

Historical Archaeologies of Overseas Chinese Laborers on the First Transcontinental Railroad

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## ABSTRACT

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John Molenda

This dissertation relies on anthropological, historical, and archaeological research in order to describe the historical archaeologies associated with Chinese immigrants to the United States who worked on the first transcontinental railroad in the mid-nineteenth century. The region of focus in the High Sierras region to the west of Truckee, California, in and around the Tahoe National Forest.

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Dedicated to  
Yuan and Oscar

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

### Introduction

This dissertation focuses on exploring the lives of the Chinese laborers who built the first transcontinental railroad across the North American continent, linking the east and west coasts of the United States. The introduction of Chinese laborers to the construction of the railroad is recorded in *High Road to Promontory* (Kraus: 1969). Kraus states that, “in 1865 nothing was scarcer in California than labor. Such Caucasians as were not employed on ventures of their own found it more profitable to work in the mines or fellow agricultural pursuits than to face the hardships of hand-carving a railroad right-of-way up the steep slopes and between the granite spires of the Sierra. At the same time, many thousands of Chinese had been drawn to California by gold fever, and were eager for employment” (Kraus 1969:110). Starting with fifty men, the work force of Chinese rapidly expanded until they made up a majority of the workers involved in the construction of the railroad. Yet, while the construction of the railroad would have been impossible without their participation, little is said in the histories about the lives of these workers. They appear on the scene as supporting players or even mere instruments of men like Charles Crocker, who directed the construction. These histories are shaped by the testimonies of the Euro-American supervisors who directed the construction, and their emphasis is on the railroad itself and its importance in the American enterprise. The lack of extant textual materials attributed to the Chinese workers involved makes it difficult to reorient these histories away from such emphasis. This is where historical archaeology has the potential to make a distinctive contribution to our understanding of these events.

If one visits the work camps occupied by the laborers who built the railroad and examines the material culture recovered from them rather than focusing on the commentaries, testimonies,

and records of Euro-American supervisors, a new perspective becomes possible. The material culture associated with these work camps is starkly different from that left behind by European-descended laborers on contemporaneous work camps in the United States. These assemblages, such as the Evans and Chace Collection, and Costello Collection, associated with Summit Camp (CA-PLA-2002/H), are dominated by products imported into the United States from China for use by the Chinese-American workers building the railroad. If one takes the material from these work camps as a starting point, the story of the railroad is no longer focused on decisions made by businessmen, politicians, and engineers directing the construction but instead emphasizes the thousands of workers who actually carried out the construction. Thus, archaeology can provide a valuable supplement and corrective to textual histories.

What was life like for the Chinese laborers whose hands carved the rock and laid the grade for the railroad? What can the materials they left behind tell us about the lives they lived in the work camps, how they spent their money, and how they forged social bonds with one another? What cultural and material resources did they draw upon to survive and thrive in a culturally and physically hostile landscape? What can the broken remains of storage containers, rice bowls, and other detritus tell us about the daily activities, desires, and even beliefs of a group of people who left behind virtually nothing written in their own words? In order to help make such histories possible, this dissertation engages with several distinct sources of data, including previously collected archaeological assemblages (such as the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections) and reports (e.g. Baxter and Allen 2008, Gralia and Gralia 2004), primary and secondary historical documents connected to the railroad (such as congressional testimony and payrolls), and anthropological and historic texts.

When first beginning research on Chinese labor camps associated with the transcontinental, I anticipated first finding previously unrecorded work camp sites via pedestrian survey, which would then be subsequently excavated and recorded systematically, capped with laboratory analysis of the artifacts recovered. This is the 'platonic ideal' of an original archaeological project, where each stage of data collection and analysis would be initiated by the researcher, and the entire process organized by directed in a step-by-step process. Such expectations quickly proved to be impractical as previously unrecorded sites of any significance proved difficult to identify. While hypothetico-deductive research design is the gold standard in the scientific community, including among many archaeologists, the material record often proves stubbornly unwilling to reorient itself to accommodate particular research questions. As a result, the focus of this research project shifted during the course of fieldwork towards the synthesis of and building-upon of the work of previous archaeologists and historians. The goals of my fieldwork shifted from putting my stamp on a totally independent and new excavation and analysis towards asking what the state of previous research was and what pragmatic steps could be taken to build upon it. While the findings of my research retain a significant level of indeterminacy in the hypothetico-deductive sense, my fieldwork and research make several distinct contributions discussed as follows.

First, I have produced a catalog and photographic record of the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections associated with Summit Camp and have made these records available to the relevant stakeholders (via the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC)) as well as other researchers (e.g. Heffner). The Evans/Chace collection has been the source for several previous archaeological publications (e.g. Chace and Evans 1969, Etter 1980), but no complete catalog of the entire collection was extant. The publication and dissemination of this data will allow other researchers to use the collection as a reference point for their own studies of Chinese-American life in the nineteenth century, even without physically travelling to the



CHSSC. In addition to producing a database for research purposes, my work with the Evans/Chace Collection also had a preservation component. When I gained extended access to the collection in 2015, it was largely disorganized and in a state of disrepair. The means of curation employed by Evans and Chace over fifty years ago had begun to degrade, and the paper bags many artifacts were stored in were disintegrating. As a result, the provenience of artifacts was being lost. In addition to creating a record of the collection, I improved its curation by replacing the paper storage bags with clearly marked bags and tags that will make it possible for future researchers to access the collection and use it for research purposes, and provided access to both the collection and photographic record to the CHSSC.

Second, I have also produced a catalog and photographic record of the Costello Collection, a previously undocumented collection from Summit Camp gathered in the 1980s. Along with the Evans/Chace collection, these Summit Camp collections represent the largest assemblage of artifacts associated with a transcontinental work camp occupied by Chinese-American laborers, at least as far as the author is aware. While these results have already been shared informally with other members of the archaeological community, this dissertation represents the first publication of the contents of this collection. Prior reports on Summit Camp were produced without the benefit of this data, limiting the interpretive claims that could be made about the site. By combining the data from the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections, this dissertation presents a more complete picture of the material assemblage associated with Summit Camp than has previously been possible.

In addition to merely recording and curating these collections, I have done comparisons of the ceramic types recorded in order to determine the relative prevalence and distribution of different wares among the Chinese laborers. These include looking at the relative frequency of Double Happiness and Bamboo styles for temporally diagnostic purposes, the presence and

frequency of more expensive Wintergreen/Celadon and Four Seasons wares, and the use of ceramics of non-Chinese origin (primarily Whiteware). I have also noted what procedures remain undone and have the potential to answer research questions in the future, including a more detailed accounting and systematic profile of vessel types (particularly with Brown-Glazed Stoneware), analysis of base marks on Double Happiness, Bamboo, and Wintergreen/Celadon vessels, systematically establishing minimum number of items (MNIs), and the evaluation of various idiosyncrasies and irregularities in paste, body, and decoration in order to produce more detailed typologies.

Third, I have established the spatial distribution and associated features of these collections by correlating the field maps associated with the Evans/Chace and Costello collections with the sites and loci described in the archaeological literature on Summit Camp, particularly the Summit Camp Evaluation report by Baxter and Allen (2008), and the assessment of three 'satellite' camps to the east of the main camp by Arrigoni et al. (2013), which synthesize prior research on the sites (e.g. Bennet and Lindstrom 1999, Bennett et al. 1997, Lindstrom et al. 1999, Sutherland and Harper 1990), and describe the location of structures, hearths, and artifact scatters associated with the camps.

Fourth, have drawn upon previously published summaries of archaeological publications on Overseas Chinese/Chinese-American sites in order to produce an introduction to the subfield from the 1960s to 2015. This review (Chapter 4) is hardly the first to summarize and evaluate research in the sub-field (previous reviews include Greenwood 1993, Orser 2004, Ross 2013b, Voss 2005, and Voss and Allen 2008), but it does expand on the number of projects discussed, both in the early period of the sub-discipline in the 1960s and 1970s and into more current research (up to about 2015). It is my hope that this chapter will be useful to new researchers who are interested in doing research on Overseas Chinese communities and will provide an

adequate introduction to the major findings, themes, and researchers who have shaped the field. Over the course of my dissertation research, many of the documents I tracked down by visiting archives, libraries, and historical societies have become more readily available, and this summary should provide a good idea of what resources from the pre-digital era are extant.

Fifth, I have expanded the number and quality of references regarding the point-of-origin of the Chinese laborers along the transcontinental railroad by references histories and ethnographies from nineteenth and twentieth century China that have not yet been referred to in the archaeological literature on Chinese-American sites (e.g. Marks 1998). These references should help future researchers better ground their research in the historical and cultural particularities of life in China and among its transnational networks. The content of this effort is of course derivative and dependent upon the research of the historians and anthropologists who produced the original analyses. My contribution is merely in assembling this research in order to highlight important aspects of Chinese culture for archaeological interpretation. Nonetheless, it is my hope that by presenting, explaining, and analyzing these documents to the archaeological community, other researchers will be able to expand their understanding of the uniqueness of Chinese experiences in North America in order to better inform their interpretations.

Sixth, I have attempted to rehabilitate *feng shui* as a useful archaeological concept by translating its sense into terms legible to the Western intellectual tradition in which the discipline of archaeology originated. In order to do so, I have again drawn on the work of prior researchers. My contribution here is merely to use the comparative method to look at several distinct aspects of spatiality (in landscape depictions, formal architecture, mortuary practices, and ceramic decorations) in order to both provide a philosophic apology for *feng shui* and to suggest how archaeologists might think through the concept when dealing with Chinese-American artifacts and sites.

Seventh, I have built upon the comparative method used by Williams (2008) to develop an understanding of personhood in Chinese contexts. Personhood has been a concept used by many archaeologists (e.g. Fowler 2004) to interpret archaeological sites and in turn put our own cultural preconceptions regarding subjectivity into question. My contribution is to propose this framework as a useful way of thinking through Chinese-American archaeological sites in order to avoid reproducing anachronistic and ana-cultural interpretations in favor of interpreting archaeological assemblages as connected to the production of particular kinds of selves. The contrast between the form and understanding of personhood expressed by Euro-American supervisors (in this case, Charles Crocker) and that consistent with Chinese understandings has not been previously discussed in the archaeological literature and represents a unique contribution into the theoretical development of the subfield.

