ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF SITE 5ME7351.1

EXCELSIOR TRAIN STATION

MESA COUNTY, COLORADO

April 2012

Completed for
Colorado Historical Society State Historical Fund
and
Bureau of Land Management
Grand Junction Field Office

DOMINGUEZ ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

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Project No. 2010-AS-006
Historic structure assessment of 5ME7351.1
Dominquez Archaeological Research Group
Deliverable No. 5

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF SITE 5ME7351.1, EXCELSIOR TRAIN STATION, MESA COUNTY, COLORADO

Completed for
The Colorado Historical Society State Historical Fund and
the Bureau of Land Management

BLM Project No. 15810-01
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DARG Project No. 2010-006

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ABSTRACT

Dominquez Archaeological Research Group (DARG) conducted an Archaeological Assessment of site 5ME7351.1, the Excelsior Train Station, in Mesa County, Colorado in conjunction with the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) and the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Field Office (BLM-GJFO). Field work was carried out between September 6th and October 15th, 2010 and on May 5th and 6th, 2011 by Nicole Darnell, Project Director, and Carl E. Conner, Principal Investigator. DARG archaeologists Curtis Martin and Michael Brown conducted the excavations and performed metal detecting respectively. Nicole Darnell and Jerri Inman analyzed the collected artifacts and performed additional historic research. All work was performed under BLM Cultural Resource Use Permit C-67009. Funding for the project was provided by a Colorado Historical Society–State Historical Fund Archaeological Assessment Grant (Project No. 2010-AS-006) and through BLM Assistance Agreement. No. LO9AC15861-0013.

Excelsior Train Station was initially recorded by Brian O'Neil with Grand River Institute during a fire rehabilitation project in November 1994 (Conner et al. 1994). The site was declared officially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on 13 March 1995 under Criteria A and D. Indications at the time led investigators to suspect that the site would likely yield additional significant information concerning the working and living conditions of nineteenth-century railroad workers. Trash scatters and depressions suggested the location of several possible structures. A vandal's pit was identified in one of the depression containing a refuse scatter during an alleged vandalism investigation by the BLM. No reference to this incident is present in the site record, but recovered artifacts from this investigation are curated at the Museum of Western Colorado (MWC).

The goal of this project was to conduct extensive surface mapping, collection of diagnostic artifacts, metal detection, and subsequent subsurface testing using hand tools to determine the vertical and horizontal extent of the site. Additionally, an effort was made to identify whether any ethnic minorities might have been present.

The results of this assessment have demonstrated the vertical extent of cultural material adjacent to Feature 4, within the Chinese artifact locus, and within Feature 5. Conclusive artifactual material depicts a Chinese presence on the site despite the lack of historical literature to substantiate this claim. The information gleaned from this study shows that this site has and will likely continue to contribute significant information about the early railroad period in Colorado and ethnic workers. The site should be periodically monitored in an effort to protect and preserve it.

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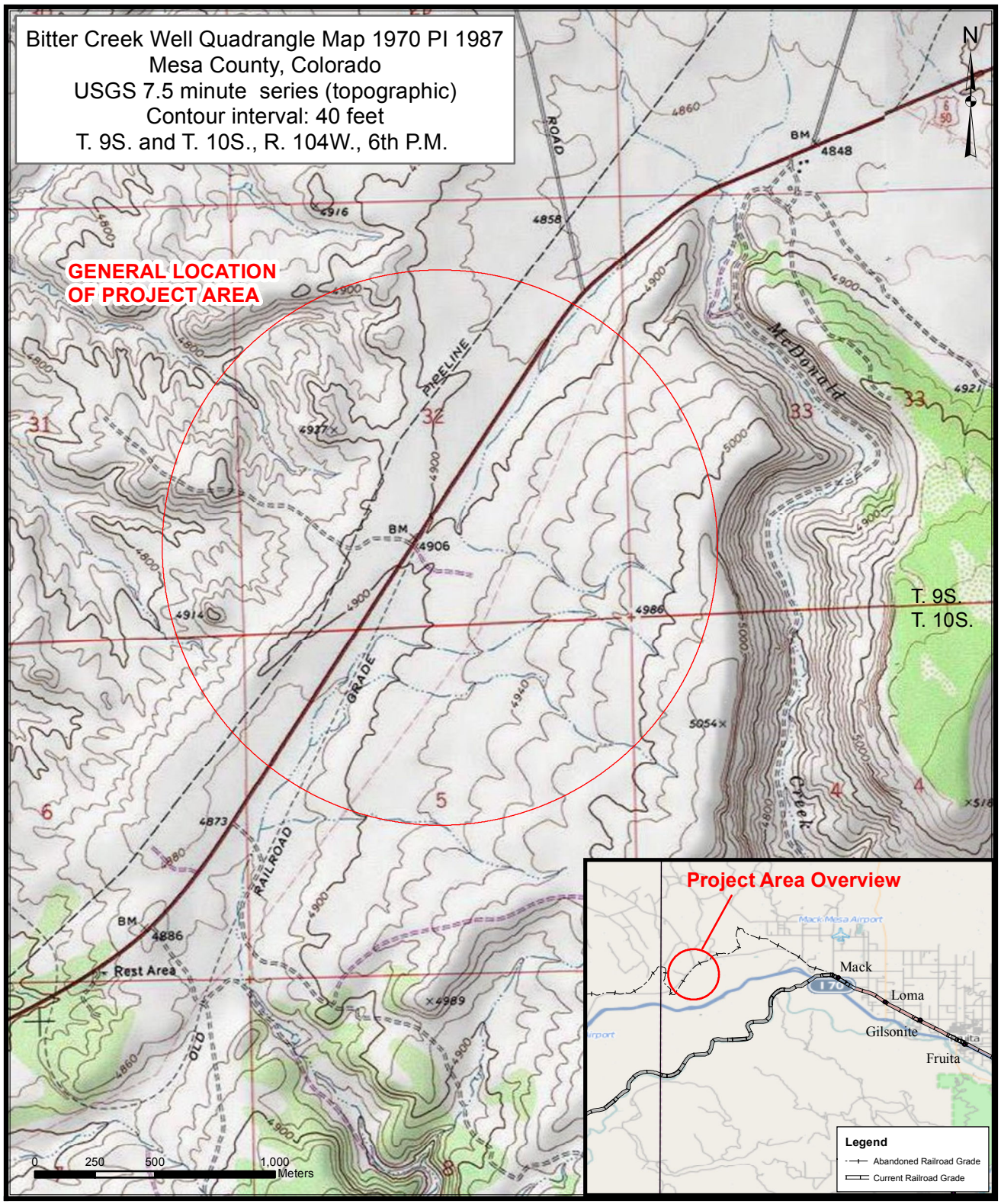

Figure 1. Project location map for the Archaeological Investigation of 5ME7351.1, Excelsior Depot, in Mesa County, Colorado (DARG No. 2010-006, BLM Project No. 15810-01, OAHP Report No. ME.LM.R773, 04/25/2012.)

INTRODUCTION

Dominquez Archaeological Research Group (DARG) conducted an Archaeological Assessment of site 5ME7351.1, the Excelsior Train Station, in Mesa County, Colorado in conjunction with the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) and the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Field Office (BLM-GJFO). Field work was carried out between September 6th and October 15th, 2010 and on May 5th and 6th, 2011 by Nicole Darnell, Project Director, and Carl E. Conner, Principal Investigator. DARG archaeologists Curtis Martin and Michael Brown conducted the excavations and performed metal detecting respectively. Nicole Darnell and Jerri Inman analyzed the collected artifacts and performed additional historic research. All work was performed under BLM Cultural Resource Use Permit C-67009. Funding for the project was provided by the Colorado Historical Society–State Historical Fund Archaeological Assessment Grant (Project No. 2010-AS-006) and through BLM Assistance Agreement No. LO9AC15861.

This project was undertaken as part of DARG's ongoing research into the identification and protection of fragile, non-renewable evidences of human activity, occupation and endeavor as reflected in districts, sites, structures, artifacts, objects, ruins, works of art, architecture, and natural features that were of importance in human events. The site documentation and basic data retrieval for this project was performed according to guidelines set forth by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation (48 CFR 44734-37), and by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) of the Colorado Historical Society.

LOCATION

The project area is located 8.5 miles west of Mack in Mesa County, Colorado on the east side of US Highway 6 & 50. Excelsior is approximately 1.5 miles east of the Utah-Colorado state line, along the former Denver and Rio Grande (D&RG) narrow gauge railroad within the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area at the northwestern end of the Uncompahgre Plateau. [redacted]

EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Uncompahgre Plateau is an uplifted feature of the Northern Colorado Plateau physiographic region. This uplift is a remnant of a late Paleozoic mountain range, the Uncompahgria, which covered most of western Colorado. It reached its present elevation after several reactivations, the last of which occurred during the Cenozoic Era. Erosion has since removed most of the overlying Tertiary and Late Cretaceous-age rocks exposing the underlying Dakota Sandstone, which resists down cutting and caps most of the Plateau. Exposed Morrison Formation within the project area overlies Cretaceous Era Mancos Shale Formation, composed of shale and sandstone and Cretaceous Era Dakota Sandstone and Burro Canyon Formations, consisting of sandstone, shale, and conglomerate.

Project area soils are composed of the Neiberger-Pariette complex (United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service [USDA, NRCS] 2007). These soils are generally well drained, 20 to 40 inches deep and found primarily on terraces. Neiberger soils are derived from aeolian deposits overlying residuum weathered shale and siltstone. The typical profile of this soil type consists of loam (0 to 5 inches), clay loam (5 to 12 inches), silty clay loam (12 to 24 inches), clay loam (24 to 30 inches) and weathered bedrock (30 to 34 inches). Pariette soils are alluvium derived from sandstone and shale overlying residuum weathered shale. The typical profile of this soil type consists of very fine sandy loam (0 to 1 inches), fine sandy loam (1 to 5 inches), sandy clay loam (5 to 11 inches), clay loam (11 to 19 inches), silt loam (19 to 38 inches) and weathered bedrock (38 to 60 inches).

