messy head
710	HW	3 1/8 inch. long	tapers to a point, restriction below head, messy head
257	HW/EC	N/A	tapers to a point on all 4 sides, restriction below head, messy head
1822	HW	N/A	square, gable/rose head
1872	HW	1 ¼ inch. long	flat head
1918	N/A	N/A	square shank
191	HW	N/A	like cat #1872, flat circular head
189	HW/EC	3x2mm, 1 5/8 inch. long	spatulate tip, irregular round head
190	HW/EC	3x2mm	like cat #189, spatulate tip, irregular round head
1830	HW/EC	N/A	tapers on all 4 sides but 2 are wider, pointed tip
1702	HW	N/A	square cross section, irregular head, broken tip
306	N/A	N/A	too corroded and broke
208	HW/EC	3x2mm	like Cat #189 and #190, spatulate tip, irregular round head
422	HW	3 ¼ inch. long	square shank, gable head, clenched tip
313	N/A	N/A	too corroded, appears to have a flat tip
325	N/A	N/A	too corroded, crude head
406	HW/EC	1 ¼ inch. long	rectangular shank but narrows on all 4 sides

APPENDIX E Continued			
305	HW (Brad Nail)	2 3/8 inch. long	square shank, pointed tip, messy head
156	HW/EC	2x3mm, 1 5/8 inch. long	gable head, pointed tip
341	HW/EC	5x4 mm, 2 inch. long	4 sides taper to a point, crude head on 2 sides
220	HW/EC	3.1 inch. long	4 sides taper to a point, crude head on 2 sides
24	HW/EC	5x4mm, 2 ½ inch. long	messy T-head
1568	HW/EC	3x2mm, 1 ½ inch. long	crude rose head
2197	HW/EC	N/A	broken shank, corroded, rose head
1832	HW/EC	5x4mm	4 sides taper to a point, no head
1675	HW/EC	3x2mm, 1 5/8 inch. long	like cat #189, 190 and 208; flat spatulate tip
1565	HW/EC	3x2mm, 2 ¼ inch. long	4 sides taper to a point, crude rose head
1615	N/A	N/A	rose head
1616	N/A	N/A	too corroded
263	N/A	N/A	broken, curved
1918	N/A	N/A	too corroded, no head
2135	N/A	N/A	too corroded, missing tip, messy head
306	N/A	N/A	too corroded, no head
1632	N/A	N/A	very corroded, 2 very nails and 2 nail fragments

Note: Although some nails are identified as showing signs of Early Cut (EC) nails they are considered hand wrought (HW) for analysis (see Chapter seven).