Finally, I have conducted initial testing of the 'China Kitchen' site (Tahoe National Forest #05-17-55-525), originally recorded by Gralia and Gralia (2004). In addition to mapping and photographing the site in greater resolution and detail, I have taken soil samples and conducted metal detection across the site. These minimally ground-disturbing tests have not produced a large collection that can be analyzed, such as the Summit Camp collections, but rather have identified the potential of different sections of the site for future research. My findings, in particular via metal detection, suggest 'China Kitchen', in contrast to the largely deflated and disturbed Summit Camp, may possess intact deposits dating to the construction of the transcontinental railroad, enabling fine-grained mapping of artifact distributions that could lead to a better understanding of what activities took place in different areas of the work camp. Again, this research is dependent on and in debt to the work of previous archaeologists, but does represent new contributions which in turn will enable and inform future archaeological research on the site.

In summary, this dissertation represents modest contributions in several distinct areas of Chinese-American historical archaeology, none of which would be possible without leaning on the data and analyses produced by others. Rather than the 'platonic ideal' of one cohesive, encompassing, and proprietary research project, the historical archaeologies presented here are indeed plural, and my contributions represent many small contributions in distinct areas. When taken as a whole, they present a complex picture of Overseas Chinese historical archaeology, its pitfalls, and its potential.

### What this Dissertation Contains

The purpose of this dissertation is to use archaeology and history to try to understand the daily lives of Chinese laborers on the first transcontinental railroad, and to relate this understanding to contemporary issues of concern. The sources of data referred to are diverse, including archaeological sites and collections, comparisons of formal landscapes, and anthropological and historical texts. The portion of the railroad studied during the background phase of research is located in and around Tahoe National Forest in the High Sierras of eastern California (Figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 Research Area

It is my hope that different parts of this document may be of interest to several different audiences. This research may be of particular interest to Chinese-Americans, especially those whose families have oral histories about the participation of their ancestors in the construction of the railroad. It also may be of interest to archaeologists who are engaged with Overseas Chinese/Chinese-American archaeology as it will provide an overview and synthesis of archaeological research done on this topic up to this point (Chapter 4), as well as newly available sources of data for their own comparisons. More generally, it should be of interest to American citizens who recognize the story of the United States is one with many beginning points. Rather than a singular origin point (like the Pilgrims) this research supports and reinforces the understanding of today's America as a tapestry made of many threads, by people from various cultural backgrounds, each of whom have their own stories, their own interests,

and their own 'centers' or 'origins' – an understanding that, given the current political crisis over immigration and national identity, is essential for our shared future.

The transcontinental railroad is a huge, quasi-mythical thing. We might even call it a 'vile' or unavoidable thing (Zizek 1989). History and archaeology have the potential to disrupt our 'origin stories' and 'national myths'. These myths are important because people point to them to explain who we are and to make claims about ownership of both past and present. This is also hopefully of interest to archaeologists, historians, and other scholars who study how so many different groups of people with different histories, ontologies, and understandings of self and their relationship to world, came to be drawn into a global interactions mediated by capitalist exchange. In other words, this is one particular story showing how one particular group was drawn into the capitalist forms of production and exchange, demonstrating in part how we have become transformed into what we are today.

Chapter Two introduces some of the theoretical motivations and background understanding that I as a researcher brought to the project. Four particular areas of focus are highlighted. The first is the strategy of writing a 'history of the present', as introduced by Foucault (1977). The second main body of inspiration comes from the broad critique of capitalism found in the Marxian tradition. The third is the various modes (monumental, antiquarian, and critical) of writing 'history for life' as described by Nietzsche ([1874] 1984). Finally, I emphasize the importance of 'archaeology as anthropology', and in taking ontological difference seriously as both a challenge to and a source for understanding.

Chapter Three discusses the research project and how it evolved from pedestrian survey, to surface mapping and collections analysis, and finally to analysis of formal landscapes beyond the railroad. It serves as a kind of introduction to both the archaeology of Overseas Chinese as



well as archaeology in the High Sierras. It begins with a narrative of my transformation from journeyman to expert in the subfield and can function as a (sometimes cautionary) tale of what future archaeologists need to know and understand in order to make a contribution to it. The data from this chapter is drawn from the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections for Summit Camp. It functions both as a basic introduction to the material culture associated with Overseas Chinese sites, and as a presentation and analysis of the collections.

Chapter Four is a review of how historical archaeologists have approached and understood the archaeological remains of Chinese-American/Overseas Chinese communities from the inception of the field in the late 1960s to the present. For heuristic and practical purposes, I will organize this history into three periods: a pioneering period stretching from the late sixties to mid/late eighties, a period of maturation from the mid/late eighties to mid-2000s, and the current period which is seeing a burst of new research.

The chapter aims at achieving three main goals. First, it will provide an overview of how the subfield of Overseas Chinese archaeology has transformed over the past fifty years. Second, it will provide an update to previous, similar reviews (e.g. Greenwood 1993, Orser 2004, Ross 2013b, Voss 2005, 2015, Voss and Allen 2008) and will integrate some of the latest publications in this rapidly expanding area of research. Third, it will highlight some of the research that is particularly relevant to this dissertation, particularly research located in and around the High Sierras section of the transcontinental railroad. In doing so, it will draw out conflicts and controversies in the subfield regarding two broad categories: controversies over theoretical paradigms, and discussions regarding technical issues.

Issues addressed include what empirical questions archaeologists have asked of the data found on Chinese-American/Overseas Chinese sites, what questions have definitively answered, and



what questions remain to be addressed. It will highlight the important contributions made towards the construction of artifact typologies and chronologies as well as the excavation and interpretive techniques that have been employed. It will also evaluate the analytic frameworks and theoretical disagreements that have dominated the conversation within the sub-field. Finally, it will provide a description of the state of the subfield as it stands today, and will make apparent how this dissertation intervenes into the current disciplinary situation.

Chapter Five focuses on contextualizing the point-of-origin of the Chinese railroad workers under investigation -- the Sìyì (四邑), or Four Counties region of Guangdong Province. This chapter has five major goals. First, it will provide a more in-depth cultural background than has thus far been provided in the archaeological literature by referencing both historical studies (Gates 1996, Hsu 2000, Kuhn 2008, Marks 1998, McKeown 2001, Pomeranz 2000, Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011, Wolf 1982) and anthropological and ethnographic accounts (Cohen 1976, 2005, Dos Santos 2006, Freedman 1979, Oxfeld 2010, Potter and Potter 1990, Rofel 1999, Watson and Rawski 1988, Wolf 1974, Yan 2003, 2009, Yang 1945, Yang 1994). Second, it will demonstrate that China in the nineteenth century was undergoing massive cultural, demographic, and political changes in order to counter the image of China as static and eternal, as (in Marx's unfortunate phrase) "vegetating in the teeth of time". Third, it will argue that despite changes China was undergoing, the cosmological vision, which by the early twentieth century was in full scale crisis, was relatively intact. Fourth, it will provide insight into the culturally-specific motivations behind emigration and remittances. Finally, it will determine what strategies for mutual aid and maintenance of in-group discipline were likely dominant amongst the Chinese laborers along the railroad.

The chapter begins with a brief and broad historical narrative situating the changes occurring in mid-nineteenth century Guangdong with reference to the global trends of expanding colonialism

and capitalism, with an emphasis on the importance of long-term changes in trade networks (Wolf 1982). Other important events impacting the region during the early nineteenth century will be noted, including the Opium Wars, the Hakka-bendi wars, and the Taiping Rebellion.

The particular historical situation of Guangdong Province during the mid-nineteenth century will be contextualized with reference to the global trends of expanding globalism and capitalism (Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011, Wolf 1982). This will be followed by a description of the *longue durée* (long term) environmental and demographic changes occurring across the whole of Southern China (Marks 1998), which helps understand the push and pull factors shaping Chinese emigration patterns in the early nineteenth century. A brief introduction will be provided for important concepts for understanding Chinese emigrants during the nineteenth century including a description of kinship organization (both the dominant form and its variants) and the patri-corporation or corporate family (Cohen 2004, Dos Santos 2006, Gates 1996). The concepts of transnationalism, the importance of migrant networks, and the effect of remittances back at home will be addressed (Hsu 2000, McKeown 2001). Anthropological and ethnographic literature will give us an understanding of the emotional and affective importance of labor in the process of both self-fashioning and community discipline (Oxfeld 2010, Potter and Potter 1990, Rofel 1999, Yan 2003). Finally, the chapter will highlight the importance of cosmology for understanding oneself and one's place in the world, as well as the subsequent disenchantment and cosmological breakdown.

Chapter Six expands the scope of the dissertation into issues of spatiality and landscape. The main goal of the chapter is to rethink how archaeologists have understood *fēng shuǐ* (風水, literally 'wind and water'). *Feng shui* will be described as a pervasive, affective aspect of the landscape and the body of cultural practices that manages this capacity. A distinction is drawn

between transcendent and emergent sources of order. The sources of the dominant modern understanding of space as *res extensa* are traced to fifteenth century Italy. *Feng shui* is presented as an alternative but equally legitimate way of being in and understanding human spatiality.

The distinction between these spatial stances is demonstrated and supported by a series of contrasts in painting and ceramic decoration, and in the formal landscapes of planned gardens and graveyards. The chapter concludes by discussing how archaeologists can productively employ this understanding of *feng shui* in their interpretations of sites occupied by Overseas Chinese communities.

Chapter Seven builds on the description of Guangdong Province in the nineteenth century provided in Chapter Four and the archaeological material presented in Chapter Two to discuss the importance of differences in moral discourse and forms of personhood exhibited by (on the one hand) Chinese laborers on the transcontinental and (on the other) that expressed by their Euro-American supervisors.