Excelsior Train Station is situated on a small bench that plateaus slightly along the west slope of a low, southwest-trending ridge. Two intermittent drainage systems flank the ridge – Bitter Creek on the west and McDonald Creek on the east. These creeks drain southward into the Colorado River, the closest permanent water source. Topography tends to be hilly and hummocky, dissected by gullies that become more frequent as the slope increases. Elevation is approximately 4900 feet with a slight southern exposure.

A middle latitude steppe climate is characteristic of the area. Precipitation ranges between 7 and 10 inches annually with surrounding higher elevations receiving up to 24 inches. Average temperatures range from 50 to 54 degrees and the average frost-free period spans 150 to 180 days (USDA, NRCS 2007). According to the Range Site Description (USDA Soil Conservation Service [SCS] 1975) the local environment is best characterized as silty saltdesert with a shadscale grass community. Galleta grass is often the dominant plant with Salina wildrye, Indian ricegrass, squirreltail, needle-and-threadgrass, three-awn, and sand dropseed grasses also present. Forbs include scarlet globemallow, paintbrush, sego lily, buckwheat, phlox, primrose, and death camas. Shrubs consist of shadscale, Gardner saltbrush, Douglas rabbitbrush, bud sage, big sagebrush, winterfat, spiny horsebrush, and prickly pear cactus. Trees are not native to this plant community. Noxious weeds found onsite included halogeton, cheatgrass, and Russian thistle (USDA SCS 1975).

Paleoenvironmental data for the area are scant, but it is generally agreed that gross climatic conditions have remained fairly constant over the last 12,000 years. Still, any change in the effective moisture and cooling/warming trends that affect floral and faunal populations probably affected prehistoric peoples' ability to effectively hunt, gather, and utilize resources.

Currently, the area is used for livestock grazing. It also provides range for antelope and to some extent wintering mule deer, which can attract mountain lions. Small mammals include the cottontail, jackrabbit, coyote, bobcat, fox, skunk, badger, weasel, deer mouse, prairie dog and rock squirrel. Game birds listed for the area are mourning dove, quail and chukar. Raptors such as golden eagles, great horned owls, red-tailed hawks and prairie falcons have also been sighted.

CULTURAL HISTORY AND PREVIOUS WORK

Cultural resource investigations in the vicinity of Excelsior Train Station have yielded surface diagnostic artifacts and excavated cultural materials consistent with Paleoindian, Archaic, Formative, and Protohistoric occupations. The material culture for these time periods have been extensively document in *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin* (Reed and Metcalf 1999) and in *Class I Cultural Resource Inventory for the Grand Junction Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management* (Conner et al. 2011). Since this report is historic in nature, these cultural eras will be included in this discussion. The reader is encouraged to explore the referenced documents for more information. Historic overviews and records indicate occupation by various bands of the Ute Tribe and by EuroAmerican settlers, miners, railway workers, and ranchers. A history of the region is provided in *Colorado History: A Context for Historical Archaeology* (Church et al. 2007) and in the aforementioned Grand Junction Class I (Conner et al. 2011). The following provides relevant historical background pertaining to the early settlement of the western portion of the Grand Valley and the construction of the D&RG Railroad.

Settlement

It has been well documented that the Ute people occupied large areas of Western Colorado until they were officially removed on 1 September 1881 as the result of the Treaty of 1880. The treaty stipulated that the White River bands were to go to the Uintah Reservation in northeastern Utah, and the Uncompahgre band was to be given a small reservation in the vicinity of the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers. Aware of the value of these agricultural lands; however, the commission charged with enforcing the terms of the treaty, under the direction of Otto Mears, manipulated the location process using a loophole in the treaty language, and the Uncompahgre were given lands in Utah near the Uintah Reservation. The Southern Ute bands remained on their small reservation in southwestern Colorado a result of the Treaty of 1873. Unofficially, many Utes remained in hiding in their homeland and many others returned each year to hunt; however, with the dissolution of the treaties that previously set up reservation lands for the White River and Uncompahgre Bands in western Colorado, most of the Western Slope was opened for Euro-American settlement.

Interest in the potential agricultural lands along the Uncompahgre, Gunnison, Colorado, Dolores, San Miguel, White, and La Plata River valleys of western Colorado had been growing for some time prior to the Utes' banishment. By the spring of 1881 the frontier towns closest to the Ute lands were "crowded with people, anxious to enter the Reservation and take possession of the most desirable locations" (Haskell 1886:2). Only days after the Utes had been expelled, settlers began rushing onto the old reservation lands. During the autumn months of 1881 settlement activity spread quickly – land claims were staked, townsites were chosen, and railroad routes were surveyed (Haskell 1886, Borland 1952, and Rait 1932). The first year of settlement activity was marked by a degree of uncertainty regarding the legality of land claims because former reservation lands were not officially declared public lands until August 1882. When finally announced, the 1882 declaration did not allow homestead entries but only preemptions, or cash entries, at the rate

of $1.25 per acre for agricultural land and $5.00 per acre for mineral land (Borland 1952:75). By 1895, the majority of the former Ute lands had been claimed, mostly under Cash Entry patents.

The settlers raised their own food and availed themselves of the plentiful game in the area. Gardens, hay fields, and orchards were planted, and irrigation ditches were dug to divert creek water to cultivated fields. Large herds of cattle and sheep were accumulating, grazing the valley floor and the vast open ranges of the Roan Plateau, Grand Mesa and the Uncompahgre Plateau, driven to the uplands via trails leading up the various gulches and canyons.

Several town sites were established in the Grand Valley shortly after the area was opened for settlement. In 1881, three parties of men led by O.D. Russell, J. Clayton Nichols, and William McGinley followed the Gunnison River north to the Colorado River (known then as the Grand) staking claims at the junction. At the same time, J.S. Gordon, William Green, and Mr. Forbush made their way east into the Grand Valley. Additionally, George A. Crawford, R.D. Mobley, M. Rush Warner, Colonel Morris, and S.W. Harper also made their way north from the Gunnison area as soon as the Ute were removed. In the fall of 1881, Crawford filed paperwork to incorporate the town of Grand Junction. His town plan included parks, schools, churches, and government buildings. Half of the funding for his town plan came from selling stock to the Denver and Rio Grande Railway.

Fruita was founded around a centrally located park in 1884 by William Pabor, a former resident of the Greeley colony. Potable water became available in 1907 via a Pinon Mesa pipeline. A side benefit of the pipeline project was a three-span bridge (Fruita Bridge) over the Colorado River. In 1910 Fruita had electricity, a by-product of the Inter-urban Railway construction.

Farther west, Loma, initially known as "The Orchard Town of Loma", was settled in the early 1880s by John Roberts and the Kiefer brothers, Joseph P., Benjamin F., and Frank O. From the first large orchards, it has always been the focus of agricultural ventures. The Kiefer brothers were responsible for the Keifer Extension Ditch, built around 1897. Verner Reed purchased a large tract of land referred to as "Golden Hills" and planted an apple orchard. Ten years later large shipments of apples were headed east. By 1917, the Highline Canal was in place irrigating about 23,500 acres of land. The earliest crops consisted of sugar beets and fruits (Conner et al. 2011). Unfortunately, by the 1920s and 1930s pesticide-resistant coddling moths and alkaline seepage caused the orchards to fail and the town never developed into a settlement destination (Barcus, Harrison, and Lower Valley Heritage Group [LVHG] 1983:142).

Closer to Excelsior Train Station is the town of Mack, named for John M. Mack, president of the Barber Asphalt Co. and the Uintah Railroad. The town of Mack grew up around an existing railway siding at Crevasse for the sole purpose of transferring gilsonite shipments from the Uintah Railroad to the D&RG. The Uintah railroad stretched from gilsonite mines in the Book Cliff mountains to the towns of Carbonera and Atchee and ended at Mack. Later, the Uintah Hotel in Mack became popular with motorists as the last stop before heading west into Utah via the "Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway." The Mercantile store was also highly valued by citizens living

north of Mack, along the Uintah Railroad, as well as by the farmers who could trade produce for cash or goods. Growth in the vicinity of Mack ground to a halt when the Uintah railroad closed in 1939.

After the completion of the Highline Canal in 1917 the area northwest of Mack became known as New Liberty. A name coined after the Liberty War Bonds. It was one of the last areas settled in the Grand Valley and never gained much popularity with the public, but was heavily utilized by sheep herders.

Transportation

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway began in western Colorado in 1882 with construction of a narrow gauge track from Gunnison to Grand Junction. The route followed the Gunnison River westward into the upper reaches of the Black Canyon. At Crystal Creek it diverged avoiding the steep narrow regions of the lower Black Canyon and the extremely difficult construction they would have entailed. After climbing up to Cerro Summit it descended into Montrose. From there it took a northerly direction along the Uncompahgre River to Delta, where it once again met up with the Gunnison River. It followed it north to the confluence with the Grand River (LeMassena 1974).

Problems completing the line from Grand Junction to Salt Lake City cropped up at the border. Utah's state territory laws prevented out-of-state companies from operating within its borders. In order to resolve this issue, officials of the D&RG created a separate subsidiary known as the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway which was incorporated in 1880. The Colorado portion of line west from Grand Junction followed the Grand River, diverging northwest at a point where the river headed into a long deep canyon. The climb away from the river and across local drainages necessitated steep grades and sharp curves; however, many locals believed the track was longer and more curved than necessary "because contractors were paid by the mile for its construction" (Bergner 1937:71-72). The 37 miles to the Utah border were finally completed in 1883 (Figure 2).

