

“Madonna del Prigioniero Prega per Noi”: An Intimate Archaeology of a World War II Italian Prisoner-of-War Camp

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Abstract Camp Monticello, located in southeast Arkansas, served as a prisoner-of-war camp for Italians from 1943 to 1946. The spatial arrangement of the camp, which consists of two officers’ compounds and three enlisted men’s compounds, was structured according to the central principles of surveillance, discipline, and control. The institution provided the inmates’ food, clothing, and possessions. From mess-hall menus to a chapel, archaeological research reveals intimate information about the men and the ways they worked together to maintain their cultural identities and regain some of their individuality.

Extracto Camp Monticello, ubicado en el sudeste de Arkansas, sirvió como un campo de prisioneros de guerra para italianos desde 1943 hasta 1946. La disposición del espacio del campamento, que consiste en dos recintos para oficiales y tres recintos para soldados rasos, se estructuró de acuerdo con los principios centrales de vigilancia, disciplina y control. La institución proporcionó a los prisioneros comida, ropa y posesiones. Desde menús del comedor hasta una capilla, la investigación arqueológica revela información íntima sobre los hombres y las formas en que trabajaron juntos para mantener sus identidades culturales y para recuperar algo de su individualidad.

Résumé Le camp Monticello, situé au sud-est de l’Arkansas, fut un camp de guerre italien de 1943 à 1946. La disposition spatiale du camp, consistant en deux baraques d’officiers et trois baraques pour gradés et hommes de troupes, reposait sur les principes fondamentaux de la surveillance, de la discipline et du contrôle. L’établissement fournissait aux détenus leur nourriture, leurs vêtements et leurs possessions. Des menus de la salle à manger à la chapelle, la recherche archéologique révèle des renseignements intimes sur les hommes et leurs façons de collaborer pour préserver leur identité culturelle et regagner un peu de leur individualité.

Keywords World War II · prisoner-of-war camps · internment · Arkansas

Introduction

The title of this article translates as “Madonna of the prisoner pray for us.” Italian prisoners of war (POWs) etched these words on the base of a statue of the Madonna they crafted from Arkansas clay and painted a pink-tinted ivory (Klein 1945). They housed the Madonna in a grotto, or chapel, constructed from packing boxes, asbestos tiles, and scrap lumber (Fig. 1). After a visit to the POW camp in southeast Arkansas in 1944, G. S. Metraux, with the International Committee of the Red Cross, wrote that “from a material point of view the Italian prisoners do not lack anything, but the morale of all these men suffers; defeat, lack of news from their families and uncertainty about the morrow create a very

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Fig. 1 The chapel in Compound 2 in the 1960s. (Photo courtesy Drew County Archives, Monticello, Arkansas.)

sad atmosphere in this camp which it is difficult to remedy” (Metraux 1944:3). These two examples demonstrate the role of material culture in everyday life at Camp Monticello. Metraux’s observation was one of a number of communications by the Red Cross mediating between the POWs and the U.S. military and, as a result, instilling empathy for the POWs and their well-being. The communication with the Red Cross and the construction of the chapel were forms of cooperation that required negotiation.

The spatial arrangement, architecture, and material culture at Camp Monticello were structured according to the central principles of surveillance, discipline, and control; therefore, the inmates lived in a world of enforced conformity, with their food, clothing, and possessions provided for them (Casella 2007). Archaeological research at Camp Monticello demonstrates the ways in which people “cooperate to accomplish what they can’t do alone” (Sennett 2012:5). Richard Sennett (2012) argues that cooperation between people from differing backgrounds is key to a thriving community and social life. Living and working together requires specific skills: experimentation, communication, repetition, and negotiation, for example. Institutions of

modern military internment are created either to remove a real or perceived threat, to reeducate a named group of enemies, or to achieve some combination of both. For the POWs, institutional life was familiar territory. After months or years under the strict control of the Italian military, living in army camps, and sleeping in barracks, they were accustomed to life in an institution (Myers 2013). Despite the POWs’ high tolerance for the particular demands of military institutional settings, there was, nevertheless, a deep-rooted tension between the forces of the institution and the individuality of people in the camp. To negotiate these tensions, rituals of cooperation were needed. Sennett’s concepts of rituals and cooperation combined with the archaeology of community life (Canuto and Yaeger 2000; Barnes 2011) provide a lens with which to examine the intimate material lives of prisoners of war in Arkansas during World War II.

Research at Prisoner-of-War Camps

Archaeologists are increasingly interested in research on internment. Research in Europe, Canada, and the United

States has fostered new understandings of POW camps, internment centers, and their inmates; e.g., Waters (2006), Pringle et al. (2007), Clark (2008), Doyle et al. (2010), Skiles and Clark (2010), Myers and Moshenska (2011), Carr and Mytum (2012), Myers (2013), Young (2013), Mytum and Carr (2013), and Ng and Camp (2015). Michael R. Waters (2006) initiated the first investigation of a prisoner-of-war camp at Camp Hearne in Texas. Metal detecting, archaeological test excavations, extensive archival research in American and German military records, oral histories with former guards and prisoners, and local historical research produced the first comprehensive understanding of a U.S. home-front POW camp. In Arkansas, archaeologists have conducted archival research, mapped remaining foundations with a total station, and conducted a shovel-test survey at Camp Robinson (Buchner and Albertson 2005) and conducted archaeological investigations and documented the existing architectural remains at Fort Chaffee (Northrip and Bennett 1990; Blakely and Northrip 1991).

More recent archaeological research of internment sites, such as POW camps, has built upon Eleanor Casella's (2007) archaeology of institutional confinement, which highlights the ways that the spatial arrangement, architecture, and material culture of such sites were structured according to the central principles of surveillance, discipline, and control; e.g., Myers (2013), Morine and Clark (2015), and Barnes (2016). This has resulted in the study of artifacts reflecting everyday life in the camps (Skiles and Clark 2010; Myers 2013). It has shown that camp inmates made items by hand or personalized them to regain some of their individual and cultural identities (Waters 2006; Myers and Moshenska 2011; Myers 2013; Barnes 2016). In addition, several archaeologists have initiated successful programs of community collaboration and public interpretation, with former internees and descendants, among others, visiting the sites and working with the archaeologists (Clark 2008; Skiles and Clark 2010).