The form of personhood dominant among the Euro-American supervisors is described in terms of C.B. Macpherson's (1962) *possessive individual*. As such, this chapter builds upon and expands the critique of possessive individualism introduced to historical archaeology by Mark Leone (e.g. 2005). It suggests the dominant understanding of personhood among Chinese laborers can be productively described as a form of *relational personhood* (Fowler 2004, Strathern 1990). This form of personhood is 'filled out' with reference to the Chinese intellectual tradition and is used to explain the significance of the labor performed by Chinese immigrants, the importance of remittances, and the particular composition of the archaeological record associated with them.

Chapter Eight presents initial fieldwork conducted on the 'China Kitchen' site. It presents the results of surface mapping, soil sampling, and metal detection on the site and uses these results to both evaluate its potential as a site for future research and to suggest particular areas of focus.

Chapter Nine Concludes the dissertation by assessing the modest contributions made, and by suggesting future directions for research.

## Chapter 2 – Theoretical Background

### The Moment: Archaeology and the World Today

When research for this dissertation began in the halcyon days of the early 2010s, it was perhaps easier to imagine a kind of distance between the problems faced by our current society and the problems faced by the Chinese laborers who first built the transcontinental railroad. Yet for them, as it is for us, the future was unwritten. The immigrants who constructed the railroad in the 1860s could not have known that less than twenty years later the United States would pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first US Law to bar immigration of a group on the explicit basis of race. While some loosening of these laws finally occurred during World War II, these racial quotas remained the law of the land until the Immigration Act of 1965.

These legal acts, explicitly motivated by a desire to construct California and the American West as white-majority areas, have had a lasting impact on the demographic and cultural make-up of the United States. In the 2010 census Chinese-Americans numbered less than 4 million, and all Asian Americans made up less than 6% of the population of the United States (US Census 2010). The passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 and more recently the election of Barack Obama as the first black President of the United States raised the hopes of many that America had finally turned a page on racialized thinking and the desire for White Supremacy among significant portions of the European-American population.

From the vantage point of the late 2010s, these hopes seem at best premature, and perhaps even foolishly naive. The issues faced by Chinese laborers in the 1860s -- including not only racism and racial *ressentiment* but also pressures engendered by capitalist culture and the

progressive economic rationalization of human life, the difficulties of living in a morally defensible and significant way, and the challenges of self-fashioning -- remain with us.

While we cannot know from our current vantage point what the coming years will bring, understanding the experiences of immigrant groups in the past, the challenges they faced, and the strategies for survival they employed can potentially aid us in facing our current predicament without bewilderment, and perhaps even with courage and hope. As the constellations of our sky shift, perhaps we will look anew on those lights that have been below the horizon of late. To paraphrase and repurpose Marx's famous lines from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, we who live in the age of *farce* at least have the benefit of looking back on and learning from an age of *tragedy* (Marx and De Leon [1898]2015).

Is it possible that archaeology is especially suited for an age where the quality of general discourse is at a low ebb? Nietzsche, in *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* ([1874]1984) wondered what use classical philology would be in his time, and concluded that its sense might issue from its very inappropriateness:

"I would not know what sense classical philology would have in our age unless it is to be effective by its inappropriateness for the times, that is, in opposition to the age, thus working on the age, and, we hope, for the benefit of a coming time." (Nietzsche [1874]1984).

Perhaps the same can be hoped for archaeology. Of course, inappropriateness in and of itself is no guarantee of relevance. Leone notably lamented the (lack of) reception for most archaeological interpretations among the public, stating, "We are primarily concerned with accurate meaning and feel no obligation to notice the boredom our own interpretations communicate when made public" (Leone 1981:12). The reason boredom so often accompanies archaeological interpretation, "is because the facts and the data are not tied to the present the

way they should be” (Leone 1981:13). How then should facts and data be tied to the present in a way that produces interest?

## History of the Present

Although this dissertation cannot claim to be fully genealogical, I aspire to use the techniques of historical archaeology in order to generate what Foucault refers to as a “history of the present” (1977:31). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) explain what this means more clearly than Foucault himself. “This approach explicitly and self-reflectively begins with a diagnosis of the current situation. There is an unequivocal and unabashed contemporary orientation” (1983:119).

Attempting to “diagnose the current situation of our society” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983:xvii), means specifically, “a diagnosis of ... our common distress” (1983:253). It then “traces the lineage of ... [whatever] produced our danger” (1983:257). The analyst is “able to diagnose our problems because [s]he shares them” (1983:125). In doing so, the analyst must recognize that “one is always already in a particular historical situation, which means that one’s account of the significance of one’s cultural practices can never be value-free, but always involves an interpretation. The knower, far from being outside of all contexts, is produced by the practices [s]he sets out to analyze” (1983:166).

This understanding immediately puts one in the position of being criticized by researchers who are committed to ‘objective scientific truth’, or as Leone might say, are “primarily concerned with accurate meaning and feel no obligation to notice the boredom [of] our own interpretations” (1981:12). However, as Dreyfus and Rabinow explain, “this interpretive contribution is not superfluous moralizing indulgence, nor can it be a matter of personal preference. It rests on three independent but mutually supporting moves. First, the interpreter must take up a

pragmatic stance on the basis of some socially shared sense of how things are going” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983:200) (recognizing of course there is perhaps no overwhelming sense of how things are going that is equally true for each person or group of people). “Second, the investigator must produce a disciplined diagnosis of what has gone on and is going on in the social body to account for the shared sense of distress or well-being [by] establish[ing] what is being said and done, by whom to whom, and to what effect” (*ibid*). Finally, the analyst must produce “an account of why the practices [s]he describes should produce the shared malaise or contentment which gave rise to the investigation” (*ibid*).

So, how are things going with respect to the present moment? Generally, not well. Of all the things that could cause an extinction or population bottleneck in the human population in the nineteenth century (including rapid and irreversible climate change, global pandemics, and even rocks from space) none have been solved, but have rather been added to. Furthermore, the plight of humans under alienating capitalism has in many senses grown worse with the demand for the economic rationalization of all aspects of human life, the acceleration of automation, and the ever-increasing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few. Racialized thinking, hostility, and white supremacy blight our lives in the twenty-first century just as they did in the nineteenth.

A diagnosis of the plight of being modern, which is perhaps nothing more than, “a story people tell themselves about themselves in relation to others” (Rofel 1999:13) could include a dizzying array of processes, including but not limited to the dangers resulting from the following:

- a) The secularization or ‘disenchantment of social and religious life’ (Thomas 2004:2)
- b) A discourse of a new epoch and a progressive history (Habermas 1987:6, Leone 2005:39)
- c) The dominance of capitalism and the rationalization and mechanization of production and economic exchange (Marx 1867)
- d) The development of disciplinary regimes of surveillance and ascetic self-transformation (Foucault 1972, Weber 1930:17)



- e) The production of subjects in as particular forms of people, most importantly the possessive individual (Leone 2005, Macpherson 1962, Matthews 2010)
- f) Enclosure and the control and understanding of space as *res extensa* (Edgerton 2006, Johnson 2006)
- g) The emergence of the nation-state, and the imposition of a global political order through colonialism (Anderson 1983)
- h) The stereotyping and coercion of others into hierarchies based on difference in ethnicity (i.e. racialization), gender, religion, sexuality, and other factors
- i) Bureaucratization (Weber 1978)
- j) Exploitative use of the environment for short-term advantage (Elvin 2006)
- k) A speeding up of the tempo of life (Harvey 1989, Li 2001)

I hope over the course of my career to be able to engage with many of these aspects of modern life and the dangers they embody. This is of course too much for this document, which is after all merely a beginning. I will therefore limit myself to addressing those aspects of modernity to which the archaeology of early Chinese America as I understand it speaks most directly. These are **capitalism, cosmology/disenchantment, the production of subjects, spatiality, rationalization, racialization, and discipline**. These broad topics constitute the major themes to be addressed in this dissertation.

These themes are reflected in the broad research questions I ask in this dissertation: In what ways did Chinese laborers need to adjust to differences in capitalist practice and ideology as present in the nineteenth century United States? In what ways did markets and commerce function differently in nineteenth century China, and do these differences help explain the decisions Chinese laborers made, such how to relate to their supervisors and what to do with their money? To what degree were Chinese laborers acting from within a different cosmological framework than Euro-Americans, and can this be seen in the archaeological record? How did Chinese laborers understand themselves and the significance of the labor they were performing? To what degree can we explain the archaeological record with reference to the cultural resources Chinese workers brought to the situation? Can we connect the racial

construction of Chinese in the nineteenth century to broader questions about race in the United States and American identity? In what ways did Chinese workers potentially set themselves apart from their peers and maintain in-group discipline, and how is this related to both the consumption of particular goods and the performance of various forms of daily sociality?

These broad research questions are informed by the impetus of a “history of the present” to “locate the acute manifestations of ... particular ‘meticulous ritual[s],’” by “isolating the central components of [a] political technology today and tracing them back in time” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983:119). While a full ‘history of the present’ would trace these changes from the 1860s through the decades to the present day, this dissertation is limited to juxtaposing the nineteenth century to the present, but serves as a potential beginning to a more thorough history of the present that would trace changes in material culture, economic standing, identity and self-understanding, and social positioning among Chinese-Americans.

Chapter 3 discusses the artifacts used by nineteenth century laborers as components of a meaningfully constituted “equipmental whole” (Dreyfus 1991:62) that oriented them in the world. Chapter 5 in part discusses the cosmological and historical understandings that underpinned the decision to emigrate and work in difficult conditions. Chapter 6 discusses both forms of spatial control, and means for establishing mastery and dominance such as surveillance and display of hierarchy, while Chapter 7 questions how the construction of subjects as particular forms of persons occurs under capitalism, and the degree to which the production of subjects in nineteenth century China was at variance with this.