Social History

Grand Junction was a major beneficiary of the coming of the D&RG railroad because it served as a cental location for laborers, shops, services, and support facilities like the roundhouse and repair shop (Mehls 1988). Most railroad construction crews were either locals who took advantage of the temporary work or single men, often immigrants, who followed the large

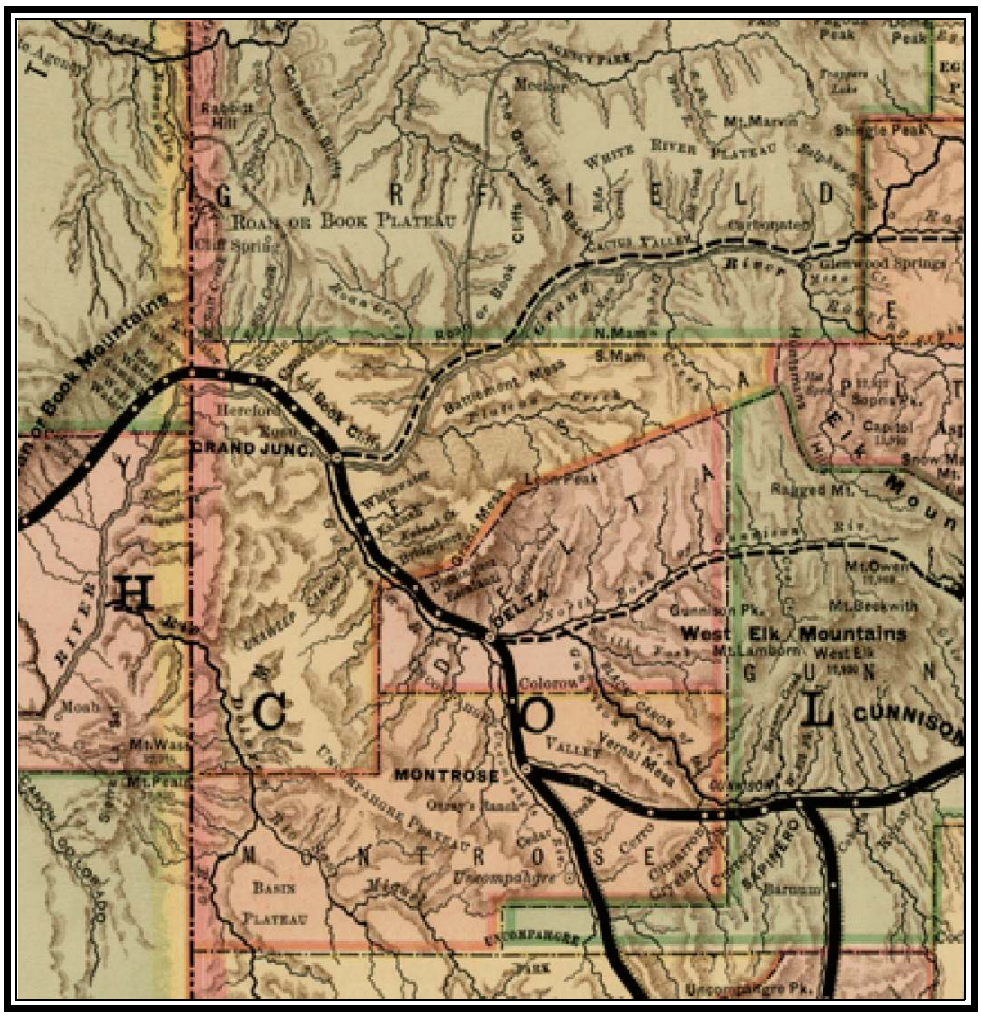

Figure 2. Denver and Rio Grande Railroad overview map (American Bank Note Company 1883).

construction projects (Vileisis 1992). A detailed description of the living conditions, while building the Colorado portion of the Denver and Rio Grande, was found in a diary by John Barker of Logan Utah:

> *We arrived in camp on Wolf Creek—shoveled away 18 inches of snow and camped in tents. The track layers should have been farther ahead, and H & H (Hammond and Hendricks) took the train—so the R. R. furnished tents, stoves, tools, and work until we do get on the construction train. On Jan. 1, 1881, opened store in the tent and sold $80.00 of goods. Hammond & Hendricks took charge of the camp. C & F men are all working for H & H. In one corner of our tent sleep Bro. Hendricks and one of his sons, in another corner Bro. M.D. Hammond and in another next the store our bed—hay spread on the ground divided by ties—the goods near the door. I was very busy for several days; Wille went to help in the kitchen. We had 2 cook tents, 3 stoves, 4 or 5 cooks and 2*

dining tents and about 12 sleeping tents—the night guard came along in the mornings at 5, calling, "Roll out boys." I got up, lit the fire, thawed out Wille's boots and started him to the Kitchen, and often Breakfast was eaten while it was freezing on the table, and the cry came, from Bro. Orchard "All aboard" and men started out to work before daylight in gum boots, overshoes, big coats, gloves, etc., with all short-handled shovels with iron handles, shoveling snow off the grade. Bro. Orchard's wife and 3-year-old boy and J. W. Hendricks' wife are here and eat in their tent with the Bosses. I also have charge of the kitchen supplies. About the 10th or 15th we moved camp down here to Chama, for the train had passed us, and now we are camped on a small willow bottom 1/2 mile from town. The wagon road 2 Rods on one side the R. R., 10 rods on the other, but here the ground was not frozen under the snow H & H has a camp of 25 men and teams 20 miles down the road hauling in 40,000 ties. And now that I have caught up with my books in which I have 200 accts., I have a very easy time (Strack 2012).

Many families supported their husbands and fathers while they worked on the railroad. Vileisis (1992), who references the *Grand Junction News* (17 February 1883), states: "In crews of local contractors, for example, wives and daughters performed the tasks of housekeeping and cooking for workers." Vileisis also states that local women worked as telegraphers along the railway in the 1880s:

As the train pulled into Excelsior Station, telegrapher Mrs. B. Moore likely greeted the conductor. Although men dominated the railroad work, wives frequently secured employment along the line as well. Section bosses and state agents routinely brought their wives and families with them to stations along the railroad....Along the Alkali Division in 1887, Mrs. J. Stafford and then Mrs. Cooney worked as telegraphers in Fruitvale. Mrs. McCarthy operated the telegraph at Crevasse, and Mrs. B. Moore was telegrapher at Excelsior....Mrs. Moore kept a "little red cow" to supply fresh milk for cheese and butter.

The Mormons, who were responsible for the a large part of the railroad grade construction along the Denver and Rio Grande Western portion of railway formed gangs and divided their earnings equally among all members (Vileisis 1992). Again, wives of the workers were known to have cooked for the crews:

Construction of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway through Grand County was begun in the winter of 1881. Arthur A. Taylor and O.W. Warner each contracted to build a section of the railroad. They hired Moab men, who brought their own work animals. James Luster and Ervin Wilson each had a four-yoke team of oxen. Several of the Taylors had teams of horses. Sena Taylor and Irene Luster cooked for the crew. O.W. Warner, A.G. Wilson, and Felix Murphy hauled hay to Moab to feed the crew's animals (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers 1972:24)....When the road bed was ready, the track gangs began their

task. They were mostly Japanese and Chinese and moved on after the rails were laid.

According to Vileisis (1992) immigrants were also employed as railway labor as the route was built into Utah:

It is very likely that Chinese and Italian laborers built track west of Grand Junction because they constructed other proximal segments of the line and eventually worked as section laborers along the tracks of the Utah Extension. In addition, the letter list in the Grand Junction News posted a special listing for Italians and occasionally posted a letter for a Chinese person during the construction phase. Grand Junction News, 18 August 1883; Grand Junction News, 8 September 1883.

According to Christian J. Buys, former Professor and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Colorado Mesa University (formally Mesa State College):

...a short note in the Grand Junction News on December 14, 1884 (p. 3) stated, "There are about a 1,000 Chinamen at P.V. [Pleasant Valley Junction, Utah]" pushing the D&RGWRy toward Grand Junction. This has been confirmed by the author who has visually inspected a half-dozen sites along the narrow gauge route (D&RGWRy).... About half of the sidings and work camps between Grand Junction, Colorado and Green River, Utah have scattered pieces of Chinese opium tins, crockery, and ceramic ware. Most of the Chinese worked strictly on railroad crews and had little occasion to frequent towns (Buys 1987:68).

Buys quotes a news item statement from another *Grand Junction News* (August 11, 1883) article that may provide indirect evidence that both of these ethnic groups were employed by the railroad:

"The danger to Mesa County on account of Chinese and Mormons combined, is not half that arising from her own statesmen and gods of Gunnison."

Vileisis (1992) attributes the following quote to railway work and Chinese laborers (*Grand Junction News* 1883):

"A Chinaman who was driving one of Hammond's teams on Thursday tried to turn around sooner than the law allows, and nearly had his neck broken instead. He was dragged several rods with his head in a tighter place than was prepared for Packer. The upsetting of the wagon and the arrival of help stopped proceedings with no serious damage."

Although there are indications of tension erupting between Chinese and the white majority, they seem to have been directed towards Chinese living within Grand Junction's city limits. Little else exists in the literature regarding the use of Chinese during the construction of the railway. It can only be assumed that a deeper delving into the archival records may be necessary to ferret out specific information on the ethnic groups employed by the railroad.

[redacted]

Figure 4. View of the General Land Office independent resurvey (1917).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Excelsior Train Station was initially recorded by Brian O'Neil with Grand River Institute during a fire rehabilitation project in November 1994 (Conner et al. 1994). The site was declared officially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on 13 March 1995 under Criteria A and D. Indications at the time led investigators to suspect that the site would likely yield additional significant information concerning the working and living conditions of nineteenth-century railroad workers. Trash scatters and depressions suggested the location of several possible structures. A vandal's pit was identified in one of the depression containing a refuse scatter during an alleged vandalism investigation by the BLM. However, no reference to this incident is present in the site record, but the recovered artifacts from this investigation are curated at the Museum of Western Colorado (MWC).

> *Site 5ME7351.1 consists of the remains of the old Denver and Rio Grande Railway Excelsior Station/Depot. This particular segment of the narrow-gauge track was commissioned by Denver and Rio Grande Railway in 1881. The site is located approximately 4 miles east of the Utah-Colorado state line, along the railway grade.*
> *According to the documentation by the railway, the original site consisted of a depot, a section house, and a bunk house.*
>
> *The station served to insure that trains had enough coal and water to make it to the next stopover. This station likely relied on water freighted in, in large wooden barrels mounted on flat cars. When the Denver and Rio Grande companies reconsolidated and switched from narrow-gauge to the wider, standard gauge track in 1889, they moved their line south to the canyon of the Colorado River and operations ceased at the Excelsior siding. Presently, the site*

consists of several trash scatters and depressions indicating the location(s) of the structures.