Adrian Myers's (2013) research at Riding Mountain Camp, a branch camp for German POWs in Canada, highlights the fundamental tension between the individual and the institution. His research outlines the ways material culture was utilized by institutions to reform the POWs (Myers 2013:55). In addition to providing books and teaching courses on history and political science, the Canadians introduced the POWs to a democratic, capitalistic way of life by familiarizing them with North American consumer goods, while the Nazi bureaucracy,

in turn, used material things, such as new Wehrmacht uniforms from Germany and heartening Christmas cards, to try to keep the POWs from turning to the other side. This research builds upon Myers's work to understand the ways in which the POWs lived "together."

The POWs were forced to share a space and create ways to live together within the institutional setting. The POWs created a community. Archaeologists, anthropologists, and sociologists have examined the ways communities are built and maintained; e.g., Rawick (1973), Anderson (1991), Brown (1994), Cusick (1995), Kolb and Snead (1997), McDowell (1999), Canuto and Yaeger (2000), Amit (2002), and Barnes (2011). "Community," like the concept of "place," tends to be a term that is taken for granted (Rodman 1992:640). It is usually, although not always, used to designate a small-scale and spatially bounded area inhabited by a population, or part of it, that has certain characteristics in common that tie members together (McDowell 1999:100). "Community" has been defined by George P. Murdock (1949) as "a co-residential collection of individuals or households characterized by day-to-day interaction, shared experiences, and common cultures" (Yaeger and Canuto 2000:2). This definition could be used to define life at Camp Monticello, but it depicts community as natural and synonymous with the site or the settlement system, since common culture is often considered a shared architecture or artifact assemblage. Communities are places of lived experience. They are not a list of traits—values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like—instead, communities are "precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion" (Appadurai 2001:7). Community in a prisoner-of-war camp does not just exist; the co-residential collection of individuals and barracks is created through day-to-day interaction and shared experiences that are differentiated by class and other social experiences (DuBois 1995; Yaeger and Canuto 2000). By examining what Sennett (2012:90–91) calls rituals of cooperation, or the repetitive transformation of objects, bodily movements, or words into symbols and expression that aid in togetherness, rituals establish patterns of experience that can be seen materially in the archaeological record. By examining the material manifestation of togetherness, it is possible to untangle, within military institutional life, the tension between the institution's push for conformity and the individual's defiance. In this essay, community, cooperation, and togetherness are lenses through which to study the ways POWs

responded to internment, the differential access to goods, and the desire to maintain military and cultural traditions within a confined space.

Camp Monticello, an Italian Prisoner-of-War Camp in Southeast Arkansas

Camp Monticello is located south of Monticello in Drew County, Arkansas (Fig. 2). Monticello's rural, isolated location, advocacy by local civic leaders, and the need for labor in agriculture and the timber industries influenced the decision to locate the camp in the southeastern part of the state. This camp was one of about 125 main camps and 425 smaller branch camps for POWs across the country (Krammer 1979; Keefer 1992; Kelly 2004), as the early 1940s witnessed the unprecedented detention of an estimated 650,000 persons (Harper et al. 2004:23). German military personnel taken prisoner in North Africa during 1943 were the first enemy troops brought to American POW camps. More than 425,000 Axis prisoners—371,000 Germans, 50,000 Italians, and 4,000 Japanese—were housed in the United States by June 1945.

In Arkansas, POWs began arriving in 1943. Initially three facilities were constructed to house them, two for German POWs (Fort Chaffee, near Fort Smith, and

Camp Robinson, near Little Rock) and one (Camp Monticello) for Italian POWs (Smith 1994). Two Japanese American internment camps were also established in Arkansas, Rohwer and Jerome (Pritchett and Shea 1978; Smith 1994). In 1944, Jerome closed, and the Japanese American internees were transferred to Rohwer and other camps across the country. Jerome was then converted into a POW camp, Camp Dermott, becoming the third facility for German POWs (Pritchett and Shea 1978; Smith 1994). There were also a number of smaller branch camps located around the state (Smith 1994; Bowman 2013).

The articles of the 1929 Geneva Convention regulated many aspects of the conditions within the POW camps (Krammer 1979:27). The treaty stipulated that the POWs should be treated the same as the troops of the retaining power. Therefore, the POW camps in the U.S. were built to the standards of American military camps. Initially POW base camps were placed within existing military reservations, but, later, as the numbers of POWs rose, base camps were built outside military bases, with some on newly acquired land. New town-like camps were quickly built from military plans, with basic one-story frame barracks, latrines, warehouses, mess halls, staff housing, medical facilities, and recreation areas arranged in grid layouts with open firebreaks and bounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers.

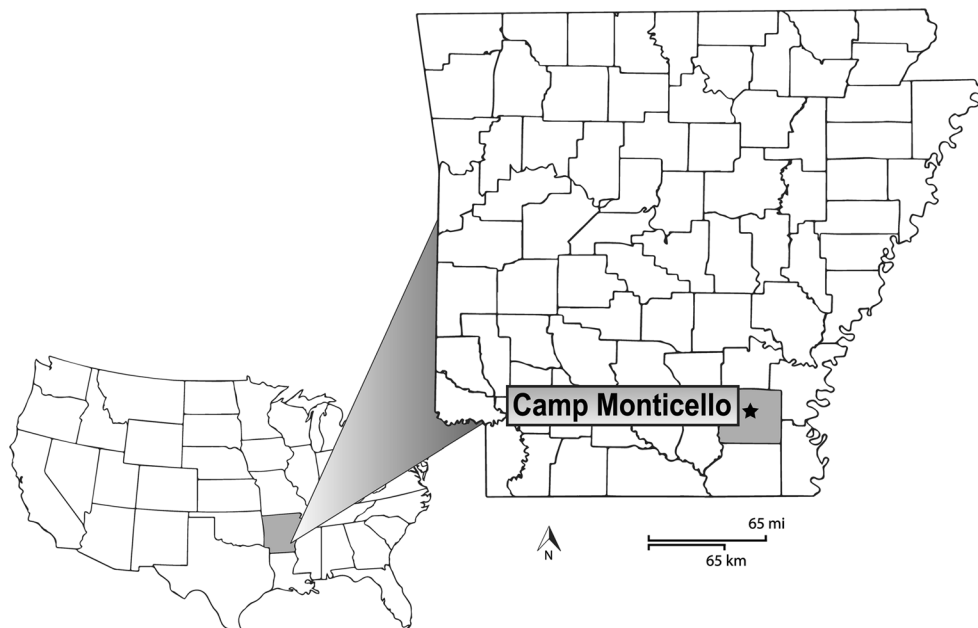


Fig. 2 Location of Camp Monticello in Arkansas. (Map by Rachel Tebbetts, 2018.)