Besides Foucault, there are three other major influences for the type of investigation I am attempting here: the critique of capitalism drawing on Marx, an understanding of history as

something that should be useful for life as described by Nietzsche, and finally an understanding of archaeology as anthropology (albeit of a peculiar sort), with all the concerns regarding particularity and the importance of cultural differences that implies.

## The Critique of Capitalism

The foremost influence on my understanding of our current predicament comes from Marx's critique of capitalism. The importance of this analysis of capitalism is rooted in the understanding that exploitation is real, suffering is real, and some of the most significant sources of our suffering today issue from the dominance of capitalist culture. The emphasis on capitalism (and its distinction from 'commerce' and from other human-centric forms of exchange that have been practiced in China and other parts of the world) is bolstered by its successful application within anthropology by scholars such as Eric Wolf (1982), Sidney Mintz (1985), and Hill Gates (1996), and within historical archaeology by scholars such as Mark Leone (2005), Matthew Johnson (1996), and Christopher Matthews (2012).

One of the major questions facing historical archaeologists is how to make our research relevant to the present day and the problems we face in contemporary life. Historical Archaeologies focused on issues of race, racialization, and the continuing legacy of slavery are among the most successful and impactful within the field (e.g. Leone 2005, McDavid 1997, 2007). McDavid understands archaeology as a conversation about the past that necessarily takes place in the present and uses the archaeology of the Levi Jordan plantation to percolate slavery into contemporary conversations (2007). The overarching focus of Barbara Little's (e.g. 2002) writing has been the connection between archaeology and public consciousness, while Paul Shackel has focused on how to 'reverse' historical narratives from forms that serve to justify those who wield contemporary power (e.g. Shackel and Roller 2013) to forms that resist

it. Concern about the importance of historical interpretations for the present day is also an important topic in anthropology as a whole (e.g. Jerman and Hautaniemi 2006, Trouillot 2015). My training at the University of Maryland in the mid-2000s emphasized that ultimately, in order to be meaningful and worth doing, archaeology should function as a kind of effective history that comments on and critiques contemporary power relations.

These are only a handful of the many historical archaeologists who argue for an unabashedly contemporary orientation in historical archaeology research. According to Leone, “[t]he job of historical archaeologists is to understand how some groups ameliorated capitalist practices, and then to explain both that fact, and the means by which they did so, to those who are aware that they need an alternative, but do not have one, so that they can do so too. Our job is to translate to our own needy peers, which has been the main goal of anthropology since its founding” (Leone 2005:28). I take ‘translation’ here to mean doing our utmost to simultaneously understand the similarities and differences between one’s own culture and the culture under consideration so that we can understand these similarities as a basis for understanding and our differences as a basis for illumination.

According to Gates (2004), Pomeranz (2000), Marks (1998), and others China has had, from at least the Song Dynasty until the early nineteenth century (as explained in Chapter 5), a more developed economy and more significant infrastructure than Europe. Given this fact, the question of what resources exist within Chinese culture of the nineteenth century that might ameliorate or prevent the expansion of capitalist modes of exchange is highly relevant for understanding and dealing with ‘our current distress’. For Leone, the main goal of historical archaeology should be “to explain to ourselves the lives of others who kept themselves free or freer” (Leone 2005:28), particularly “by those at [capitalism’s] bottom and margins, by those who saw its actions and found ways to survive it” (Leone 2005:32).

As we will see in the coming chapters, a particular understanding of cosmology, kinship organization, moral discourse and of personhood as practiced by Chinese and Overseas Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century reveal themselves to be imperfect but still promising means of amelioration for some of the ills instituted by capitalist culture. To put it as plainly as I can, because the Chinese immigrants of the nineteenth century believed themselves to be particular kinds of beings connected to others via kinship and social relationships and having a particular moral worth, they to some degree embodied and constituted themselves as such. And because Chinese immigrants were thus constituted as *relational* persons (Fowler 2004) they were able to take certain collective actions that helped them survive within a capitalist economic system. This is not to say that exploitation does not occur among and between *relational* persons, nor to suggest that Chinese in the nineteenth century were not engaged in sophisticated economic networks that can to some degree be described as both capitalistic and exploitative. Gates (1996) in particular emphasizes the exploitative nature of the patri-corporation that organized much of economic life in China, and with a slight shift in perspective, remittances can be interpreted not merely as constituting a positive social bond, but as a form of extraction as well.

The concerns regarding archaeology's contemporary relevance, shared problems inured by life within capitalist culture, and the imperfect means people have used to deal with them are in a sense a supplement to a Foucauldian-style 'history of the present', which focuses on how particular 'rituals of power' have come to dominate our lives, but frequently does not provide us with any alternative ways to escape or even transform various 'games of power'. The lives of Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth century were shaped to a significant degree by the forces of international capitalism. They were not immune to its ills – they were exploited and sometimes died. But one of the main contentions of this dissertation is the significance of their

decisions and actions cannot be reduced to a purely capitalistic logic. This optimism is however tempered by the recognition (unavoidable in these times) that ‘desire is not inherently emancipatory’ (Brown 2001). The question “how powerful is archaeology to challenge capitalism?” (Leone 2005: 257) will be left open.

## History for Life

A second thread, not entirely divorced from Foucault’s ‘history of the present’, finds its clearest formulation in Nietzsche’s *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, from his *Untimely Meditations* (Nietzsche [1874]1984). Here Nietzsche lays out three different sorts of history in both their ‘life generating’ and ‘degenerate’ forms. These are monumental, antiquarian, and critical history. While much of the emphasis within academia is focused on critical history, Nietzsche explains both the partiality and necessity of all three forms of history. To put it succinctly, ‘critical’ history stands in judgment of the past, which is primarily useful because we are in need of justice. This is the voice that denounces the way Chinese immigrants were used in capitalist enterprises only to be driven out in the following decades. This is also the eye that sees the connection between anti-immigrant sentiment in the mid-nineteenth century, and the anti-immigrant politics of the current day. But while critical history can tell us what has gone wrong, it cannot tell us what is worth preserving. That is the job of what Nietzsche calls ‘antiquarian’ history. The ‘degenerate’ sense of this antiquarianism is fetishization – romantic or compulsive attraction to objects from the past simply because they are old. However, Nietzsche also describes antiquarianism in a constitutive sense – this sort of history tells us what is worth preserving (not merely objects but cultural practices as well, such as the practice of friendship) (*ibid*). Given that capitalism involves the involuntary and progressive rationalization (and destruction) of cultural practices, antiquarianism in its generative sense is every bit as important as critical history. Finally, monumental history looks back to great deeds and takes from them

inspiration to be great in the present. While this is in a sense myth-making, the ability to inspire awe is one of the most important ways history 'acts' on people.

To look at the railroad and to be in awe of the difficulties Chinese immigrants had to live through in order to create it is a kind of monumental history. To describe their daily practices – how they reinforced social bonds through networking, food, gaming, etc. – and to see the value in marginalized practices is a kind of antiquarian history. To deplore the capitalist exploitation and racial prejudice suffered by the Chinese laborers on the railroad is a kind of critical history. All three forms of history are partial, but together perhaps they can show why the experiences of Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century shaped and remain relevant in the twenty-first.

### Archaeology as Anthropology

How to present archaeological data in a way that engages audiences, is a history of the present, is effective critical history, and is in service for life? The final major source of inspiration comes from a desire on my part to write a historical archaeology that relies on concepts present in the Chinese intellectual tradition rather than imposed upon it from the outside. This is based on the hope, which I can in no way prove, that refusing to avail oneself of strictly *etic* concepts might result in a more congenial understanding of the lives of Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century. This desire springs from insights into the differences between dominant Chinese and Western ontology and epistemology that I gained from living in China for several years in the early 2000s and which have been reinforced through my readings of both the classics of the Chinese intellectual tradition as well as ethnographies focusing on Modern China.

This is not to re-inscribe a picture of China as an intellectually isolated and alterior culture. By the nineteenth century, extensive links from trade, missionaries, and diplomatic exchanges had

been developing for hundreds of years (Wolf 1982). The goal is to find a balance that simultaneously recognizes genealogically different dominant discourses that are not wholly isolated from one another nor defined merely as a negative image of the other.

The idea is to avail oneself, whenever possible, to indigenous concepts rather than importing transcendent concepts and principles, to find an interpretation of human being that is both legible to western academics but felicitous to Chinese understandings of personhood, and which is primarily concerned with truth not as 'correspondence' but as 'fittingness'. Thus, I have attempted, insofar as is possible, to evaluate the worth of current theories in the western academy from the point-of-view of the Chinese intellectual tradition. It is for this reason that, while I implicitly understand the role of capitalism in the present from a Marxist point of view, I will not avail myself of the transcendent certainty which grounds Marx's optimism. For this reason, I have relied implicitly upon Heidegger's (via Dreyfus) understanding of *dasein* as a kind of metatheory about human being that is both sufficiently precise and sufficiently general to describe variant forms of personhood and self-understanding cross-culturally. Hall and Ames (1995,1997), Froese (2006), and Parkes (1987) are but a few of the scholars who have noted the happy agreement between Heidegger's analysis and indigenous Daoist and Confucian understandings. Finally, the purposes of writing history as suggested by Foucault, Leone, and Nietzsche -- an effective and critical history of the present for life -- are in happy agreement with Confucian understandings of what history is for. As Tu Wei-Ming states, "A concerned intellectual, the modern counterpart of the Confucian chün-tzu [junzi] (nobleman or profound person), does not seek a spiritual sanctuary outside the world. He is engaged in this world ... [t]he Confucian calling is not to serve the status quo but to transform the "secular" world of wealth and power into a "sacred" community in which, despite egoistic drives, the quest for human flourishing in moral, scientific, and aesthetic excellence continuously nourishes our bodies and uplifts our hearts and minds" (Tu 1985:177).