The Excelsior Station consists of five features. Feature #1 consists of the remains of a 12x27 foot, rectangular sandstone foundation outline located next to the gravels which mark the edge of the railway siding grade. Feature #2 consists of an oval 12x18x4 foot depression associated with a 20 foot rectangular surface configuration of tabular sandstone, and is located approximately 100 feet southeast of the edge of the railway grade. Feature #3 consists of an oval 15x18x3 foot depression located next to the edge of the railway grade. Feature #4 is a smaller 9x9x2 foot depression which appears to be a vandal pit. Feature #5 is a small 3x3x2 foot depression which may represent an outhouse pit. Also present are the remains of the original railway grade and the siding grade. The surrounding area is littered with the remains of at least four refuse dumps, three of which may be directly related associated with the relative positions of the Depot, the Section House, and the Bunkhouse, as identified by a Denver and Rio Grande Railway map of the Excelsior Station [(Figure 5)].

Scattered historic trash extends for a distance of approximately 1200 feet along the existing railway grade. Comparisons with the Denver and Rio Grande map [(Figure 5)] *with the present surface manifestations* [(Figure 6)] *at the Excelsior Station indicate that Feature #1 is probably the remains of the depot. The associated refuse scatter, located approximately 50 to 100 feet to the south southeast consists primarily of broken glass and tin cans. Feature #2 is probably the remains of the section house. The largest refuse scatter is associated with this feature, and is located directly east of the depression and rectangular alignment of tabular sandstone. Besides the usual scatter of tin cans and glass shards, this refuse scatter also contains domestic crockery and ceramics such as plate and cup fragments, pie tins, barrel hoops, leather, and saw cut sections of cow bones indicative of domestic activities. This kind of domestic refuse is consistent with the activities of the wives and families of the section bosses and station agents as described by Vileisis (1992:50-54). However, the position of Feature #2 approximately 100 feet southeast and away from the edge of the railway grade is inconsistent with the Denver and Rio Grande layout of the Excelsior Station. Feature #5, a suspected outhouse pit, is located approximately 75 ft. to the northeast of Feature #2. Also present is what appears to be an intrusive sheep camp located along the northern edge of the Feature #2 refuse dump, just south and east of Feature #5. This intrusive sheep camp is marked by such items as lard cans, condensed milk cans, and tobacco cans. Also present are 12 inch long pieces of wood consistent with the use of a portable sheep-herders stove. Feature #3 is located at a position consistent with the Denver and Rio Grande map showing the location of the bunkhouse. No evidence of a permanent foundation is currently visible, except for the large depression. An area of scattered bricks and cans is located approximately 100 feet to the northeast, and this may be the location of the refuse dump associated with the bunkhouse. Feature #4, a definite vandal pit, is located in this area.*

Finally, there is another concentration of tin cans located approximately 200 feet northeast of Feature #4. This concentration of cans does not appear to be associated with any structure known to exist at the Excelsior Station, and may represent a more remote refuse dump, or perhaps another intrusive sheep camp from approximately the same period. Roadside litter along the highway corridor ranges from flat-top steel beer cans from the 1940s, through present day aluminum and plastic beverage containers.

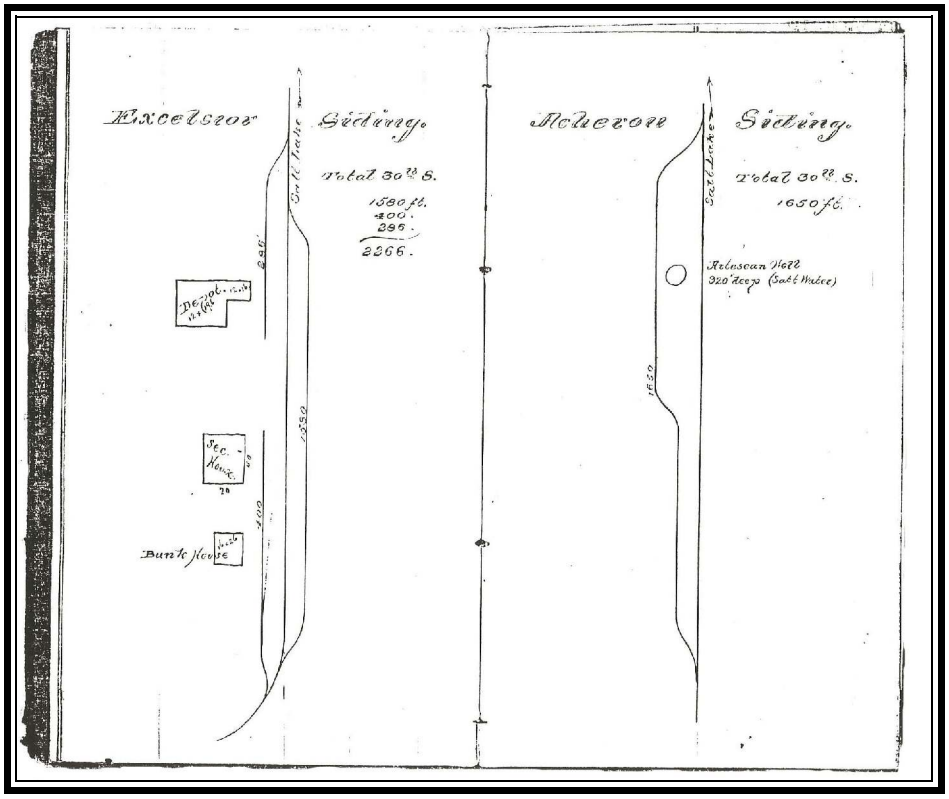

Figure 5. Denver and Rio Grande feature map (map courtesy L.D. Ellicott, date unknown).

The previously recorded artifacts discovered at 5ME7351.1 include bottle necks with applied finish (brown, green, purple, and clear). Finish types observed include double ring, flat or patent, reinforced extract, tapered and straight wine or brandy. No complete bottle bases exhibiting a maker's mark were observed, though one base fragment showed the letters "NING" which may refer to Corning Glass Works. There are numerous glass shards littering the area which may be pieces of bottles as well as window glass. Ceramics include plates, dishes, and cups. Visible trademarks on the bottoms of the plates or dishes indicate manufacture by "McLand" and by "Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles – Iron Stone China." Brown sewer pipe with the trademark "LacLede-Fire Brick Fire Brick-Gas Retorts. James Green's. Terra-Metallic-Sever. St. Louis."

Cans consist of many hole-in-top, medium to large sized produce cans for fruits and vegetables. Condensed milk cans were also frequent. Other cans consist of interlocked folded seam, medium sized produce cans, syrup cans, lard cans, sardine cans, and paint. A total of about 100 cans were discovered. Local soils and sandstone were used for construction materials. Red brick fragments are present and scattered on the surface in the area of the probable location of the section house and the bunkhouse. Additional items recorded on the site include railway spikes, pie tins, a bucket, a wash pan, a saute pan, a frying pan, a stove pipe and stove parts, barrel bands, leather shoe soles, and faunal bones (cow) which have been sawn. No artifacts were collected as a result of the original (1994) recordation.

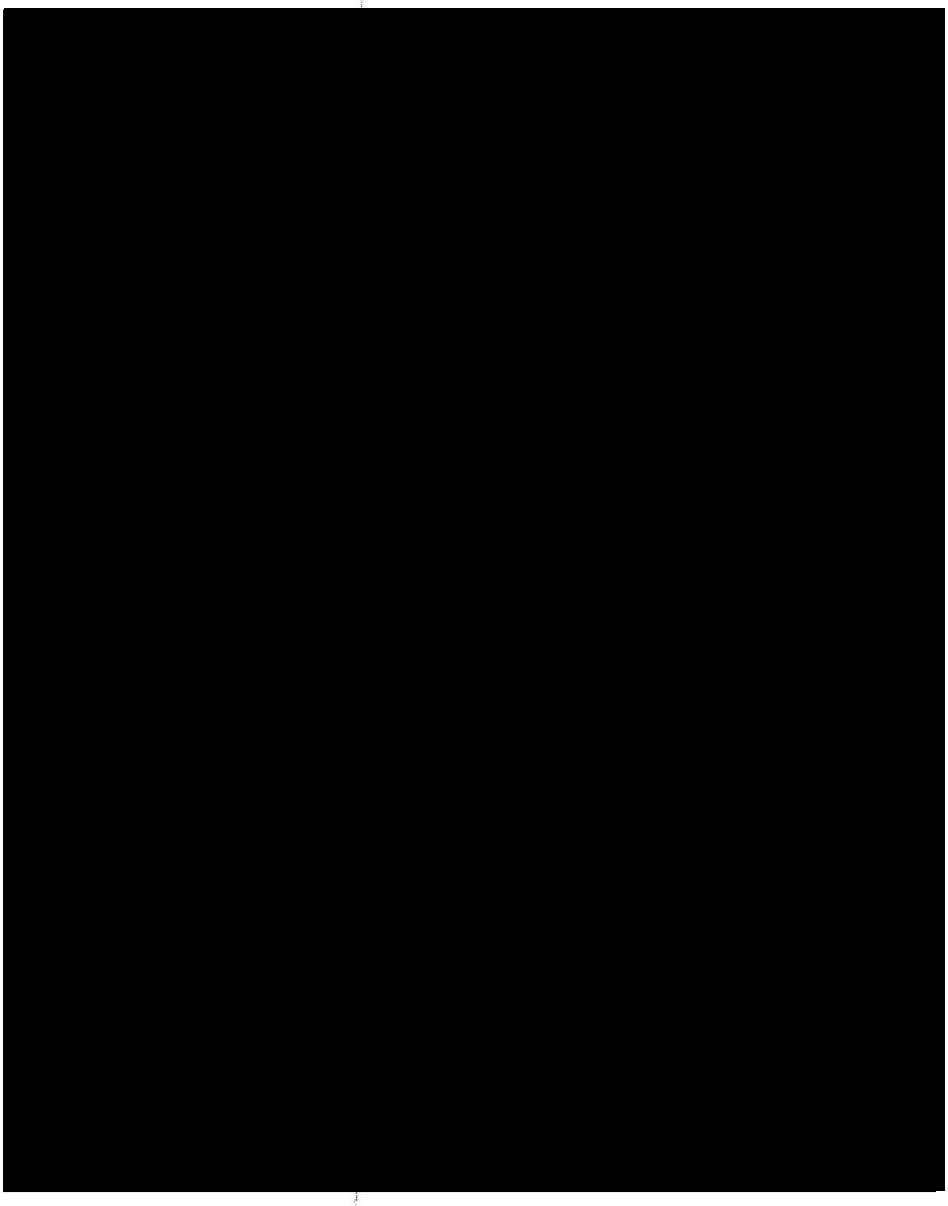

Figure 6. Original site plan map from OAHP form (O'Neil 1994).