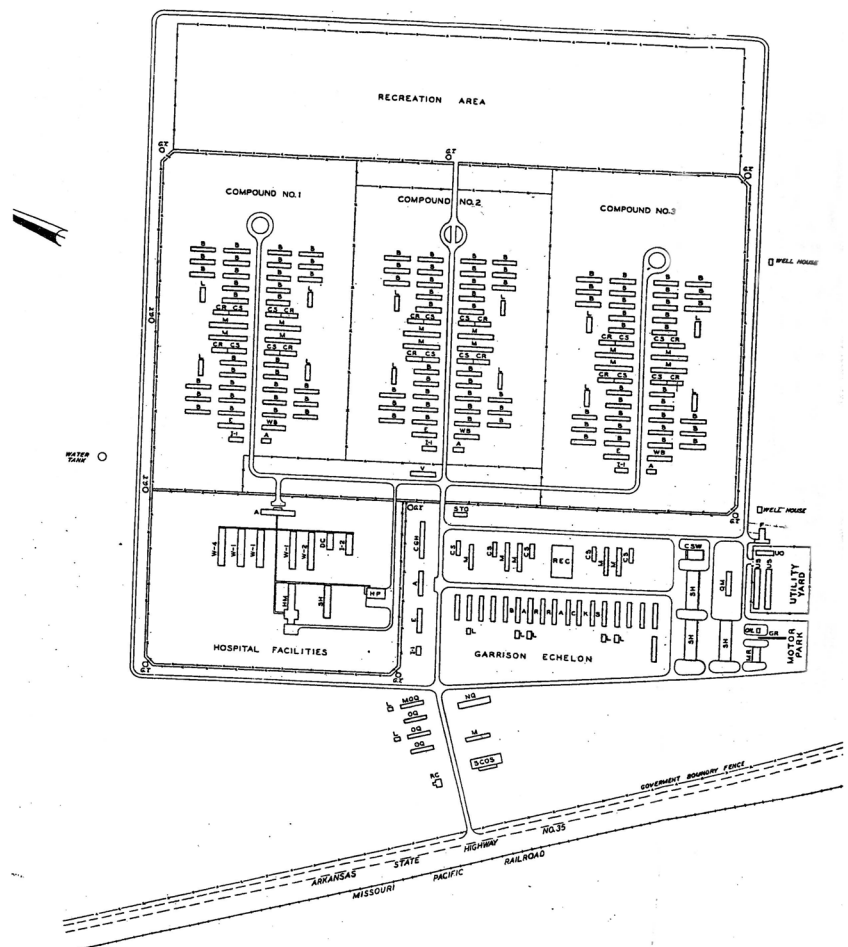
Local civic leaders, including Congressman William F. Norrell, a Monticello resident and state representative, played a role in influencing the decision to build the camp in Monticello. The corps of engineers conducted a survey and identified five potential sites for the camp. Despite the challenges of health conditions, labor, and electricity sources, 750 ac. were deemed a good location overall for the camp in 1942 (Bryan 1942b; Robins 1942). On 30 June, Congressman Norrell announced that the \$2,000,000 prisoner-of-war camp would be built in Monticello (*Advance Monticellonian* 1942; *Arkansas Gazette* 1942; Droessler 1999:6).

Following the Geneva Convention, the camp was planned according to the specifications of “the standard plan for three thousand man alien internment camps” (Bryan 1942a), with three compounds, hospital facilities, and a garrison echelon (Fig. 3). After a number of negotiations, the camp was expanded in 1943 with additional hospital facilities and two additional

compounds for officers and generals (Bryan 1943; Faulkner 1943; Owens 1943) (Figs. 4, 5). What happened to change the plans for the construction of Camp Monticello is unknown, but the compounds for generals and officers were unique (Shea 1988). The additions expanded the potential occupancy of the camp and included compounds specifically for generals and officers. The British captured much of the Italian high command at Tobruk and elsewhere in North Africa, and many of these officers were interned in Monticello.

The buildings were not designed to be permanent structures. They were temporary “war mobilization” structures designed to last 20 years (Waters 2006:8). Each of the barracks had wooden floors supported by beams that rested on concrete or brick piers. The other buildings—latrines, mess halls, offices, and common buildings—had cement foundations. All of the buildings, regardless of foundation type, had walls composed of wooden beams covered by black tar-paper and

Fig. 3 Plan map of Camp Monticello, 1942 (U.S. Engineers Office 1942).