## A Note on the Disciplinary Moment

As will be more fully discussed in Chapter 4, the sub-discipline of the historical archaeology of Overseas Chinese or Chinese-Americans is in a moment of disciplinary transformation. Stanford University's Chinese Railroad Workers of North America has brought together scholars from across North America and the wider world into unprecedented conversation with one another. In a sense, this dissertation appears at the close of one period and the opening of another. As such, its future use will likely largely be as a synthesis of previous research made without the benefit of being able to integrate many of the unprecedented research projects and collaborations currently underway.

## Chapter 3 – The Road to Summit Camp

### Introduction

At the outset of this research project, I had experience both with Chinese culture (from studying and living in Hong Kong for several years) and as a professional archaeologist. I did not, however, have prior experience either working in the environmental conditions of the High Sierras nor with the material culture associated with Chinese-American sites. The research process for this dissertation was thus necessarily a learning process, where I identified various bodies of knowledge I would need and then proceeded to acquire them as expeditiously as possible. Following the initial literature review (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4), my initial priorities were to both familiarize myself with previous archaeological work and techniques used in the High Sierras, as well as familiarizing myself with the material culture likely to be encountered. I then proceeded to both catalog and analyze the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections associated with Summit Camp, and to conduct initial, minimally ground disturbing tests at the 'China Kitchen' site (discussed in Chapter 8). I then proceed to perform preliminary steps to address the cultural context from which Chinese workers emigrated (Chapter 5), spatial organization in formal and informal contexts (Chapter 6), and how to conceptualize agency, personhood, and interrelatedness in Chinese contexts (Chapter 7).

### Fieldwork in the High Sierras

I was first alerted to the research potential of Chinese-American work camps on the transcontinental by Barbara L. Voss of Stanford University, and began contacting historical archaeologists who had previously worked in the area. Kelly Dixon of the University of Montana put me in contact with Carrie Smith, the National Park Service (NPS) archaeologist responsible for the section of the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) the transcontinental railroad passes through. Initial consultations with archaeologists Carrie Smith, Susan Lindstrom, and Scott Baxter helped

delineate both the possibilities and challenges of fieldwork in Placer and Nevada Counties. There are four significant challenges facing archaeological exploration of Chinese laborers in this area. First, the High Sierras are a largely erosional rather than depositional environment. For example, the area around Summit Camp is mostly granite rock outcroppings interspersed with small, flat platform areas of cobbly, sandy loam (Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2). Severe topographical changes, in combination with yearly snowfall and melt, create archaeological sites where site formation processes can make spatial analysis and identification of activity areas very difficult. The erosional nature of the region also means archaeological assemblages gathered from surface survey and collection do not have the character of sealed deposits that can be definitively associated with particular occupation periods.



*Figure 3.1 Soil Map of Summit Camp area. RRG= Rock outcrop, granitic-tinker complex, 30 to 75 percent slopes. Map generated with USDA web soil survey.*



*Figure 3.2 Photograph of typical surface conditions at Summit Camp. Photo by Author.*

This difficulty is exacerbated by the second challenge facing empirical study of these sites: given their close proximity to the railroad, and continued railroad maintenance activities and other human traffic evident in many of these sites, the archaeological integrity of both features and artifact assemblages have been further diminished. Summit Camp, for example, is located just off Donner Pass Road, and is very close to a popular rock climbing area, observation platform, and ski resort. Pedestrian traffic across the site is a daily occurrence. This threatens the archaeological integrity of the site in two distinct ways. First, hikers and other park-goers both collect and move surface artifacts. I witnessed several specific artifacts at Summit Camp move location in between site visits. This makes claims about artifact distributions and ratios potentially problematic. Furthermore, current use of the area results in the deposition of modern artifacts, which then become mixed with artifacts from previous periods. This is of course not limited to the current day. Both the Evans/Chace and Costello collections include artifacts that

post-date the Chinese occupation of Summit Camp, though remarkably the vast majority of artifacts recovered can be dated contemporaneously. This dual process of souvenir hunting and continued deposition create assemblages where temporally non-diagnostic artifacts can potentially be attributed to incorrect periods of occupation. This is a particular risk for artifacts such as undecorated Whiteware, which has a date range from the early nineteenth century to the present (South 1977).

The third difficulty facing study of these sites is, at the onset of my research, most work done on Chinese railroad sites had been confined to studies of single sites and had thus not been synthesized into a regional picture. Summit Camp itself has been the subject of around a dozen studies (Table 3.1), but none of the published sources had access to both the Evans/Chace or Costello collections.



<u>Year</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Content</u>
1966	Chace	Initial report of railroad sites in High Sierras
1969	Chace and Evans	Suggests sites around Donner Pass can be used as template for an archaeological 'horizon'
1990	Sutherland and Harper	Site report for a satellite camp to east of main camp
1997	Bennet et al.	Initial site record for 'Summit Camp'
1999	Bennet and Lindstrom	Site report for a satellite camp to east of main camp
1999	Lindstrom et al.	Pipeline incident report
2005	Bennet et al.	Additional site record
2005	Lindstrom	Report on Metal Detection
2008	Puseman	Macrofloral and Organic Residue Analysis
2008	Baxter and Allen	NRHP Evaluation
2013	Arrigoni et al.	Report on three Summit Camp satellite sites

*Table 3.1 Previous publications focused on Summit Camp*

After I became aware of the existence of these collections at the Society for California conference in 2013, I began to see this difficulty as a kind of opportunity. Due to the generosity of Julia Costello, Paul Chace, Scott Baxter, and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC), I had the opportunity to spend significant time with these collections cataloging and analyzing their contents. However, my research project did not begin with collections analysis, but rather with pedestrian survey, and that is what revealed to me the

fourth challenge facing archaeological investigation of the area: the coniferous forest which dominates the landscape in the High Sierras creates a thick layer of pine needles (or, 'duff') that makes the identification of surface scatters difficult to identify and limits the effectiveness of pedestrian survey.

Despite these challenges, I began initial pedestrian survey in the Summer (May-July) of 2013, aided by Alison Damick of Columbia University and Lindsey Montgomery, then of Stanford University. Areas of interest were selected due to their proximity to the railroad (within 500m) and their flat topography (Figure 3.3). These two factors determined which areas were regarded as having a higher probability of containing sites. Pedestrian survey was conducted in 5m transects oriented by compass. Surface finds were photographed and in situ and were recorded with a Garmin handheld GPS (Figure 3.4).