Feature 1: Possible Depot. 12 x 27 foot foundation with associated refuse scatter.
Feature 2: Possible Section House. 12 x 18 x 4 foot depression with foundation and associated refuse scatter.
Feature 3: Possible Bunkhouse. 15 x 18 x 3 foot depression
Feature 4: Vandal's pit. 9 x 9 x 2 foot depression.
Feature 5: Possible outhouse. 3 x 3 x 2 foot depression.

The MWC has two sets of collections curated by the BLM from this site. These artifacts include those collected from the site by BLM personnel and those acquired by the BLM as a result of a vandalism investigation. These materials include those associated with the railroad (spikes, bolts, miscellaneous parts), as well as ethnic items such as glazed china, opium tins, and I Ching tokens. While this is not definitive proof of the use of ethnic Chinese labor during the construction

and maintenance of the railway due to the lack of provenance, it is a strong indication. Inquires made with the BLM GJFO resulted in no additional information regarding the vandalism investigation.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

This investigation is divided into two parts. The first consists of the recovery of archaeological data pertaining to the site. These include documentation of: the original railroad grade; identification of artifacts; ties, tie plates, spikes, and anchors with special attention to maker's marks; the influence of the station on local farms and ranches; a search of the surrounding area for any additional railway features or cultural materials that might relate to the Excelsior Station. To accomplish this DARG conducted an extensive visual inspection of the previously identified site area as well as the area surrounding the depot. An intensive surface map was created using a Trimble GeoXH and then compared to the Denver and Rio Grande plan maps. Additionally, metal detection was used to identify subsurface features and artifacts. Diagnostic artifacts were collected and subsurface test excavations were undertaken using hand tools. These test units provided stratigraphic data and depth of cultural fill.

The second goal is a study into the cultural ethnicity of the site, specifically, whether there is substantial evidence for Chinese railroad workers. Site 5ME7351.1 is discussed in "Ethnicity," *Colorado History: A Context for Historical Archaeology* (Carrillo 2007:199-200), but was incorrectly reported as not having been recorded: "[Jonathon] Horn (personal communication 2005) says he has seen Chinese materials at the Excelsior railway station, but the site has not been recorded. Chinese railway workers were used on the grade west of Grand Junction and into Utah, perhaps as far as Salt Lake Valley at that time." He goes on to state that Chinese sites are among the few that always retain ethnic markers because food traditions were largely retained and most Chinese came to America not intending to remain, so they made little attempt at assimilation.

Although evidence located at the MWC demonstrates a strong potential for Chinese occupation at the site, it is inconclusive. Additional artifacts will be sought (such as buttons, food and beverage containers, and medicine bottles), *in situ*, at the site to attempt to resolve the claim of Chinese occupation at Excelsior. Other cultural groups that may be represented include Greeks and Italians, known for their work on construction gangs. With this in mind, research goals appropriate for this study include identification and documentation of any camps which are separate from the occupation area and of any artifacts which support the claim of Chinese use, or any other minority use of the site. Special consideration will also be given for potential intrusive sheep camp(s), as Basque and Hispanic herders also utilized this area. In order to do this, artifacts encountered which could be ethnic hallmarks will be collected and curated. A vigorous examination and analysis of these artifacts along with possible ethnic features were undertaken. Additionally, records search and research will be undertaken regarding the details of the artifact seizure during the vandalism investigations. This will include an inventory of materials curated at the MWC.

METHODS

Field and analytic methods were chosen to meet the maximum data recovery requirements within the financial confines of the research design. The scope of work during the field investigations consisted of: (1) mapping of surface artifacts and features using a Trimble GPS unit; (2) metal detection conducted throughout the site to identify subsurface features and artifacts; (3) the establishment of excavation grid units; (4) the collection of ethnically identifiable artifacts.

To begin, the suspected site area was surveyed by a crew of two people walking a series of north-south transects spaced at intervals of 15 meters. Cultural materials were sought as surface exposures of individual artifacts, artifact and trash concentrations, building foundations, and railway grades. The site datum, locations of all artifacts, and in some cases concentrations of artifacts, were accurately mapped utilizing a Trimble GPS unit. The site boundary was defined based on the location of artifacts and features; however, the railway grade and siding continue beyond the identified site area to the southwest and northeast for an undetermined distance. Identified features were recorded and photographed. Artifacts found to be ethnically identifiable were mapped and collected.

Additionally, an associated metric grid system oriented to true north was established over the site utilizing a tape measure and Brunton compass. A temporary datum was established from which a north/south baseline was laid, extending 95m south of the temporary datum. Off of that line, three 1x1m test units (TU) and one 2m x 0.50cm test unit were established and are referenced by their southwest corners. Two of the test units, TU 19S 3W and TU 32S 10W, were concentrated in the Chinese locus near a concentration of ceramics and one of trash respectively. The third, TU 32S 1W, was placed east of Feature 4, an area of trash concentration adjacent to the vandal pit, and the fourth, TU 69S 4E, was positioned at Feature 5, a possible privy pit. Hand tools were used to excavate the test units. Excavation proceeded in arbitrary 10cm levels and depth was referenced as below present ground surface (bpgs). All excavation ended when deposits were deemed to be sterile. The soil matrix was sifted through ⅛ inch screens. All diagnostic artifacts within the units were bagged separately and labeled by unit and level; all the other artifacts were bagged in aggregate. Individual excavation units were photographed as appropriate.

In the laboratory, artifacts were sorted according to a classificatory scheme, generally related to functional typologies. Special attention was given to artifacts which denote the presence of a particular ethnic group. Additional research, including historic census records, county records, newspaper archives and company records, as well as legal documents relating to the vandalism of the site, were reviewed. Lastly, a new site form was completed.

RESULTS

Field work began on September 6, 2010, with the initial mapping of the site's features (Figure 7) and artifact concentrations (Figure 8) using a Trimble GPS and a USGS Bitter Creek

Well quadrangle, 7.5 minute series, topographic map. As a result of the surface survey, the site boundary was changed slightly to accommodate additional finds in the northeast portion of the site. A selection of artifacts are discussed under Artifacts. A map of collected artifacts is discussed in Figure 9 and Table A-1 gives a summary.

Metal Detecting

Metal detecting was conducted on October 10, 2010 with additional mapping activities on October 15, 2010. Originally, metal detection was planned to cover the entire site, but due to the overwhelming amount of metal objects on the site this activity proved to be extremely time consuming and could not be done within the scope of this research effort. Therefore, in order to obtain the greatest amount of information, metal detection was restricted to the Chinese locus and the debris field surrounding the section house locus (Figure 10). Collected metal artifacts are discussed in the Artifact section. .

Sidings

According to the D&RG railway map of Excelsior Siding (Figure 5) there were two sidings, one on each side of the main line. The siding north of the main line measured 1580 feet, while two shorter sidings were on the south side. The more westerly line was 286 feet in length and appears to have terminated at the depot. The line to the east was 400 feet in length passing in front of the Bunkhouse and terminating at the Section House.

The railroad grade was investigated and mapped. Where the railway siding grade is visible, on the south side of the highway, it is apparent that several factors have impacted the siding. First, the south side of the road has been used by off-road vehicles or as a ranch road. Second, it appears that the sidings were impacted by highway construction when rail-bed soils were removed to build up the highway roadbed. Third, a recently constructed highway pull-off may have impacted or obscured portions of the location of the actual grade and siding. The roadway used by ranchers/OHV users can be seen on aerial imagery extending from the northeast for 4260 feet, where it joins the railroad grade. This roadway is graded and graveled, and is estimated to be 22 feet wide. It is unknown whether this is a portion of the "Midland Trail Automobile Highway." Presently, it is infrequently used by ranchers. A search north of the highway did not identify any additional railway features or artifacts. Because of this disturbance, as well as the off-road use of the grade, it is no longer possible to discern the exact location of each siding.

Excavation

Excavations occurred on May 5 and 6, 2011. Four test areas (Figure 10)were identified to explore based upon surface indications of potential subsurface cultural fill. A discussion of each test unit follows.

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Test Unit 19S 3W

This unit was excavated to a depth of 20cm bpgs throughout the entire 1x1m unit except for the southeast quarter which was dug to 40cm bpgs. Soils were uniform and consist of unstratified blocky aeolian yellowish brown loamy clays. The soils were blockier and more consolidated below 5-10cm, however there were pockets of extremely hard clay throughout. Bioturbation was found throughout the fill in the form of insect tunnels, none of which appear modern. No rocks, pebbles, or cobbles were present in the soil matrix. No profile or plan view maps were drawn due to a lack of identifiable stratigraphy or features. Table 1 is a summary of the artifacts recovered.

Table 1. Test Unit 19S 3W – Artifact Summary.

Level bpgs	Description
Surface	Vessel glass, metal and one Bamboo style china shard.
Level 1 (0-10cm)	An assortment of artifacts including metal, a large square nail, Chinese style crockery, Bamboo style china, and glass fragments.
Level 2 (10-20cm)	Rust and glass observed in situ at 18-19cm. Bamboo style china at 12cm in a sidewall. Clinker at 20cm, china at 17cm, nail and bottle glass at 20cm.
Level 3 (20-30cm)	3 pieces of glass and 1 piece of metal.
Level 3-4 (30-40cm)	One Bamboo style shard, occasional charcoal flecks/clinker; otherwise soils are sterile.