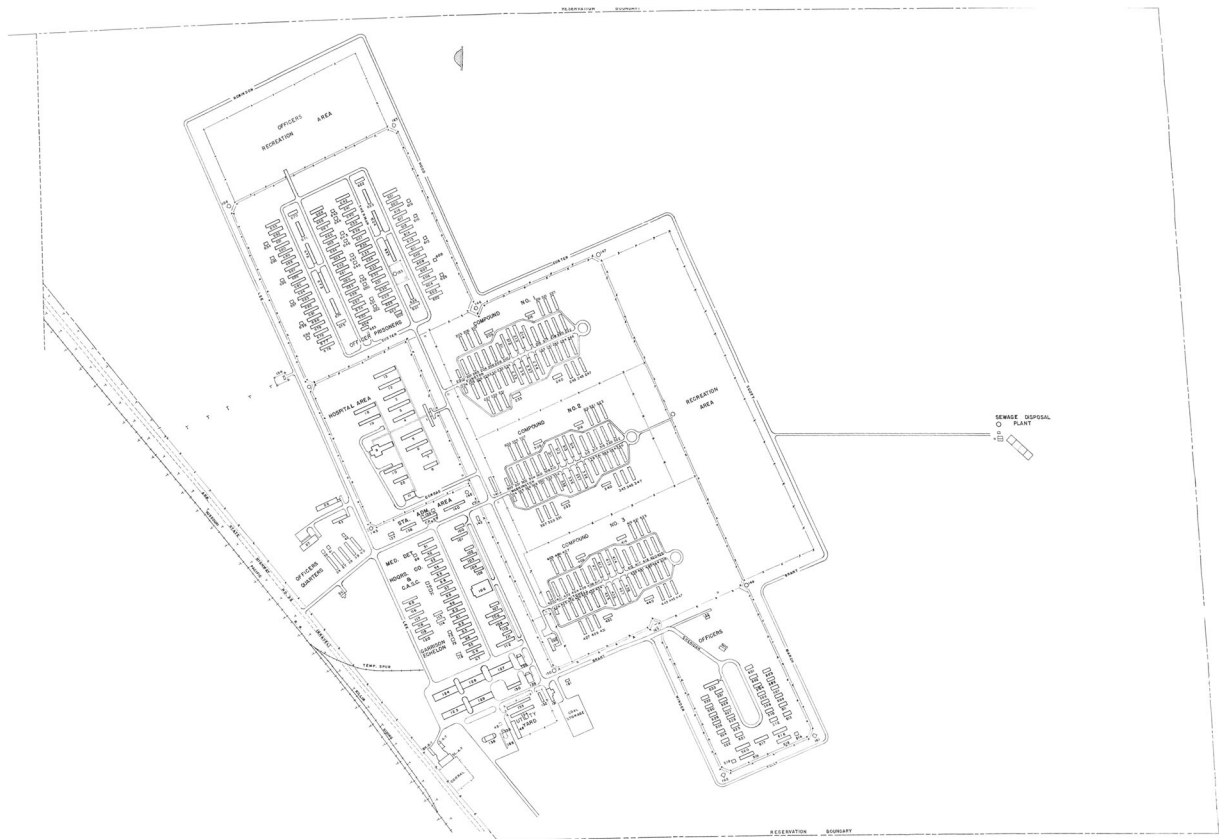


Fig. 4 Plan map of Camp Monticello with additional compounds and hospital buildings, 1943 (U.S. Engineers Office 1943).

asphalt roofs (Kriv 1991; Garner 1993; Waters 2006:8). A gravel-lined road bisected each compound. Fire hydrants lined the streets, and a drainage ditch ran parallel to them. Gravel and wooden pathways connected the barrack areas and other buildings, and narrow cement bridges spanned the drainage ditches (Waters 2006:8).

Meanwhile, in Italy, from June 1940 through May 1943, hundreds of thousands of Italians went to war (Keefer 1992). By the end of 1943, over 600,000 of those Italian soldiers had been taken prisoner, and, of those, 50,000 were brought to the United States as enemy prisoners of war (Keefer 1992; Kelly 2004). The Allies were not prepared to handle the enormous number of prisoners they had taken, most of whom were ill clothed, malnourished, and dirty (Keefer 1992:17). Prisoners awaited embarkation to the United States in huge holding camps outside Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca. The voyage was not pleasant; there was not “enough food, and the seas were rough” (Keefer 1992:33). They had motion sickness and “with coils of barbed wire blocking the stairways

between decks, and armed MPs,” they “remained below decks the entire trip” (Keefer 1992:33). Upon arrival in New York, Boston, or Norfolk, Virginia, doctors examined and deloused them, their clothes were fumigated, and then they were put on trains to camps across the country.

In 1943, these Italian POWs, the vast majority officers, begin to arrive at Camp Monticello (*Dermott News 1943b, 1943c*). According to Louis E. Keefer (1993:49), approximately 4% of the 50,000 Italian prisoners brought to the United States were non-commissioned officers and 7% were officers. Of the 1,850 men on Camp Monticello’s roster in 1944, there were 15 generals, 37 colonels, 29 lieutenant colonels, 51 majors, 77 captains, 297 first lieutenants, 413 second lieutenants, 522 non-commissioned officers, and 389 enlisted men (Smith 1994). Since there were so few enlisted men among the Italian POWs, military authorities did not believe it was necessary to construct a separate camp for them as was done with the German POWs (Metraux 1944; Smith 1994).

Fig. 5 Entrance to the Officers' Compound with the water tower in the background. (Photo courtesy Drew County Archives, Monticello, Arkansas, 1943–1945.)



Research at Camp Monticello

A synthesis of archaeological, documentary, and oral-history information yields insights that go far beyond what can be learned from any one of the sources by themselves. Historians have been interested in Camp Monticello since the 1970s. Around 1975, Michael Pomeroy began to research the history of the camp. His family owned portions of the land prior to the construction of the camp, and he grew up exploring the area. He and others have published articles about the camp (Pomeroy 1976, 1988; Shea 1988; Droessler 1999). Pomeroy and Bill Shea conducted oral-history interviews with local people. In addition, Pomeroy has researched the locations in which photographs at the camp were taken, based on building numbers and accounts from people who worked and were imprisoned there (Pomeroy 2011).

Beginning in 2013, I conducted new research on an 80 ac. tract of Camp Monticello (Barnes 2014). My work built upon the previous research and consisted of archival searches, total-station mapping, metal detecting, and shovel testing. Archival research was

conducted at the University of Arkansas at Monticello Library, the Drew County Archives, the Arkansas History Commission and State Archives, Special Collections at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. This resulted in newspaper articles, a number of site-survey, labor, and camp-inspection reports, letters regarding the transfer of POWs to and from Camp Monticello, menus, clothing and equipment records, and other relevant documents.

The building foundations and other aboveground features at the site were mapped with a total station. The precise locations of the corners of all of the buildings, interior walls, and visible piping were recorded. These points were compared with existing maps of the camp to identify the function and use of the buildings (Barnes 2014, 2016).