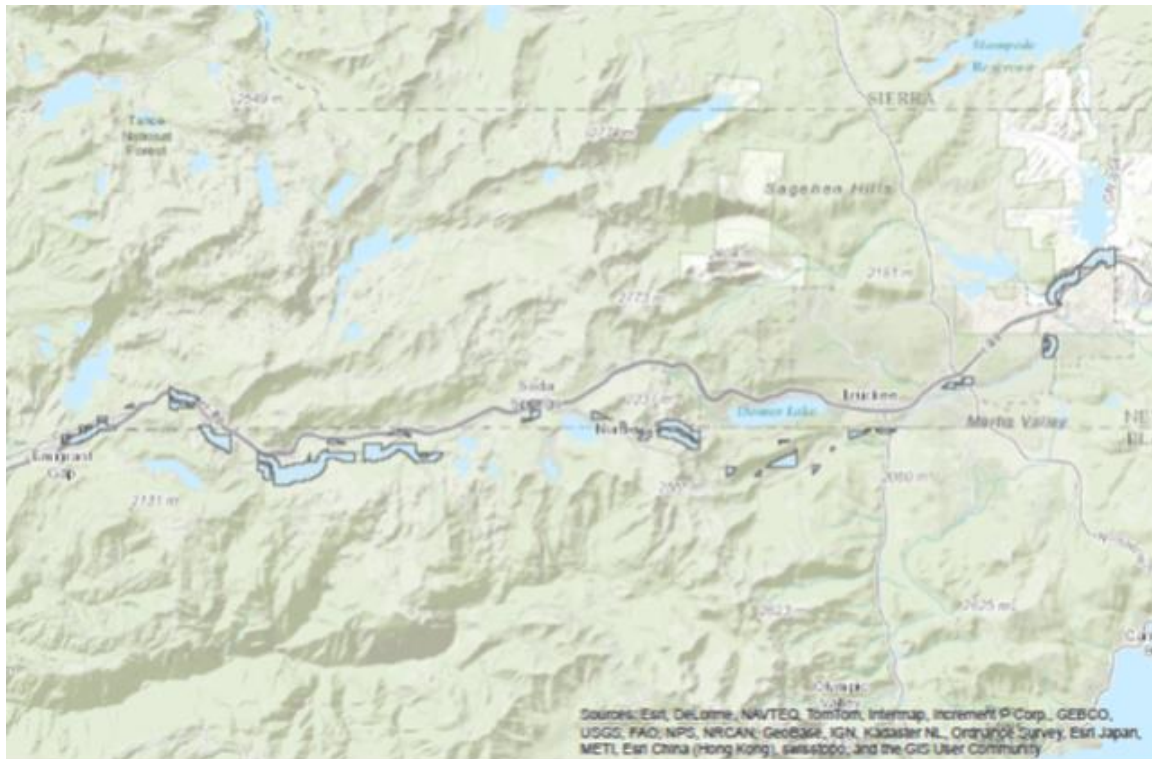


Figure 3.3 Area of Planned Pedestrian Survey

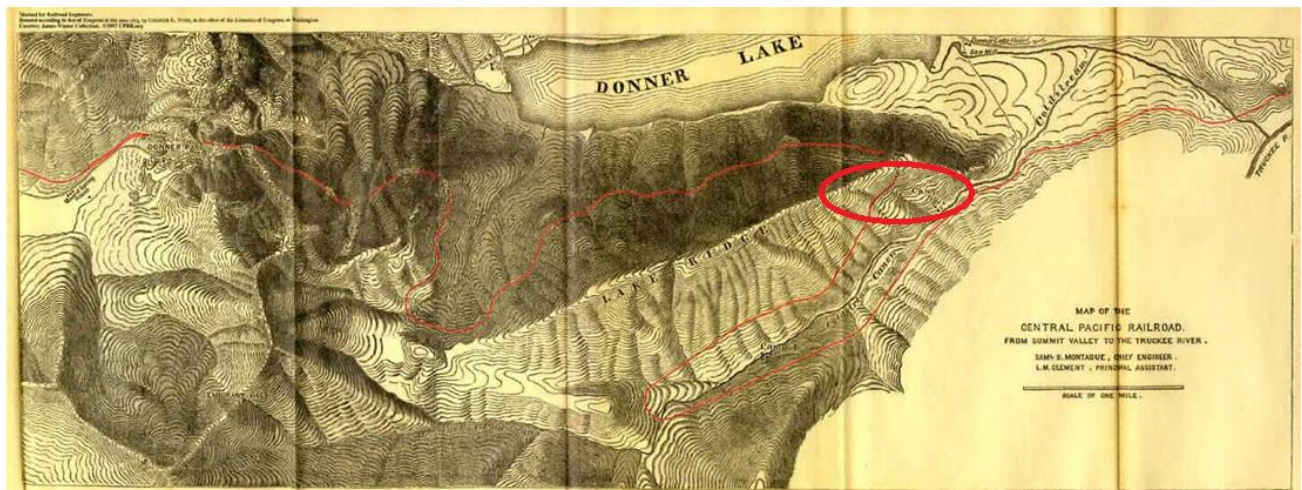


*Figure 3.4 Chinese Brown-Glazed Stoneware in situ*

I began my investigations of Chinese railroad camps with pedestrian survey for four interrelated reasons. First, I wanted to evaluate the potential for larger scale pedestrian survey involving larger teams in order to determine if a systematic survey in search of railroad camps was a feasible strategy for future research. Second, I wanted to understand the relationship between larger, more permanent work camps around tunnels, culverts, bridges, and other areas of intensive work (this category of sites includes both Summit Camp and China Kitchen) with the smaller, more expedient camps I assumed would be present along longer stretches of railroad where work proceeded more quickly. Third, I was aware of my then-journeyman level of expertise in the subfield, and wanted to gain more hands-on experience in the field before tackling previously identified sites. Finally, I wanted to find undisturbed, intact sites that could eventually be excavated, either as the culmination of the dissertation or for post-doctoral research. Of the resources noted during the course of pedestrian survey of selected flat areas



within 500 m of the railroad, only the Schallenberger Ridge Site and Camp #5 merit further archaeological scrutiny (Figure 3.5). Initial surface mapping of the Schallenberger Ridge Site took place during July of 2013. Ironically, this very month a cultural resources inventory report published by the California Department of Transportation by State Archaeologist Denise Jaffke was published (Jaffke 2013), which included previously unpublished site reporting on the Schallenberger Ridge Site by Gilbert and Green in 2001 (Jaffke 2013:19-20). As a result of this publication, fieldwork on the site no longer represented a wholly original contribution and was suspended. Having spent the summer engaged in a largely fruitless effort to locate previously unknown sites, the practical need to access significant data sources for this dissertation necessitated a change of research strategy.



*Figure 3.5 Location of Schallenberger Ridge/Windmill Tree/Domino Site and Camp #5 (Map from Vose 1883)*

However, despite the modest results of this survey, the pedestrian survey did provide answers for some of the questions listed above. First, I found pedestrian survey is a generally ineffective strategy for finding sites in the mountainous regions of the Sierra Nevada due to a combination of site destruction from railroad maintenance and low ground visibility due to ground coverage. Pedestrian survey seems to be a much more effective strategy in the flat regions of the railroad

in Nevada and Utah, where the flat topography and limited ground coverage has resulted in more substantive results (e.g. Polk 2015). Second, the location of the only significant sites (Camp #5 and the Schallenberger Ridge Site) near tunnels suggests that work camps with significant deposits are likely to be found in proximity to areas of intensive works such as culverts and tunnels, while any smaller encampments that may have been present along more open stretches of the railroad are likely to have been much more ephemeral.

Of the four goals I initially had when beginning pedestrian survey, only the final goal of finding undocumented, intact sites was thwarted. While there undoubtedly remain undocumented Chinese work camps along the railroad, pedestrian survey should concentrate on flatter areas with less ground cover in order to be effective. As for future survey of railroad sites in the Sierra Nevada, areas of interest should be selected based on their proximity to areas of intensive work associated with the presence of longer-term camps that leave more noticeable archaeological signatures.

Following a field season of pedestrian survey with no significant results, my research shifted towards working on previously identified sites through collections analysis (of the Costello and eventually Evans/Chace collections) and surface mapping (of the 'China Kitchen' site, discussed in Chapter 8).

### [Material Culture of Nineteenth Century Chinese-American Work Camps](#)

Prior to my work with the Costello and Evans/Chace Summit Camp collections, the other thread of my archaeological investigations of Chinese work camps involved gaining familiarity with the artifact types associated with Chinese-American sites. I accomplished this by spending time with three different collections. First, I examined the Asian American Comparative Collection (AACC) at the University of Idaho, a type collection curated by Priscilla Wegars. This collection is a good place to start for someone interested in developing a familiarity with the types of

artifacts associated with Chinese-American sites, and also contains a fairly extensive library of texts on Asian-American history and archaeology. The collection is extremely helpful because it includes samples of intact vessels, which aids in the identification of vessel form from sherds found in archaeological contexts.

Next, I visited the Anthropological Studies Center (ASC) at Sonoma State University to examine Chinese-American artifacts recovered from urban contexts in Oakland and Sacramento. These collections, then curated by Adrian and Mary Praetzellis, include thousands of artifacts recovered from sites occupied by Chinese-Americans and include many products of non-Chinese origin. These objects of non-Chinese origin raise interesting questions about when and to what degree did Chinese-American immigrants begin to integrate non-Chinese materials into their 'equipmental wholes' (Dreyfus 1991:62), especially given the fact that Chace and Evans (1969) demonstrated from the onset of the subfield that "Chinese-inhabited sites contain immediately identifiable artifacts" (Baxter 2015:40).

An "equipmental whole" is a term used by Dreyfus (1991:62) to explain how Heidegger conceptualizes the way we relate to the world of artifacts. For this reason, it is an idea that can potentially help archaeologists think through our paramount source of data. To briefly explain this concept, Heidegger proposes that the primary way we relate to material culture is not as *objects* but as *equipment* (i.e. we use them to get something done), and furthermore that this equipment "always refers to other equipment" (*ibid*). As Dreyfus states, "An 'item' or equipment is what it is insofar as it refers to other equipment and so fits in a certain way into an 'equipmental whole'" (*ibid*). As such, a particular artifact can be made sense of only when it is part of "a nexus of other equipment in which this thing functions" (Dreyfus 1991:63). Thus, to interpret artifacts, the archaeologist must consider not only their formal or objective properties but both what they are *for* and how they *fit in*.

By thinking about archaeological assemblages in this way, we can make meaningful statements about the significance of changes over time and how they might relate to or inform other social changes (such as norms and patterns of activity). In practice there is nothing novel about archaeologists thinking through assemblages in such a way. In using the term, I am making explicit the similarities between already existing archaeological practice with a specific body of philosophical thought that is legible to and continues to inspire scholars in a variety of social science and humanities.

Finally, I was given the opportunity to spend time with collections housed by the Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project at the Stanford Archaeological Center (SAC). The Market Street collection contains a variety of artifacts of both Chinese and non-Chinese origin. Stephanie Chan, then a Master's student at Stanford, was writing her thesis (2013) on British-produced transfer-print whitewares of European origin associated with the Chinese occupation of Market Street. Chan's research focused on establishing whether the Chinese residents of Market Street were using the transfer-prints, and sought to interpret what such use meant regarding their status as an excluded group. Given the fact that the transfer-prints Chan cataloged and identified were high-cost ceramics, their possible use by the Chinese community represented an interesting departure from previously dominant interpretations of Chinese artifacts as evidence of either insularity or acculturation. Chan cataloged, identified, photographed, and interpreted the artifacts for her 2013 thesis, and used spatial analysis to associate them with particular households.

I was interested in how spatiality was depicted in these transfer-print wares and whether the landscapes depicted in the decorations were three-dimensional or not. Chan generously allowed me to access her database in order to determine the degree to which the transfer-print decorations depicted three-dimensional landscapes. Given the depiction of three-dimensional space is a western art technique developed in the fifteenth century, I expected it to be very rare

in assemblages associated with Chinese-Americans during the nineteenth century. I hypothesized that Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century would likely have had aesthetic preferences for 'narrative' depictions of landscape as seen in Chinese paintings and other arts. Contrary to this expectation, Chan's database included 123 artifacts depicting three-dimensional landscapes associated with 29 separate features.

This finding led me to the conclusion that aesthetic preference for landscape depictions rooted in the Chinese tradition fails to explain the decorations present in the transfer-print whitewares from Market Street. Rather, it seems more likely that the availability of second-hand ceramics in urban contexts as well as a concern for frugality had much more to do with determining the use of ceramics in Market Street, as Chan (2013:42-3) suggests. As such, the presence of these ceramics undercuts the argument that pervasive and coherent aesthetic preferences would be visible across multiple spheres of material practice at sites associated with Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century.

The landscape depictions on Market Street transfer-prints are in the Romantic style, depicting idealized and imaginary landscapes based on an Orientalized vision of the Near, Middle, and Far East, not dissimilar to the 'Willow Pattern' (Figure 3.6). This style of landscape depiction is a western reconstruction/imitation of artistic styles prevalent in China. Although inauthentic, it does have certain similarities to Chinese landscape art in that the space is depicted as an aesthetically enhanced moment with narrative potential (Figure 3.7). In this sense, aesthetic preferences could still play a role in the selection of transfer-print ceramics at Market Street, and in the use of non-Chinese ceramics by Chinese-Americans in other contexts. However, these preferences do not seem to be predicated on whether the landscape is three-dimensional or not.





