

**Cave and Basin &
Castle Internment Camp
Site Visit Report
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Figure 1.1 Cave and Basin National Historic Site Internment Exhibit

Banff National Park was the site of two internment camps during WWI: Castle Mountain and the Cave and Basin Internment Camps. Opening on July 14, 1915, Castle Mountain Camp – a seasonal tented camp was located on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A) at the foot of Castle Mountain. The internees and their guards would later relocate to Cave and Basin in November of 1915 after the winter temperatures proved too cold for the tented camp. Cave and Basin Internment Camp consisted of more permanent structures; army barracks, and was located on the outskirts of the town of Banff next to the Cave and Basin Hot Springs. They would later transfer back to Castle Mountain Internment Camp in the spring of 1916, continuing this seasonal cycle until the camps' closure in July of 1917. During the winter months, the internees laboured closer to town with land reclamation, cutting trails, building bridges and quarrying stone for the Banff hotel. In the spring and summer they extended the Bow Valley Parkway – the highway leading to Lake Louise (Kordan 2002).

Due to the close proximity of these two camps and their structural diversity, Cave and Basin and Castle Mountain Internment Camps present a unique opportunity to study the surviving surface artefacts that remain in Canadian WWI Internment camps with regards to permanent structures – wooden barracks, versus the temporary nature of tented camps. In this vein, research at the Morrissey Internment Camp will benefit from an archaeological site reconnaissance of these two sites as well as other internment camps in

order to compare and contrast the types of research conducted by others. Finally, examining the structural differences of confinement in each of the Canadian WWI internment camps, noting commonalities and variances in artefact surface scatter, can shed light onto the daily lives and the differences between the prisoners and their guards.

To do so, I travelled to Banff, Alberta where Steve Malins, Cultural Resource Management Advisor for Parks Canada, provided a guided tour of the Castle Mountain and Cave and Basin sites. Steve Malins was gracious enough to take me to these two sites on Friday, October 16, 2015. Due to the nature of my visit with Parks Canada, I was able to make observations, take notes and photograph the sites. However, I did not GPS in coordinates of artefacts and structural locations since I did not have permission to do so. Hence, my report will consist of observations and descriptions of these artefacts but not their specific locations in each camp.

Cave and Basin

Similar to the Morrissey Internment Camp, Cave and Basin Camp was dismantled upon its closure in 1917 and consequently, very little remains on the surface in this internment camp. Trees and woody shrubs in various stages of growth, including herbaceous plants cover the site. Dense leaf litter also obscures potential surviving features. However, immediately apparent once one descends down the trail into the site of the camp is a terraced area where the military barracks once sat – the internment quarters. This is evidenced by the level ground surrounded by a gradual slope on either side and the lack of trees growing in this open area (Figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2 Terraced area where prison barracks once stood

Several pieces of galvanized, non-corrugated metal belonging to the barrack roofs remain on the surface (Figures 1.9, 1.10, 1.11), fragmented remnants of the cement footings to the same buildings (Figure 1.6, 1.7) as well as glazed heating pipes (Figures 1.3, 1.5). A diesel fuel can (Figure 1.4), a tobacco can (Figure 1.8), fence posts and remnants of the

privy (Figure 1.12) are also observable. The privy's location is verified by the internment camp's model reconstruction housed in the museum.



Figure 1.3 Glazed Pipe



Figure 1.4 Diesel Can



Figure 1.5 Pipe



Figure 1.6 Cement Footings



Figure 1.7 Cement Footings



Figure 1.8 Can

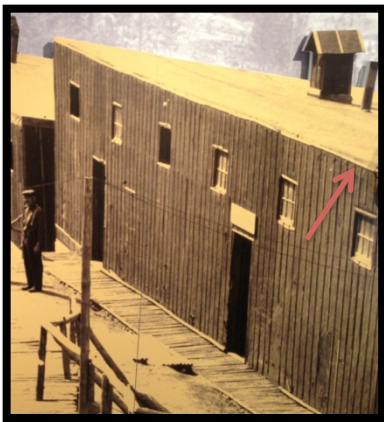


Figure 1.9 Galvanized Metal Roof (Historic photo of internment barracks in the Cave & Basin Museum)



Figure 1.10 Galvanized Metal



Figure 1.11 Galvanized Metal



Figure 1.12 Remnants of the Privy

Castle Camp

Castle Mountain Internment Camp was a temporary tented camp situated on the Bow Valley Parkway (1A) just outside of Banff and housed 660 internees during its time in operation (Kordan 2002). It is interesting to note that the memorial for Castle Mountain Camp is located on the north-east side of the Bow Valley Parkway (1A) while the camp itself remains hidden approximately one kilometer up the road on the south-west side, drawing visitors and potential looters away from the historic site (Figure 1.13). However, looking out over the horizon allows one to sight the camp's location since the tree line is dramatically lower where the camp begins (Figure 1.14).



Figure 1.13 Castle Mountain Memorial



Figure 1.14 Visible difference in the tree line on the left side of the Bow Valley Parkway where the Castle Mountain Internment Camp is located. The memorial is situated on the right side of photograph next to the white vehicle



Figure 1.15 Open meadow where the guard's tents and part of the prisoner's internment area were located (Castle Mountain Internment Camp)

Today, an open meadow remains where the guard's tents and part of the prisoner's internment area were located (Figure 1.15). A barrier of double barbed wire surrounded the tented camp and remnants of the camp are many; a trench drawing water away from the camp encircles the site – a commonality shared with other internment sites such as Morrissey and Monashee (Figure 1.16). The remains of a privy along with barbed wire (Figure 1.17) and barbed wire fencing (Figure 1.18) and many cobblestone formations are evident. It is interesting to note that the cobblestones form linear lines as well as circular formations (Figures 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22). An examination of historic photographs illustrates the usage of cobblestones to demarcate pathways and entrances to the temporary enclosures. They were also likely placed along the barbed wire fence lines in order to prevent escape by digging under the fences (Figures 1.23, 1.24, 1.25).