Metal detecting is an important component of the archaeology of military sites in general (Geier et al. 2010), and research on POW camps ranging from the Civil War to World War II utilizes the metal detectors. Students and volunteers with the Arkansas Archeological Society helped with all aspects of the

fieldwork. The metal-detector survey focused on the Officers' Compound and Compound 1 at Camp Monticello. In sections of the camp tracts of land 10 m in width were flagged, and the area was thoroughly walked and metal detected. Each positive metal-detector hit was bagged and tagged by provenience, and the location was recorded with a global-positioning system (GPS) unit. In the Officers' Compound, hundreds of nails were recovered around the barracks. After the third 10 m transect, the metal-detector settings were changed to discriminate against wire nails. Nails were still recovered, but this allowed the team to focus on artifacts that might provide additional information about the lives of the POWs. The metal-detector survey identified distinct patterns in the distribution of artifacts that can provide insight into the variations in use of different areas of the camp and the behavior of its occupants (Sivilich 1996; Waters 2006).

In Compound 1, less artifactual material was recovered from the metal-detector survey. In comparison to areas around the latrines and between the barracks in the Officers' Compound, there were considerably fewer positive hits. Ten shovel test pits were excavated on the north side of the compound to determine whether there was a sampling error. Six of the shovel test pits were positive; all of the artifacts in the positive shovel test pits were nails.

All of the data from the total-station mapping, metal-detector survey, and shovel pit testing was uploaded to Surfer and ArcGIS to analyze the spatial distribution of aboveground foundations and features, as well as that of the artifacts recovered below the surface. The work resulted in 957 artifacts and a plethora of spatial information about the camp's construction and layout, as well as about everyday life at the camp. All of the artifacts were categorized by functional classifications (Table 1).

Over 77% of the assemblage was classified as "Architectural." This includes nails, tacks with the tar paper still attached, hinges, springs for doors, and other hardware. Wire nails, which varied in size from 2d to 60d, were the predominate artifact recovered. Conductors and electrical wire were also recorded in this category. The "Institutional" category includes ammunition, barbed wire, and other items provided by the institution, such as a U.S.-issued identification tag. "Foodways" includes kitchen utensils, a cast-iron pot base, knife handles, a canning-jar lid, tin cans, and larger glass-jar fragments. Buttons, buckles, and shoe eyelets, along with cologne or hair-tonic bottles, toothpaste and

shaving-cream tubes, and a comb fragment comprise the "Personal/clothing" category. The "Unidentified" category includes metal artifacts that have not been identified and whose functions are unknown. These groupings provide a way to look at the distribution of artifacts across the site and, combined with documentary and oral-history accounts, provide insight into the rituals and daily routines of the Italian POWs.

Rituals of Cooperation at Camp Monticello

The first train pulled up to the station at Killin on 12 August 1943. The POWs were moved through the town-like camp with buildings arranged in grid layouts and bounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers with machine guns. They were processed through the supply houses, passing the U.S. officers' quarters, the administration area, the garrison echelon, and the hospital facilities, and then housed in one of the three enlisted men's compounds or the officers' or generals' compounds, depending upon rank (Fig. 4). They arrived in rural Arkansas with their war-torn clothing and equipment after months and sometimes years at war. The men came from different parts of Italy and had diverse class positions with varied life experiences (Calamandrei 2001; Crociani and Battistelli 2013), yet they shared military and Italian cultures.

Military culture, or the cultural and behavioral norms for military personnel, is composed of distinct elements: discipline, professional ethos, ceremonies and etiquette, and esprit de corps and cohesion (Burk 1999:448).

Table 1 Functional classification of artifacts by percentage

Functional Category	Artifact Types	Percentage
Architectural	Nails, tacks, hinges, springs for doors, and other hardware	77%
Institutional	Ammunition, barbed wire, and other items provided by the institution	5%
Foodways	Kitchen utensils, a cast-iron pot base, cast-iron handles, a canning-jar lid, tin cans, glass jar fragments	6%
Personal/clothing	Cologne or hair-tonic bottles, toothpaste and shaving-cream tubes, a comb fragment, buttons, buckles, and shoe eyelets	4%
Unidentified	Unidentified artifacts	8%

These facets of military life involve ritual and togetherness (Sennett 2012), and begin at a young age. Military training in Italy started well before the year of duty; beginning in 1932, young males joined the fascist youth organization, or the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* (Italian youth of the lictor), at eight (Crociani and Battistelli 2013:20). Although it was limited mostly to weekly meetings, the youth organization provided pre-military training. Lessons in military theory were given at school between the ages of 13 and 18 (Crociani and Battistelli 2013:20). Once they joined or were drafted into the military, soldiers undertook a series of drills and exercises daily. The labor, drills, and long marches kept them fit, taught them how to work in a group, and instilled discipline (Crociani and Battistelli 2013:20).

The officers in command prescribe discipline, or the orderly conduct of military personnel, individually, in formation, in battle, and in the garrison through ritual behavior (Burk 1999:448). Before arriving at Camp Monticello, the Italian military men had achieved a high level of discipline through instruction and repetitive drill that made desired actions a matter of habit (Burk 1999:448). The large number of officers who arrived at Camp Monticello had instructed, drilled, and commanded soldiers to work together in battle. At Camp Monticello, the rituals of discipline continued. The POWs lined up twice a day, once at reveille (6:30 AM) and again at retreat (5:10 PM), to be counted by the U.S. military personnel.

At war, a gulf divided Italian officers and soldiers. In a society still largely rural and characterized by a rigid class system, those who had had the chance to become officers were either part of the urban middle to upper classes or they belonged to the gentry and, as such, had very little in common with their soldiers. In most cases, the soldiers came from rural areas that experienced varying degrees of poverty and illiteracy, as many men spoke and understood only local dialects (Crociani and Battistelli 2013:34). Italian officers were often accused of showing little, if any, interest in their subordinates. Despite this gulf, Crociani and Battistelli (2013:38) note that, after the battle of El Alamein in December 1942, Italian soldiers were shaken by the defeat and retreat, but those who managed to withdraw still showed confidence and willingness to fight, thanks mostly to their *esprit de corps*. *Esprit de corps* refers to the commitment and pride soldiers take in the larger military establishment to which their immediate unit belongs (Burk 1999).