Figure 3.6 Willow Pattern



Figure 3.7 Section of scroll by Wang Hui, 1698 (From The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

There is a certain irony in European-Americans using ceramics like the Willow Pattern, in which the spatiality of landscape is depicted in a style uncommon in the western tradition while at the same time Chinese Americans used ceramics with decorations incorporating western perspective with orientalized depictions of exotic locales. These issues will be contextualized

further in Chapter 6, which concentrates on how to understand spatiality and landscape in Chinese contexts.

In summary, the initial experiences I had working with collections at the AACC, ASC, and SAC provided me with a necessary familiarity with the artifacts associated with Chinese-American sites in the nineteenth century. Distinguishing between materials and ceramic types is relatively straight forward, as the biscuit and glaze of ceramic types is quite distinct. However, distinguishing between vessel forms among utilitarian wares can be more difficult, due to the degree of fragmentation, unevenness of glaze, and varying thickness within given vessel types. This would prove to be a substantial barrier in my analysis of the Brown-Glazed Stoneware portion of the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections. As a result, I was able to identify the vessel form of only a fraction of the Brown-Glazed Stoneware assemblage, preventing any significant analysis of the relative frequency of the major forms. This is one of the most significant shortcomings of the collections analysis in this dissertation.

Both the ASC and SAC collections were gathered from archaeological contexts and demonstrated a mixture of artifacts of both Chinese and non-Chinese origin. While there are significant differences in both context (urban/rural) and dating of these collections from the railroad sites associated with the Chinese workers on the transcontinental, they still provide a touchstone for identifying and analyzing the remains from the Summit Camp site. They also highlight the fact that archaeological collections are fragmentary. While I conceptualize these artifacts as meaningful parts of an 'equipmental whole' that was in effect a medium through which to interact with the world and lead a significant life, there are entire parts of the 'whole' that are absent from the archaeological record. While significant numbers of relatively fragile artifacts such as toothbrushes have been recovered from some urban contexts (e.g. Douglas

2007), there is only a single toothbrush in the entire Summit Camp collection (Appendix). Wood, bone, textiles, shoe parts, and food remains are relatively scarce (a total of 9 artifacts in both collections (see Appendix)) and presumably underrepresented in rural archaeological collections, and this is especially true for surface collections in areas with significant weathering such as Summit Camp. However, perhaps it is enough to understand that the materials represented in archaeological collections are pieces of an incomplete puzzle that will never be fully filled in.

### Collections Analysis

This leads us directly to a discussion of what sort of artifacts *are* represented on Chinese-American work camps on the transcontinental railroad. The shift in my research project from pedestrian survey towards collections work was serendipitous. I participated in a Society for California Archaeology session in 2013. During the discussion after my talk, I learned of the existence of an artifact collection from Summit Camp that had not yet been analyzed or made public. These artifacts were collected in 1984 by Julia Costello and are currently being curated by her. The collection consists of nearly 1,500 (N=1476) artifacts. Due to her graciousness and generosity, I was able to spend time cataloging, photographing and analyzing this collection (Appendix). Initially, there was no site map for the collection, though a rough field map was recovered the following year (Appendix). Analysis consisted of identifying artifact type by material, style, form, type of sherd, and also involved determining weight and any unusual characteristics.

At this conference I was also made aware of the existence of an even larger collection of nearly 6,000 (N=5809) artifacts from Summit Camp gathered by Paul Chace and Bill Evans in the



1960s. This collection has been used as the basis for Evan and Chace's publications from the 1960s. In the summer of 2015, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) granted me access to the Evans and Chace collection. Aided by CHSSC student volunteers and archaeologist Linda Bentz, the entirety of the collection was identified, cataloged, and photographed. Analysis again consisted of identifying artifact type by material, style, form, type of sherd, weight and idiosyncrasies.

Artifacts from the Evans/Chace collection are distributed between thirteen separate proveniences (Sites 1-12 and a collection labelled 11/12) (Figures 3.8 and 3.9).

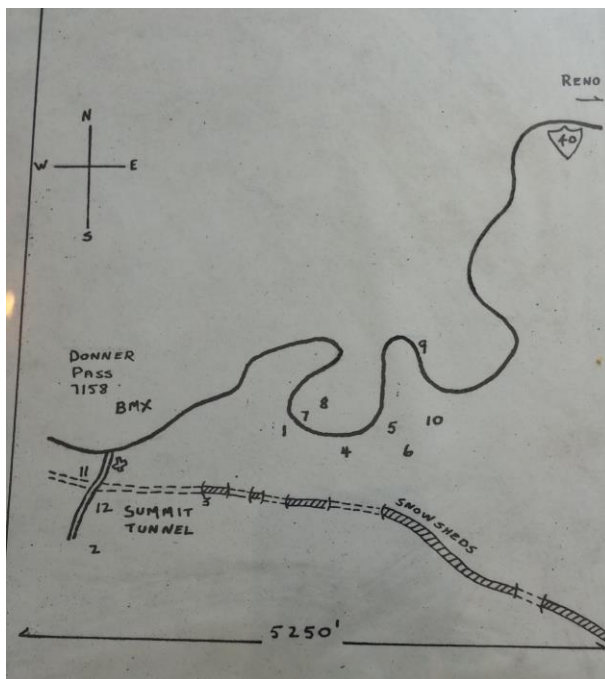


Figure 3.8 Evans/Chace field map of 12 sites comprising Summit Camp



*Figure 3.9 Google Earth Image of Summit Camp area*

These sites vary in size and composition, with the largest (the combined Sites #2, 11, 11/12, and 12) encompassing thousands of artifacts and the smallest (Site #6) less than two dozen (Tables 3.2-3.14). Given the extremely vertical nature of the terrain, the locations of these sites are relatively easy to relocate, especially the eight eastern sites, as they occupy small flat areas that are surrounded by shear rock, and would be the only available locations for extended occupation.

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	34	374.4
	Double Happiness	1	9.9
	Celadon/Wintergreen	1	0.8
	Bamboo	3	22.9
	UID Porcelain	1	3.3
Opium	Pipe	1	2.6
	Box	4	7.8
Glass	Medicinal	2	8.9
	Wine Bottle	2	51
	Bottle	2	9
Personal/Daily	Button	2	1.3
	Shoe Lining	2	10.7
	Suspender Buckle	1	1.2
	Gaming Piece	1	1.8
Metal	Wok	2	271.9
	Shovel	2	74.7
	Can	2	23.5
	UID metal	6	16.8
Misc	Telegraph Breaker	1	26.7

*Table 3.2 Evans/Chace Site #1*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	258	948.2
	Double Happiness	471	2190
	Celadon/Wintergreen	31	57.5
	Bamboo	215	1886.8
	Four Seasons	23	22.4
	Whiteware	109	274.9
	UID Non-CBGS Stoneware	1	5.1
Opium	Pipe	98	98.6
	Box	60	236.7
	UID Porcelain	32	294.6
Glass	Medicinal	23	315.7
	Wine Bottle	49	1372.7
	Bottle	6	176
	Pickle Bottle	1	32.7
	UID Embossed Glass	4	13.1
	UID Glass	1	7.4
Personal/Daily	Button	4	3.6
	Mother-of-Pearl	1	0.1
Metal	Coin	1	2.3
	Wok	2	303.8
	Shovel	4	409
	Punctured	1	100.3
	UID Metal	3	39
Misc	Tobacco Box	3	36.6
	Rubber	1	1.7

Table 3.3 Evans/Chace Site #2

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	7	46.1
	Double Happiness	18	68.7
	Bamboo	8	20.7
	Whiteware	1	1.2
	Sake Bottle	5	32.8
Opium	Box	4	3.1
Personal/Daily	Button	3	2.5
Metal	UID Metal	3	6.8

*Table 3.4 Evans/Chace Site #3*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	76	2587.2
	Double Happiness	6	53.4
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Bowl	7	111.9
	Bamboo	4	24.6
	Four Seasons, Bowl	14	31.9
	Four Seasons, Cup	2	6.2
	Whiteware	4	21.5
	Ginger Pot	2	4.8
	UID Unrefined Earthenware	1	1.1
	Opium	Pipe	1
Metal	Wok	6	203.2
	UID Metal	2	37.2
Misc	Plastic	1	1.2

*Table 3.5 Evans/Chace Site #4*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	57	985.3
	Double Happiness	13	9.8
	Celadon/Wintergreen	1	0.5
	Bamboo	5	8.3
	Four Seasons	5	43.1
	Whiteware	14	20.8
Misc	Plastic	1	1.8

*Table 3.6 Evans/Chace Site #5*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	13	749.4
	Double Happiness	2	3.2
	Bamboo	1	2.6
	Whiteware	1	4.7

*Table 3.7 Evans/Chace Site #6*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	255	4563.6
	Double Happiness	28	92
	Bamboo	56	308
	Ginger Jar	1	21.6
	UID Porcelain	7	52.3
	UID Refined Earthenware	1	21.5
Opium	Box	6	24.8
Glass	Medicinal	14	207.7
	Wine Bottle	9	119.8
	Bottle	8	130.9
	UID Glass	4	26
Personal/Daily	Button	2	1.8
	Utensil, Knife	2	31.1
	Suspender Buckle	4	10.2
Metal	Wok	2	313.4
	Nails, Cut	45	270.3
	Shovel	1	24
	Ammunition	4	17.6
	Dish	1	24.4
	UID Metal	8	64.8
Misc	UID	3	7.2

*Table 3.8 Evans/Chace Site #7*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	328	4004.9
	Double Happiness	82	282.9
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	4	4.4
	Bamboo	33	138.4
	Whiteware	36	40.9
	UID Polychrome	1	2.4
Opium	Pipe	5	6.2
	Box	30	49.1
Glass	Medicinal	6	66.5
	Wine Bottle	1	54.5
	Bottle	1	6.6
Personal/Daily	Button	7	4.5
	Shoe Lining	1	3.4
	Suspender Buckle	4	5.4
	Gaming Piece	1	1.6
	Inkstone	1	9.5
Metal	Shovel	3	1643
	Can	3	49.9
	Nails, Cut	1	16.6
	Ammunition	1	12.6
	Bottle Stopper	1	3.5
	UID Metal	7	196.3
Misc	Plastic	7	4.6