Figure 1.16 Trench surrounding the camp (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.17 Barbed Wire (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.18 Barbed Wire Fence (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.19 Cobblestone features (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.20 Circular cobblestone pattern – possibly demarcating an entranceway (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.21 Cobblestones in linear pattern (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.22 Cobblestones (Castle Mountain)



Figure 1.23 Castle Mountain Historic photograph noting cobblestone walkways (left) and placement along barbed wire fence lines (right)



Figure 1.24 Castle Mountain – note cobbles running along the length of the fence line



Figure 1.25 Castle Mountain – cobblestones along the barbed wire fence line

In addition to my meeting with Steve Malins, I also corresponded with Parks Canada Archaeologist Bill Perry, based out of Calgary, who discussed the site survey undertaken at Castle Mountain Camp in July 1994. He noted that Parks Canada had used previous aerial photographs of the Cave and Basin site from the early 1930's, to outline the contemporary internment site's location, while no further investigations have been undertaken. However, a brief survey was completed at Castle Mountain Internment Camp where a basic GIS map was created to record the surface resources: cobblestone features, bridge remains, the potential clink, several depressions and the privies. Bill was seeking permission from Parks Canada to share the site report and was going to follow up once he had heard back from them (Bill Perry, personal communication, November 20, 2015).

In 1997, Richard Allyn Meyers from the University of Calgary's geography department undertook a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey at the Castle Mountain site. The GPR results were inconclusive and Meyers recommended further investigation that has never taken place (Bachusky 2001). However, Parks Canada's response, from both Steve Malins and Bill Perry, was that the two mounds contained only dirt and rock debris (Steve Malins, personal communication, October 16, 2015; Bill Perry, personal communication, November 20, 2015). I have spent several weeks in communication with the University of Calgary, trying to make contact with Richard Allyn Meyers the former graduate student, but have been unsuccessful in locating him.

Further GPR work at these two sites would help to locate additional subsurface anomalies that are not immediately apparent on the landscape. This would be especially ideal at the Cave and Basin site where the ground is level and conducive to a GPR

survey. GPR's are advantageous since they point out near-surface anomalies in non-invasive ways, allowing large sites to be viewed efficiently. In doing so, they maintain the integrity of the site by pointing out potential locations to put in test pits in lieu of auguring or excavating along an entire axis of a site, subsequently allowing the site and artefacts to remain preserved and protected.

From this research survey, made possible by the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund, I have determined that the more permanent Cave and Basin site leaves behind physical remains in both structural and artefact materials such as galvanized metal, glazed heating pipes, cans, fence posts, cement footings and privies. The tented Castle Mountain Internment Camp, due to its impermanent nature, does not leave behind evidence of similar structural features; however, it does note a few material artefacts such as the barbed wire, barbed wire fencing and privies. Unique to the tented camp are the natural remains of permanent environmental features that were once incorporated into the camp's structure such as the cobblestones used to demarcate fence lines and pathways.

The material artefacts are commonalities shared between the Banff National Park Internment Camps and Morrissey Internment Camp. However, thus far my research notes a surface collection unique to Morrissey Internment Camp that consists of enamelware pots and dishes, ceramics, bricks, milk and food tins that can be used not only to date the site but also to shed light onto physical health through camp diet, prison economies as reflected in traded goods and contraband, and acts of resistance and punishment. It can also offer insight into prisoner coping mechanisms through arts and crafts, education, sports, drugs, alcohol and even suicide. Expanding this analysis to examine environmental landscape features and material artefacts from the remaining Canadian WWI Internment Camps would provide a more complete picture and thus contribute in a greater way to the internment story.

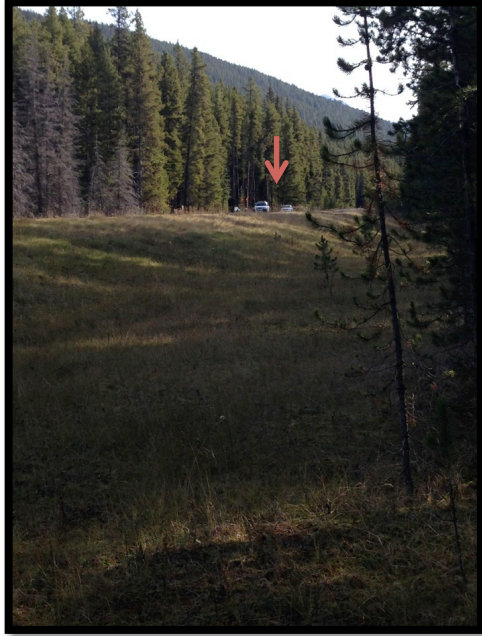


Figure 1.26 View looking back from the Castle Mountain Internment Camp to where the memorial lies

References

Bachusky, Johnnie,
2001 Mounds at Castle Mountain may hold tragic victim of First World War. *Rocky Mountain Outlook* 25 October, Canmore, Alberta.

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2002 *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War Internment in Canada During the Great War*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, Quebec.