In spite of all the weakness of its army, from the lack of adequate weapons to the lack of training, the poor command and leadership, and an overall shortage of equipment and supplies, the Italian soldier would nevertheless keep fighting, all too often in conditions that soldiers belonging to other armies would have considered unacceptable. (Crociani and Battistelli 2013:56)

The feelings of identity and comradeship, or the military cohesion, displayed by the Italian soldiers were an outgrowth of face-to-face or primary group relations (Burk 1999). Despite the differences, the POWs formed a cohesive group because they had been oriented to shared goals and to the communal means of achieving them through the collective practice of training and battle. Training and months of war had instilled a professional ethos, or normative code of conduct, that they shared (King 2006). At Camp Monticello, this social cohesion was maintained by the informal social interactions in which bonds of comradeship are forged. As soldiers, and later POWs, the men were motivated by a desire for honor and a fear of shame in front of their peers.

Ceremonies and etiquette are the most visible manifestation of military culture. Salutes, uniforms, ribbons, and medals are institutional imperatives to acknowledge lawful authority, control or mask anxiety, affirm solidarity, and celebrate the unit or individual (Burk 1999). Ceremonies structure interaction and help forge a common identity. They connect the military to the nation and the society that it serves (Burk 1999). Etiquette guides or controls interpersonal behavior between soldiers of different rank or military status (Burk 1999). Both play an important role in establishing the distinctiveness of military service, socializing military members into service, and reinforcing military values (Burk 1999). Archaeologically, evidence of the informal masculine rituals, such as “banter” about sexual exploits that often occur, is not seen, but the efforts to maintain the ceremony and etiquette have been observed archaeologically at Camp Hearne and Riding Mountain (Waters 2006; Myers 2013), and can be seen in the historical documents at Camp Monticello. For instance, when G. S. Metraux wrote about the POWs clothing, he noted:

The prisoners have American clothes at their disposal. The Italian uniforms of the officers are in rather bad condition. Many of their insignia are lost but one of the prisoners, who is clever at

manual work, makes bars and stars in a very ingenious way. (Metraux 1944)

The compounds at Camp Monticello were segregated by rank, so the POWs maintained their professional ethos and structures of social interaction. General Mario Bartolini and General Luigi Guarini were appointed spokespersons for all the POWs (Faulkner 1943). In addition, each sector of the camp had a spokesperson. For instance, in October of 1944, General Ferdinando Cana was the spokesperson for the 56 generals and Colonel Pietro Ingargiola was the spokesperson for 893 officers. Sergeant Benedetto Plumeri was the spokesperson for 464 non-commissioned officers and Luigi Filiponi was the spokesperson for 431 privates (Metraux 1944). The spokesperson communicated the POWs' concerns up the chain of command to the Red Cross representatives and U.S. military personnel.

In 1944, Colonel Bals replaced Colonel Brown (*Advance Monticellonian* 1944b). Upon his arrival, Colonel Bals initiated a tightening up of discipline. He thought the camp had been far too leniently run, and he inaugurated much more supervision. He made it a policy not to enter the compounds and rarely or never came into contact with the prisoners of war (Roth and Eberhardt 1944). The POWs' camp spokesperson informed Dr. Roth, a Swiss representative who toured the camp multiple times, that the former good feeling that had existed between the Americans and the prisoners of war was disappearing rapidly (Roth and Eberhardt 1944). The POWs and the Red Cross representative used military procedure to protest the treatment. Roth's report was submitted to the commanding general of the prisoner-of-war division (Edwards 1944), and by April Colonel Bals had been transferred to Camp Hood in Texas (*Advance Monticellonian* 1944a).



Fig. 6 A dog tag issued to Angelo Balestri, recovered in the Officers' Compound. (Photo by author, 2014.)

Upon arrival, the Italian POWs quickly developed daily rituals and routines. They established what Sennett (2012:90) terms a “pattern of experience” that can be seen archaeologically in the documents and material culture. These rituals were not gigantic in scale, but they resulted from repetition. Barbed wire and guard towers with machine guns limited their movement. Most of the prisoners were awakened between 5:30 and 6:00 AM. They lined up to be counted at reveille, after which they were served breakfast. Lunch was provided around noon. They lined up again at retreat, and dinner was served around 7 PM. Barrack “lights out” was at 9:30 PM. All lights, except those in the latrines, on the exterior of the buildings, streetlights, and those on the fence were turned off at 11 PM. Because of this strict schedule, the POWs' routines varied little (Waters 2006:23; Myers 2013). From such a routine there is a kind of “muscular bonding” that arises from the practice of lining up and being counted, or marching together in time, that is not very different from the bonding that occurs among people enacting a common religious ritual (McNeil 1995).

These routines became a part of the POWs' habits that can be seen in the archaeological as well as the historical record as they moved between the barracks to the latrines, to the mess hall, and to the recreation areas. The POWs created “domestic spaces” in which they slept, ate, bathed, prayed, and spent their leisure time (Avery and Garrow 2013). A majority of the clothing, personal, and military artifacts were recovered between the barracks and the latrines. One of these military items is an identification tag issued by the U.S. to an Italian POW (Fig. 6). The tag includes the POW's name, an identification number (8W151552), and a “C” in the bottom corner that refers to religion, i.e., Catholic. The “8” in the identification number refers to the prisoner having been captured in North Africa, and the “W” refers to “Western Allies,” meaning that either U.S. or British troops made the capture or accepted the surrender. The “I” refers to “Italian.” The remaining numerals refer to the rank of the prisoner of war at the time of capture, determining his treatment as an officer or enlisted person, as the duties expected of a POW varied with rank. Other military artifacts included a buckle for a rucksack and four-hole deep-dish buttons and a grommet from a shelter quarter/poncho. The dog tag is an important artifact, as it helps in imagining a real person—Angelo Balestri, a second lieutenant, living in the Officers' Compound at Camp Monticello, walking from

Fig. 7 Unidentified POWs with the compounds in the background. (Photo courtesy Drew County Archives, Monticello, Arkansas, 1943–1945.)



the barracks to the latrine every day, most likely carrying a bag with his clothing and other personal items.