Test Unit 32S 1W

Total depth excavated was 35cm bpgs within the NW ¼ of the unit. Excavation stopped at 20cm bpgs in the remainder of the test unit. Soils were a blocky consolidated grayish brown clay to a depth of 9 to 11cm where they graded into a yellowish brown clay similar to the soil in TU 32S 10W. Evidence of bioturbation with a marked decrease in artifacts was found in Level 1 (2-10cm bpgs). Again, occasional areas of extremely hard-packed soil were present at depth. No profile or plan view maps were created due to a lack of identifiable features or stratigraphy. Table 2 is a summary of the artifacts recovered.

Table 2. Test Unit 32S 1W – Artifact Summary

Level bpgs	Description
Surface (0-2cm)	Scatter of broken glass. One fragment of Bamboo style china, brick (not collected) clinker (not collected), melted glass fragment, and a Levi jeans-like button.
Level 1 (2-10cm)	Railway spike at approximately 10cm and 2 Levi style buttons.
Level 2 (10-20cm)	Shell button and a bone fragment as well as miscellaneous pieces of metal and glass
Level 3 (20-35cm)	A couple of small glass shards and metal were recovered from upper portion of this level (20-30cm bpgs).

Unit 32S 10W

This Unit was excavated to a maximum depth of 20 cm bpgs throughout. The soil matrix was similar to that in the two previous units. The surface and upper level was a grayish brown clay and extended to a depth of approximately 10cm whereupon it graded into a yellowish brown clay with areas of hard packed fill. No profile or plan view maps were created due to a lack of features and stratigraphy. Table 3 is a summary of the artifacts recovered.

Table 3. Test Unit 32S 10W – Artifact Summary

Level bpgs	Description
Surface	Square nails, metal, glass and ceramics.
Level 1 (0-2cm)	Stoneware, metal, square nails and glass shards
Level 2 (2-10cm)	22 caliber shell casing.
Level 3 (10-20cm)	Small slivers of glass and metal fragments.

Test Unit 69S 4E

This unit was laid out as a 2m X 0.5m trench. The NE corner was established for vertical control rather than the SW corner as in all the other TUs. Level 1was limited to the southern portion of the unit which also exhibited a laminated reddish gray, silty loam soil. After the entire unit was excavated to 10cm bpgs the south 1m was dug to a depth of 30cm bpgs. Here, soils had ashy lenses intermixed in the soil matrix. The southern 50cm of the unit was then excavated to a

depth of 40cm bpgs. Soils throughout all the levels remained a light gray clay. Finally, an auger hole was dug to a depth of 1.9m bpgs at the southern end of the unit. Soils within the auger test contained chunks of charcoal and coal approximately 1m bpgs. At 1.2 to1.5m bpgs the soil became a profusion of charcoal extending to 1.7m bpgs, where soils took on a sandy consistency. At 1.8m bgps sandy crystals and shale were present. Bedrock was reached at 1.9m. While the depth of cultural remains might be consistent with a privy, the soil character and cultural findings within the excavated portion of the feature are not. A stratigraphic profile of this unit is presented in Figure 11. Table 4 is a summary of the artifacts recovered.

Table 4. Test Unit 69S 4E – Artifact Summary

Level bpgs	Description
Surface	Miscellaneous metal fragments.
Level 1 (0-10cm)	Square nails – otherwise sterile.
Level 2 (10-20cm)	Glass, metal, knife-cut can lid and glass fragments.
Level 3 (20-30cm)	Cut metal cans, aluminum (similar to foil) and glass.
Level 4 (30-45cm)	Metal fragments and glass shards.
Auger hole at 1.2-1.5m	Charcoal and nail found.

Artifacts

This discussion covers artifacts previously observed and/or curated at the MWC as well as those recovered during this assessment. A wide variety of bottle fragments, clothing remnants (a shell button and a four-holed Prosser button, Levi buttons, shoe eyelets, and a buckle) as well as other artifacts associated with railway building and construction (square nails, railroad spikes, bricks, etc) were uncovered during the excavation process. A representative sample of each category is discussed with the exception of Chinese ethnic artifacts. Since a Chinese connection is considered integral to this research, a separate discussion is set aside for these ethnic artifacts.

Utility Pipe

Diagnostic artifacts relating to the operation of the Excelsior and its EuroAmerican occupants include brown sewer pipe marked with the trademark "*Laclede-Fire Brick Fire Brick-Gas Retorts. James Green's. Terra-Metallic-Sever. St. Louis.*" Apparently, sewer pipe as well as fire brick was being produced. The following is a brief history of Laclede Brick Company, published in *Brick. Special Issues on St. Louis, May and June 1904* (Corbett n.d.):

> *The plant was established in 1844, its location then being far from the city of St. Louis, the district being known at that [time] as the village of Cheltenham. The first products were firebrick and tile. In those early days firebrick was made*

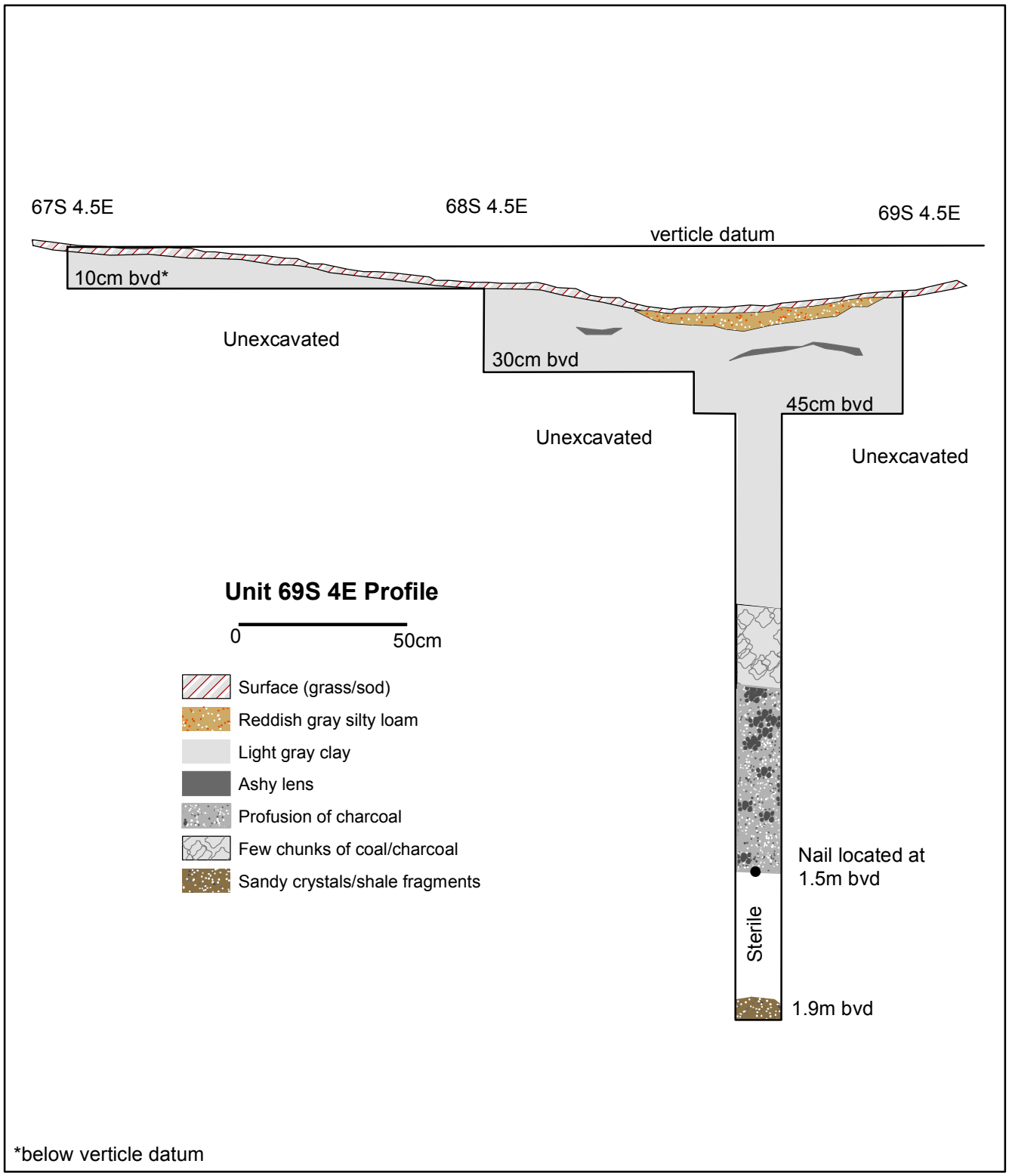

Figure 11. Profile drawing of Unit 69S 4E.

by hand. It is due, however, to the efforts of James Green that the works have attained their present magnitude. Mr. Green is now a well-known manufacturer and capitalist in St. Louis....In 1865 Mr. Green took hold of the clay manufacturing enterprise and in 1869 the Laclede Firebrick Manufacturing Co. was incorporated. Mr. Green is at this time [1904] president of the corporation and has always been the controlling factor.... The products of the plant are produced rea[dily] in three plants, numbered respectively, No. 1, 2 and 3.

Buttons

A button back stamped with the words "*SPORTING EXTRA QUALITY*" (Plate 1) was found during the original survey (O'Neil 1994). This button can be attributed to the late 1800s (GB Buttons 2012). Additionally, two presumed Prosser buttons (a four-hole and a domed gaiter) and shoe soles were observed during this project.

Plate 1. Button back.

White Ceramics

White tableware china was also recovered from the site, including shards with maker's marks from "*McLand" and "Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles – Iron Stone China*." Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles operated in East Liverpool, Ohio from 1870 to about 1929. The manufacture of this utilitarian china peaked during the turn of the century. This success is attributed to its use as hotel china and table china (Noles 2008). Many of the china fragments found on the site appear to be of this variety.

Glass

Bottle fragments were plentiful throughout the site. Chart 1 shows the number of the glass fragments recovered from the excavation. Many of the bottles exhibited three-piece molded bodies with applied finishes. Finish types included blob, prescription lip, double ring, flat/patent, reinforced extract, crown, and brandy. No complete bottles were located; however at least two bases were recorded that had sufficient information to make a positive identification; a third base inscription was more uncertain. Makers' marks from bottle bases located on the site include:

- CC&C - Carl Conrad and Company. They have an early manufacture date of 1876 and a late date of 1882. These monograms are divided into several categories based upon the font inscribed. The recovered artifact appears to be a Type II with a Serif logo, as opposed to a Sans Serif--Type I, especially since a single letter is inscribed under the monogram. These bottles were commonly manufactured for beer companies, primarily Budweiser and Anheuser Busch (Lockhart, et al. 2006).

- CVCo No. 2 MILW - Chase Valley Glass Company, No. 2. The "No. 2" refers to a factory which opened in 1880 but subsequently closed in July 1881 to be reorganized as the Wisconsin Glass Company. The most common bottles manufactured were for beer (Maas 2006)
- C. S. & Co. - This may refer to Cannington, Shaw, and Co. The company was based out of St. Helens, Lancashire, England (1875-1913) and in 1892 was the largest bottle maker in the country and exported worldwide (Wild 2008). This makers mark sometimes appears with LTD or LD (Limited) embossed on the base (Whitten n.d.)

In addition, a large variety of glass bottle colors were observed on the surface and within the test units including: colorless (amethyst), aqua, milk glass, yellow, amber, and red. Numbers of the recovered glass fragment artifacts are presented in Chart 1.

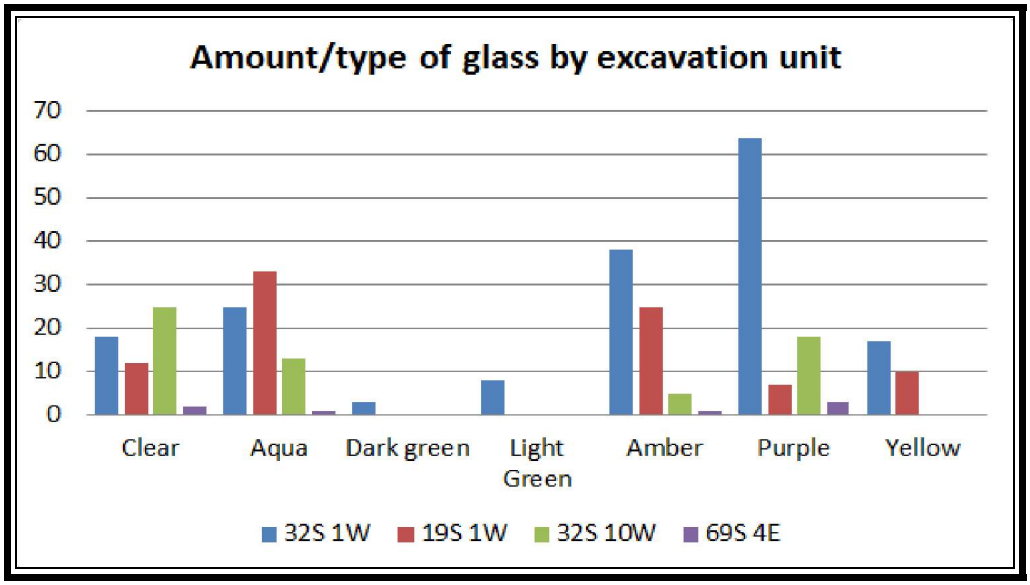

Chart 1. Glass fragment counts by excavation unit.

Metal

Cans (mostly fragments) were the most plentiful metal artifacts on the site. Hole-in-cap and milk cans were observed as were larger cans. The larger tins may have held produce, lard, syrup, and sardines. No tobacco tins were observed. Other metal domestic goods were found in association with the trash dump: pie tins, wash pans, cooking utensil, and stove parts. Few artifacts associated with the maintenance of trains such as spikes and rail fragments were found. A shell casing was recovered from one of the test units. It was stamped with WRA CO 30 WCF. The Winchester Repeating Arms Company (WRA CO) started marketing the .30 Winchester Center Fire (30 WCF) in 1895 and continued using the headstamp "WRA CO" until 1932 (Steinhauer n.d.). A buckle and small metal star (possibly used for decorative purposes) found via metal detection appear to have been associated with clothing.

CHINESE ARTIFACTS

The surface inventory and excavations for the Excelsior Station identified a distinct concentration of Chinese artifacts within the site. Artifacts included tableware and teaware fragments, utilitarian vessel fragments, painted jars or possible ginger jars, brass opium tins, and possible fragments of an opium pipe bowl. These artifacts were identified through the use of comparative collections. The University of Montana (2006) maintains a website for the purpose of making images of Chinese artifacts available for identification. Also, a website related to mining at German Gulch (Montana) offers images from a comparative collection that includes Chinese artifacts associated with that occupation from the 1870s -1890s (Norman 2010). Additionally, other Asian comparative collections were consulted (Wegars 1988, 2010; Yang and Hellmann 1998; Graves 2007).

Ceramics

At least three different styles of Chinese semi-porcelain tablewares were located: Bamboo (also called Three Circles and Dragonfly, or Swatow), Celadon (or Winter Green), and Four Seasons (or Four Flowers,). No maker's marks were found on the tablewares from Excelsior although Chinese characters were visible on one rim shard. Fragments of rice bowls, at least one tea or liquor cup, and a spoon were discovered. Chinese tablewares are defined as dishes for serving and eating made out of porcelain or porcellaneous stoneware (Wegars 1988). All the ceramic styles represented here are markedly different ceramic styles imported for American use during the same period. These styles fall into a category of trade goods imported along with spices, silks, and lacquered ware (Madsen and White 2011).

Bamboo Style

Ceramic vessels encountered on “nearly every Chinese site examined in the United States, is a blue-on-white one that is now known as ‘Bamboo’” (ibid). It was also the most common style of bowl used by the Chinese on the Central, Pacific, Southern Pacific, and Northern Pacific Railroads due to its low cost.

Plate 2. Example of Bamboo Style rice bowls from Northern Pacific Railroad Chinese sites.

The Bamboo design (Plate 2) is described as being decorated with "blue or gray vertical designs that were intended to represent shoots and leaves of the bamboo plant" (Norman 2010). Elements also include “three circles, a longevity character or dragonfly motif, and floral decorations with both round leaves and thinner, pointed leaves” (Wegars 1988). According to Wegars (1988) the Bamboo design is represented almost exclusively on rice bowls. Bamboo was common prior to the 1890s, after which Celadon and Four Seasons gained in popularity.

Plate 3. Fragments of Bamboo style dishware from current investigation.

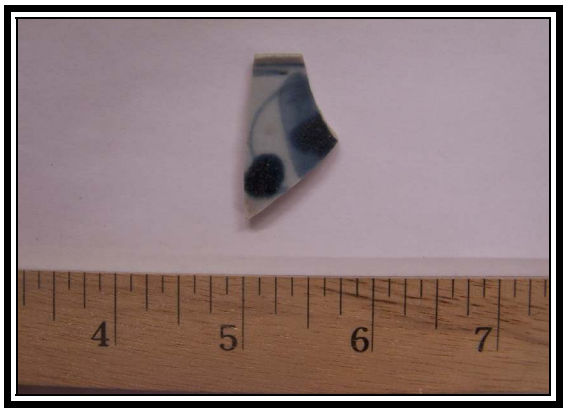

Plate 4. Fragment of Bamboo style dishware from Excelsior vandalism investigation.

Forty-one fragments from several vessels (Plates 3 and 4) have been collected from the various investigations at the site. This number represents artifacts collected during the current project as well as those curated at the MWC. Of these, 10 were rim shards and 3 base fragments.

Celadon Style

Celadon is a bluish green to pale green porcelain comprising a variety of dishware including large bowls, spoons, saucers, sauce dishes, and small cups. It was originally produced for the wealthy in China but became popular with the working class Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s (Norman 2010). It is believed that the Celadon style can be attributed to seven fragments collected during the current study. It is likely that they represent bowl fragments and two re-fitted fragments of a spoon handle (Plate 5). None of the items curated at the MWC from previous Excelsior investigations appear to be of this style.

Plate 5. Celedon style spoon handle fragments from the current site assessment.

Four Seasons Style

Four Seasons uses four separate floral motifs using a hand painted overglaze polychrome, each representing one of the four seasons. Spring is symbolized by an orchid; Summer by the plum blossom; Fall by a chrysanthemum; and Winter by bamboo. It is unique because it was hand-painted. The style occurs on a variety of shapes and sizes with serving bowls being the most common form (Wegars 1988). It was comparable to Celadon in cost but substantially higher in price than Bamboo (ibid). Plate 6 is a photograph of a complete cup shown for comparison.

This motif appears to be represented on very thin fragments from different vessels of apparent teaware recovered from Excelsior. Four artifacts of this style were identified; three were collected during the current project and one from a previous investigation was curated at the MWC. Of the three collected during this assessment two are from a possible tea or liquor cup. A third painted on the interior curve suggests either a saucer or spoon (Plate 7).

Plate 6. Example of Four Seasons style teaware (University of Montana 2006).

Plate 7. Four Seasons style teaware from current assessment at Excelsior. Center and right have gold painted rims; the left does not.

Glazed Stoneware

These common crockery vessels generally contained food items, such as pickled duck eggs, spices, dried fish, pickled vegetables and beans (Norman 2010). The most utilized crockery vessels during this time period for the Chinese include: spouted jars, liquor bottles, wide-mouthed jars, globular jars, straight-sided jars, barrel jars and pans (a type of serving dish found among the lower classes). Although all of these types of stoneware vessels would have initially held specific foods, they were reused as general food containers. For instance, a spouted jar was also frequently referred to as a soy pot, containing not only soy but liquor, black vinegar, and peanut oil (Yang and Hellmann 1998). Quoting Mr. Philip Choy, "You archaeologists are always looking for one particular function, but these Chinese containers weren't used that way. They would be used for anything, and there was no gospel involved" (ibid). Two examples of painted stoneware are presented in Plates 8 and 9.