The metal-detector survey also located a brass buckle, buttons, and eyelets from a POW's leather boot. Inspection reports indicate that prisoners had American clothing, and historical photographs show men in cotton undershirts or khaki button-up shirts, adapting their wardrobe to the heat of an Arkansas summer (Fig. 7). The rucksack that the POW carried back and forth to the latrine would have also held a number of personal items similar to the artifacts recovered, such as cologne or hair-tonic bottles and Burma Shave, Barbasol, and Ipani-toothpaste tubes (Fig. 8). All of these items were likely purchased at the PX, or personal exchange, within their compound and reflect the everyday routines of the POW—walking from the barracks to the latrine, with personal items in tow, showering, shaving, brushing his teeth, and combing his hair.

From Mess Hall to Lumber Company: Work Inside and Outside Camp Monticello

America's growing number of POWs proved an invaluable new source of labor for a nation that was

Fig. 8 An example of the personal items recovered in the Officers' Compound. (Photo by author, 2014.)

drained of manpower (Keefer 1992:59). Under the terms of the Geneva Convention, prisoners received a monthly allowance depending upon their rank, and those with the rank of private were required to work. Prisoners with the rank of corporal or sergeant could be required to work as supervisors, and officers were exempt from work assignments (Keefer 1992; Waters 2006:51). The POWs who were required to work were obligated to perform "Class 1" labor, or regular chores around the camp, such as keeping the barracks and grounds clean (Waters 2006:23). POWs were disciplined for refusing to perform. At Camp Monticello, 11 POWs were placed on a restricted diet for 14 days and refused canteen privileges (Roth and Eberhardt 1944).

Some POWs opted to escape the boredom of camp routine and worked outside the camp on farms or with timber companies. All work outside the compounds performed for private employers was voluntary. Employers contracted to pay the U.S. government at prevailing labor rates for the prisoner services. Plans to use POWs as farmworkers were made prior to their arrival (*Dermott News* 1943a), specifically for rice farming in Stuttgart, Arkansas (Faulkner 1943), and continued throughout their confinement, with 200



Fig. 9 An example of the foodways artifacts recovered in the Officers' Compound. (Photo by author, 2014.)



Italian POWs going to work on farms near Dermott (*Dermott News* 1944). In the immediate vicinity of Monticello there was no need for farm labor, but there were requests for labor with timber companies (Faulkner 1943). In 1944, 1,899 POWs were working in the camp, and 2,354 POWs were working in agriculture and forestry (Carroll 1944) with companies such as the Ozark Badger Lumber Company (War Manpower Commission 1945).

Within the camp, a number of POWs worked in the hospital (Faulkner 1943). Others worked on grounds and roads, motor maintenance, or in the mess halls, canteens, or PXs. These jobs filled their days, but also allowed the POWs to make changes in the camp that fit their cultural traditions.

“At the outset, the food they were served was unlike anything they knew. They got things like hot dogs and corn, and then the Americans brought in containers of jello for dessert” (Keefer 1992:52). A 1944 labor report indicates that 435 prisoners of war worked in the enlisted men’s or the officers’ mess halls (Carroll 1944). The staffing of the mess halls with Italian men improved their meals. As

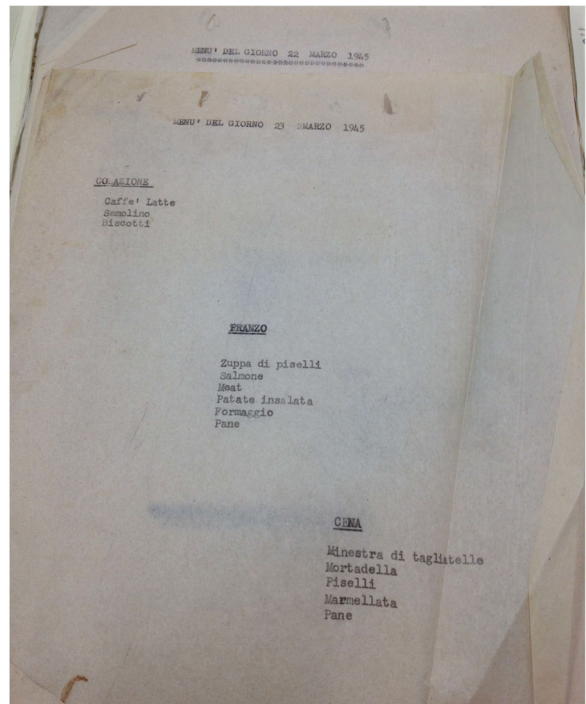
Metraux (1944) reports: “Prisoners prepare their own food the way they want it. We have the opportunity of dining with them, and have found the meal very appetizing.”

Archaeologically, foodways can be seen in the base of a cast-iron skillet, pan handles, knife handles, spoons, canning jars, and whiteware or restaurant-ware dishes that the POWs may have dined upon (Figs. 9, 10). Garden tools and tractors were made available for the establishment of a large garden (Faulkner 1943). Shopping lists provide information about the ingredients that were being grown or purchased (Office of the Provost Marshal General 1942–1947), and menus show that Italian meals—caffè latte, *minestra de tagliatelle*, and biscotti—were being prepared and served (Office of the Provost Marshal General 1945) (Fig. 11). The artifacts, combined with historical documents, show that the POWs were working together to grow their own vegetables, to prepare traditional Italian meals, and maybe even to can tomatoes or other vegetables, as indicated by the recovered canning jar, making life in the camp more comfortable overall.

Fig. 10 Whiteware, or restaurant-ware, dishes recovered in a trash midden. (Photo by author, 2014.)



Fig. 11 Menu from Camp Monticello (Office of the Provost Marshall General 1945).



“Madonna del Prigioniero Prega per Noi”: Religion at Camp Monticello

Religion was an important component of life in Camp Monticello. A majority of the POWs were Roman Catholic; therefore, each compound had a chapel, and Mass was said almost every day (Metraux 1944; Roth and Eberhardt 1944; Axberg 1945; Stoltzfus 1945). In Compound 2, only the concrete base of the Madonna and the asbestos-tile floor remain from the grotto. But, the structure, made of packing boxes and pieces of scrap lumber, was a ritual space and a reminder of home (Fig. 1). It was a place for the POWs to come together to pray and practice their religion daily.

Its presence also highlights the intimate connection between the POWs and the U.S. military personnel. What were the procedures and protocols for acquiring the space and gaining access to materials for its construction? How did requests move up the chain of command? Who made the plans? What did the social networks of cooperation look like? The answers to these questions are unknown, but the grotto symbolizes the POWs’ creative use of everyday items and the rituals of cooperation required to maintain their cultural traditions.

Novel Things Made out of Wood, Stone, Cement, and Metal: Leisure in the Camp

Article 17 of the Geneva Convention states: “So far as possible, belligerents shall encourage intellectual diversions and sports organizations by prisoners of war” (Waters 2006:27). Since the majority of prisoners at Camp Monticello were officers and exempt from work assignments, athletics and recreational activities were important to alleviate the boredom of daily life. Football was an important ritual at the camp, as it was in Italian life more generally (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1997; Archambault 2006). At Camp Monticello, in addition to football, the POWs competed in tennis and boccie matches regularly (Metraux 1944; Roth and Eberhardt 1944; Axberg 1945). Competition occurs within commonly accepted conventions and rules that require cooperation (Sennett 2012); therefore, these football and boccie matches were another example of the rituals of cooperation within the camp.

Other intellectual diversions and rituals of cooperation included films, theater, music, classes, and other creative endeavors. A film was shown once a week at the theater in the Garrison Echelon (Metraux 1944). Theater was also popular (Roth and Eberhardt 1944); the POWs wrote their own plays (Stoltzfus 1945). They also formed an



Fig. 12 German POWs building a rock castle at Camp Robinson in Arkansas. (Photo courtesy Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock, 1943–1945.)

orchestra, which performed in a converted barracks used as a concert hall (Metraux 1944; Axberg 1945).

The camp had a library with books in Italian and English. Most of the officers were well educated, but not necessarily English speaking. The average soldier was neither. Many of the POWs could neither read nor write when they arrived (Axberg 1945; Keefer 1993). “The officer’s g[a]ve elementary lessons on various subjects” (Schnyder 1943). For some, the camp became a place to further their education. They had classes in mathematics, economics, English, and Italian. These classes encouraged cooperation across boundaries of class and rank.

Fig. 13 Galvanized metal with etchings from the Officers’ Compound. (Photo by Jane Kellett, 2015.)

The POWs also made novel things out of wood, stone, cement, and metal (Stoltzfus 1945). P. Schnyder, from the Swiss Legation of the International Red Cross, visited the camp in 1943 during an exhibition of paintings and sculptures created by the prisoners. People from the neighborhood were invited. He describes the landscapes and portraits as particularly good, but he was most impressed with the miniature models of warships, the officers’ barracks, and Santa Luca Church near Bologna (Schnyder 1943). Excavations and archival research at POW camps have shown that POWs attempted to regain some of their individuality through acquisition or creation of personal or unique items; e.g.,



Fig. 14 Carving donated to the University of Arkansas at Monticello Research Station by a former guard at Camp Monticello. (Photo by Katy Gregory, 2015.)



Buchner and Albertson (2005), Waters (2006), and Myers (2013) (Fig. 12).

At Camp Monticello, reports indicate that the prisoners also decorated some of the chinaware in the mess halls (Schnyder 1943) and created an enclosure for birds in captivity (Axberg 1945). The grotto is an example of these creative endeavors. In addition, a piece of galvanized metal with etchings was recovered from the metal-detector survey in the Officers' Compound (Fig. 13), and a former guard donated a wood carving that was given to him by a POW (Fig. 14). The piece of scrap metal, the wood carving, and the chapel demonstrate the creativity and the rituals of cooperation that continued at Camp Monticello.

Rituals of Cooperation: An Intimate Archaeology of World War II

Archaeological research at Camp Monticello has revealed intimate information about the everyday routines of the POWs and the ways in which they were spending their time—working, attending Mass, preparing Italian meals, creating art, and building community. It also shows the ways the POWs were maintaining Italian military traditions through rituals of cooperation. The creative endeavors, like the grotto and the preparation of Italian meals, were not just the work of individuals. These activities required cooperation. The U.S. personnel provided access to materials and ingredients. They also permitted the POWs to modify the landscape, paint the dinnerware, and work together. By working together to create tasty meals and experiencing the grotto as a site of ritual interaction, the prisoners of war were creating and recreating community.

Sennett (2012) argues that modern society has weakened cooperation in distinctive ways, ranging from inequality to labor practices. I agree. Yet, cooperation is key to archaeological research. Although one person could excavate and analyze a site alone, a project is richer with the involvement of people with varied experience and knowledge. In the spring of 2015, Silvia Bizio and her son Matteo Borgardt visited Camp Monticello (Bizio, this issue). Her father was a prisoner of war at the camp. For her, the POW camp represents a personal family story. Archaeologists working with the more distant past can more easily forget that living people are connected to the sites studied here. And it is not too often that an archaeological report can make someone cry, but Bizio provides a reminder that archaeology is personal, that things like chairs or cologne bottles are meaningful, and that we archaeologists have an obligation to tell stories that show what the lives of the people we study were like. The practice of archaeology at Camp Monticello has brought descendants, students, members of the Arkansas Archeological Society, and local people together. This is cooperation and community.

For Silvia Bizio, imagining what her father's daily life might have been like became more vivid with the artifacts reflecting everyday life in the camp. The menus, including *caffè latte* and *biscotti*, the everyday things, and the presence of handmade and personalized items, like the chapel or the etching on the scrap of metal, demonstrate the ways in which camp inmates attempted to regain some of their individuality while working together to build community and maintain their Italian culture. This research demonstrates that the POWs' capacities for cooperation were far greater

and more complex than would have been expected at a prisoner-of-war camp. Descendants and other stakeholders have expanded the rituals of cooperation in the archaeological practice described here to reveal intimate information about the community life of the POWs at Camp Monticello.

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