Plate 8. Painted stoneware from Central Pacific Railroad camps (Graves 2007)

Plate 9. Painted stoneware pot from Central Pacific Railroad camps (Graves 2007).

Brown glazed stoneware as well as decorative painted fragments (Plate 10) were discovered within the Excelsior Chinese artifact locus. Christopher Merritt, PhD., University of Montana faculty and staff archaeologist with P-III Associates, Inc., confirmed that the painted jar fragments from Excelsior are likely from stoneware crocks and similar to those in collections from the Central Pacific Railroad (Merritt 2012).

Plate 10. Fragments of painted stoneware from current assessment at Excelsior.

Most of the crockery from Excelsior is a brown-glazed variety. One foot-ring fragment was recovered from the vandalism investigation and three from the current work. The brown-glazed foot-ring (Plate 11) is likely from a spouted or wide-mouthed jar similar to one (Plate 12) from a camp on the Central Pacific Railroad (Merritt 2012).

Although most of the Excelsior crockery was too fragmentary to definitively identify as to vessel type, it can generally be assumed that they were being utilized by Chinese, rather than their EuroAmerican counterparts.

Plate 11. Brown glazed foot-ring from previous investigation at Excelsior.

Plate 12. Example of glazed spouted jar. University of Montana (2006)

Opium Pipe

Because of their fragile nature opium pipe bowls were easily broken and discarded making them some of the most commonly recovered artifacts relating to opium use on archaeological sites. "The orange, terra-cotta, color is the most common for opium pipe bowls, though there is a range of other colors, including burnished black. Opium pipe bowls came in a variety of shapes as well…" (Norman 2010). Three opium pipe bowl fragments (Plate 13) were found at Excelsior; their identification was confirmed by Merritt (2012). An example of an opium bowl is presented for comparison in Plate 14.

Plate 13. Opium bowl fragments from Excelsior.

Plate 14. Example of an opium bowl from German Gulch (Norman 2010).

Metal

Opium Tins

Elizabeth Sinn (2005) indicates "that the most favored brands of opium, Fook Lung and Lai Yuen (Plate 15), along with the less popular Ping Kee brand, were produced by the Yen Wo [aka Yan Wo] syndicate of merchants from Dongguan, a Cantonese-speaking district southeast of Canton." The ownership of the Lai Yuen company changed several times over the years. Yan Wo (producers of Lai Yuen) was competing with rival company Wo Hang in 1859, when Yan Wo gained the opium monopoly. In 1874, Yan Wo, Wo Hang, and Chap Sing formed a new syndicate known as the Sun Yee company (Chinese in Northwest American Research Committee [CINARC] 2012; Butt 2011). Two Lai Yuen tins were recovered from the site.

Plate 15. Example of Lai Yuen opium tin (Sinn 2005).

Several opium tins were recovered from the site displaying stamped seals of Hong Kong opium producers. A Lai Yuen tin (Plate 16) was identified in the vandalism collection and another (Plate 17) from the current site assessment. Along with the pipe bowl fragments and tins, several small glass bottle rims which may have been opium vials were collected.

Both Chinese and EuroAmericans smoked opium. It was often used as a medicine to relieve physical pains, an occupational hazard of the demanding labor required for railway construction. However, Merritt (2012) suggests that EuroAmerican consumption was more recreational and it use limited primarily to opium dens. Opium was consumed in the United States until 1909 when the Opium Exclusion Act was passed, making its use illegal.

Plate 16. Opium tin from vandalism collection at MWC.

Plate 17. Opium tin recovered from current assessment of Excelsior Station.

I Ching Tokens

Two tokens were recovered during the vandalism investigation. The coins were too degraded to be definitively identified for diagnostic purposes. They are presented in Plate 18 as another example of evidence for Chinese workers at the Excelsior Station.

Plate 18. I Ching Tokens recovered from the vandalism investigation.

IMPACTS, EVALUATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Impacts

Although traffic along US Highway 6 & 50 has been for the most part diverted to I-70, the site still draws railroad afficionados, recreationalists looking for a good time with their ATVs and other toys, and vandals looking for historic artifacts even though structures are gone and the foundations are indistinct. Undoubtably, diagnostic artifacts have been taken by collectors as evident in the vandal pit and the resulting investigation. All vandalism complicates the interpretation of the site. Modern and near historic trash has been left in several areas both within the historic trash scatters and the features. For example, 1960s Coors pull top beer cans (Carlson's Brewery Research 2012) were noted in several areas. Additionally, between 15 October 2010 and 5 May 2011, somebody left 10 beer bottles along a two-track road/pull off in the western portion of the site. Luckily none of the bottles were broken and there was no damage to the soils from the vehicle. However, a final visit to the site on March 17, 2012, for the purpose of photographing features, discovered tire tracks within the largest trash concentration, resulting in damage to artifacts, i.e., crushing of cans from tires and churning of the soil. These impacts were photographed as part of the site documentation. Additional impacts to the site include livestock grazing, which has resulted in artifact trampling and scattering.

Evaluation

Site 5ME7351.1, Excelsior Train Station, was declared officially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. DARG heartily supports this evaluation. The site meets both Criteria A and D for inclusion into both the National and State registers. Under Criterion A the station represents a specific important moment in American history - the construction of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway as part of a pattern of historical events relating to railroads and the western expansion of the nation, and evidence of immigrant populations in the construction of a major railway system in an area of Colorado where there is no written evidence. Additionally, limited testing has demonstrated that the Excelsior has the potential to contain significant, intact, buried cultural material that could add important information to the history of the region, thereby making it eligible under Criterion D.

For the most part, the site retains its Setting and Location values. U.S. Highway 6 and 50 has, to some extent impacted the site, but most of that impact is limited to the removal of some of the railroad bed. Most of the surroundings remain largely undeveloped and intact. In terms of Design, the layout of the foundations with regard to the grade demonstrates the structures were built with form and function in mind. Concerning Association, there is a direct link between an important historic event, the building of the D&RG Railway and Excelsior Train Station to service the railroad, and the local community. Largely lacking are the qualities of Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling. Most of the materials have been removed and the buildings torn down or moved – all of which add to the importance of feeling and workmanship as qualities that are missing from the site.

Recommendations

As one of the only railway sites in western Colorado that exhibits Chinese occupation, the site should continue to be studied to define the role Chinese workers, as well as other possible immigrant groups, played in the construction of the railway system and the nation's westerly expansion. First and foremost, the site should be protected and preserved for future generations.

This could be accomplished in a number of ways. It appears that recreationalists are having the greatest impact upon the site. Their use of the area could be restricted by the placement of large boulders along Highway 6 and 50 discouraging vehicular traffic. Fencing and signing could also be employed. Additionally, regular patrols to monitor the site condition should be undertaken by the BLM. Educating the public is one of the best means to protect the site. In order to obtain the information necessary to develop an educational plan additional data recovery should be undertaken.

A number of different excavation strategies could be employed to sample the site. Random excavation of privy features and the other trash dumps would provide the quickest method for obtaining additional information. However, a more directed approach using ground penetrating radar (GPR) first to identify features would provide significantly more data. By combining data from GPR with the D&RG plats, structural features which are now indistinct or invisible to the

naked eye could be discovered. Excavations could then be referenced to these site features to answer specific research questions. The GPR might also be able to locate assemblages of ethnic occupations, i.e. tent camps, which could yield data about the social stratification and working class lifestyles of the Anglo Americans as well as revealing the presence of additional Chinese or other immigrant groups (such as Italians and Irish).

Information from data recovery could then be used by the BLM to produce educational material such as signs to educate the public about this important site. Additionally, information gleaned will be used to develop educational programs, which can then be presented in public forums and professional meetings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research goals for this assessment were twofold. First was an intensive visual inspection of the site to identify the primary features of the site including the railroad grade, artifactual materials, influence of the track on local inhabitants and surrounding communities, and a search of the surrounding area for additional railway features or cultural materials relating to Excelsior Station. The second was a study of the cultural use of the site. This involved the collection of and identification of diagnostic ethnic artifacts and concentrations of artifacts, and archival research. Previous collections at the MWC were researched along with the newly acquired artifacts.

In order to undertake these tasks DARG conducted extensive site mapping techniques using GPS and GIS software to produce the most up to date map of the site. Metal detecting proved to be extremely useful but also problematic due to the density of metal artifacts on the site. Therefore, the use of this methodology was restricted to the Chinese locus and the debris field surrounding the section house locus. Test units were also excavated to determine the potential for intact buried cultural materials. It appears that this cultural exposure is fairly close to the surface, an auger test demonstrated that there could be some depth - possibly 1.5m bpgs.

The number of recovered artifacts of Chinese ethnicity from this as well as previous investigations indicates the presence of Chinese laborers at the station, if not during the railroad construction. These artifacts include: china, crockery, glass, I Ching tokens, opium pipe fragments, and opium tins. It is DARG's conclusion that the Chinese artifact concentration may in fact represent a Chinese labor camp. Although no written documentation could be found referencing Chinese laborers working on the railroad, several references to a Chinese community in Grand Junction have been found.

The site has provided evidence of Chinese occupation during the 1880s, but there are still large data gaps in the current record regarding Chinese immigrant contributions to the construction of the D&RG Railway that additional research may answer. Also, is there evidence of other ethnic groups who may have contributed to the railway construction?

It is for these reasons that DARG recommends that the NRHP status of the site be retained. In addition the site needs to be preserved and protected. To affect that, the BLM should restrict access to the site, mainly from recreationalists. This could be accomplished in a number of ways – the placement of large boulders along the pull-off and old highway or by fencing. Periodic monitoring could also slow down the impacts resultant from recreational activities. But most importantly the public needs to be educated and informed of this historic site. Interpretive signs might help increase public awareness and education regarding the site.

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Appendix A. Resource Location Data
(BLM and OAHP copies only)

Appendix B. OAHP Site Forms