Table 3.9 Evans/Chace Site #8



<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	745	7604.1
	Double Happiness	3	16.6
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	2	5.7
	Bamboo	2	10.3
	Four Seasons	1	5
	Whiteware	7	19.8
	UID Porcelain	1	89.1
Glass	Bottle	4	21.7
Metal	Spike	1	45.4
Misc	UID	1	2.1

*Table 3.10 Evans/Chace Site #9*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	257	3159.5
	Double Happiness	1	3.1
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	1	8.9
	Four Seasons	1	4
Metal	Ammunition	1	5.7
Lithic	Chert Flake	1	3.2

*Table 3.11 Evans/Chace Site #10*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	309	3500.2

*Table 3.12 Evans/Chace Site #11*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	668	9213.8
	Double Happiness	221	782.8
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	9	8.4
	Bamboo	35	154.6
	Ginger Jar	1	2.1
	Whiteware	16	63.4
	UID Idiosyncratic Porcelain	3	101
Opium	Pipe	29	60.2
	Box	1	0.4
Glass	Medicinal	7	106.7
	Wine Bottle	4	235.3
	Bitters Bottle	1	158.9
	Bottle	8	207.7
	UID Embossed Glass	6	50.2
	UID Glass	1	16.6
Personal/Daily	Button	2	1
	Game Piece	1	1.9
Metal	Wok	16	59.4
	Shovel	3	522

*Table 3.13 Evans/Chace Site #11/12*

<u>Artifact Category</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	521	8069.6
	Ginger Jar	5	13.3
Opium	Pipe	25	77.5
	Box	20	40.9
Personal/Daily	Button	5	2.8
	Suspender Buckle	3	5.2
	Game Piece	2	3.5
	Toothbrush, Wooden	1	0.3
Metal	UID Metal	1	0.7

*Table 3.14 Evans/Chace Site #12*

Taken together, the Evans/Chace Summit Camp sites comprise over 5,000 (N=5037) identified ceramic sherds that can be categorized into the major types of Brown-Glazed Stoneware, Double Happiness, Bamboo, Whiteware, Wintergreen/Celadon, Four Seasons, and Ginger Jar (Table 3.15).

Provenience (Site #)	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
Brown-Glazed Stoneware (#)	34	257	7	75	57	13	255	328	745
Brown-Glazed Stoneware (w)	374.4	943.9	46.1	2584.4	985.3	749.4	4563.7	4004.9	7624.1
Double Happiness (#)	1	471	18	6	13	2	28	82	3
Double Happiness (w)	9.9	2190	68.7	53.4	9.8	3.2	92	282.9	16.6
Bamboo (#)	3	215	8	4	5	1	56	33	2
Bamboo (w)	22.9	1886.8	20.7	24.6	8.3	2.6	308	138.4	10.3
Whiteware (#)		109	1		14	1		36	7
Whiteware (w)		274.9	1.2		20.8	4.7		40.9	19.8
Wintergreen/Celadon (#)	1	31		7	1			4	2
Wintergreen/Celadon (w)	0.8	57.5		111.9	0.5			4.4	5.7
Four Seasons (#)		23		16	5				1
Four Seasons (w)		22.4		38.1	43.1				5
Ginger Jar (#)				2				1	
Ginger Jar (w)				4.8				21.6	

Provenience (Site #)	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11/12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>None</u>
Brown-Glazed Stoneware (#)	257	309	668	521	2
Brown-Glazed Stoneware (w)	3159.5	3500.2	9213.8	8069.6	15
Double Happiness (#)	1		221		
Double Happiness (w)	3.1		782.8		
Bamboo (#)			35		11
Bamboo (w)			154.6		123.7
Whiteware (#)			16		
Whiteware (w)			63.4		
Wintergreen/Celadon (#)	1		9		
Wintergreen/Celadon (w)	8.9		8.4		
Four Seasons (#)	1				
Four Seasons (w)	4				
Ginger Jar (#)				1	
Ginger Jar (w)				2.1	

Table 3.15 Major Identified Ceramic Types, Products by Site (Number and Weight(g))

As seen in the table below, Brown-Glazed Stoneware is by far the dominant type of ceramic represented in the Evans/Chace collection, followed by Double Happiness, Bamboo, and Whiteware. Wintergreen/Celadon and Four Seasons account for only about 2% of the

assemblage by number of sherds and less than 1% by weight, making them very rare in the assemblage as a whole (Table 3.16)

<u>Artifact Type</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent (Number)</u>	<u>Percent (Weight)</u>
Brown Glazed Stoneware	3528	70.05	
	45834.2		86.79
Double Happiness	846	16.8	
	3512.4		6.65
Bamboo	373	7.41	
	2700.9		5.11
Whiteware	184	3.65	
	425.7		0.8
Wintergreen/Celadon	56	1.11	
	198.1		0.38
Four Seasons	46	0.91	
	112.6		0.21
Ginger Jar	4	trace	
	28.5		trace

*Table 3.16 Evans/Chace Collection Major Ceramic Type Totals by Number, Weight, and Percentage*

As previously shown in Table 3.1, a number of different archaeologists have taken collections and performed various analyses of Summit Camp, starting with Chace's original 1966 report on the site, and most recently with Arrigoni et al.'s (2013) report on three satellite camps to the east of the main Summit Camp site. The most substantial of these reports is Baxter and Allen's (2008) National Register evaluation of Summit Camp. Baxter and Allen's report includes detailed maps of the site, including topographic maps and maps of extant structures. However, it does not take into account the data from either the Evans/Chace or Costello Collections, as

Baxter and Allen were unaware of their existence when they produced their report (Baxter 2013 personal communication). While the Evans/Chace Collection is permanently curated by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, at the time of the 2013 SCA conference it was temporarily in the possession of Scott Baxter. Prior to my accessing the collection in 2015, at least two archaeologists have produced unpublished partial catalogs of the Evans/Chace collection. The records for Patricia Etter's partial catalog are curated with the collection itself at CHSSC. Many of the artifacts in the collection are labeled with numbers corresponding to this original catalog. However, given the unfinished nature of the database and the lack of detailed notes about the vast majority of artifacts, it is of limited use for research. While in possession of the collection, Baxter also produced a partial catalog and photographic record (Baxter June 15, 2015: personal communication), although this has not been made accessible and I do not have any details on what sort of procedures he performed. In any case, the catalog and photographic record I produced during the Summer of 2015 is the first catalog to account for the entire collection, including the portions collected at other sites such as Donner Hotel and Virginia City (Appendix). A significant amount of time during cataloging was directed towards mitigating the effects of disintegrating curation materials. When I first gained access to the collection, the artifacts were stored in a number of various packages including jewelry boxes, paper, and plastic bags. Many of the paper bags in particular were falling apart and the provenience of some unmarked artifacts was permanently lost.

The research priorities for the Evans/Chace collection were thus as follows: First, to leave the collection in a serviceable condition so that future researchers and CHSSC staff can access the collection without further degrading its provenience. This involved re-bagging and tagging the majority of the collection (unfortunately acid-free bags were not available and thus further curatorial care will be needed in the coming years to ensure the permanent survival of the collection) and assigning new designations for the orphaned artifacts reflecting their loss of

provenience. It also involved producing a photographic record of artifacts with their tags that could be associated with particular entries in the catalog for future reference, so that even if something happens to the collection, there will be some record of its state at the time. Second, to correlate the proveniences available with proveniences from the Costello Collection with a view to eventually merging (analytically and physically) the two collections to make the Summit Camp collection a more complete representation, as well as connecting them to the site maps featured in Baxter and Allen (2008) and Arrigoni et al. (2013). Third, to determine the degree to which ceramics of non-Chinese origin (particularly Whiteware) were present, could be chronologically dated to the 1860s, and thus were plausibly used by Chinese laborers on the railroad. Fourth, to establish the distribution and frequency of various ceramic types across the site in order to both validate the temporally diagnostic ratio of Bamboo to Double Happiness ware types and to compare the relative frequency of different ceramic types by weight and number in order to get a sense for what types might be over- or under-represented based on what metric is emphasized. Due to the time constraints involved, the scattered locations of shared proveniences within the collection, and the unexpected necessity of prioritizing curation, minimum number of items (MNI) was not consistently evaluated. Furthermore, due to these factors, as well as my level of experience in dealing with the irregularities of Brown-Glazed Stoneware, I was unable to consistently establish vessel forms for the Brown-Glazed Stoneware component of the assemblage. These two procedures (and tertiarily, analysis of base marks and idiosyncrasies and irregularities in tableware) should be prioritized by any future analysis the Evans/Chace Collection. Despite these limitations, systematic recording of the Evans/Chace Collection and its integration with the Costello Collection have allowed for the first complete (at least, complete until we discover another collection that has been stored away for decades) presentation of the artifact profile associated with Summit Camp (Table 3.17). The procedures I have enacted also allow for provisional answers to the questions asked regarding the distribution and frequency of ceramics at Summit Camp.



Evans and Chace Sites #2, 11/12, 12, and Costello Collection

		<u>Number</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>
Ceramics	Brown Glazed Stoneware	2682	25621.3
	Double Happiness	801	3162.1
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	6	15.9
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Bowl	2	3.5
	Celadon/Wintergreen	40	90.5
	Celadon/Wintergreen TOTAL	48	109.9
	Bamboo	274	2110.7
	Four Seasons	23	22.4
	Ginger Jar	11	19.3
	Whiteware	140	374.2
	Other	22	160.3
Opium	Pipe	192	269.3
	Box	266	562.6
Glass	Medicinal	52	506.5
	Wine Bottle	53	1608
	Bitters Bottle	1	158.9
	Pickle Bottle	1	32.7
	Other	3	37.7
	UID	20	114.7
Personal/Daily	Button	18	11
	Suspender Buckle	3	5.2
	Toothbrush	1	0.3
	Gaming Piece	8	15.5
	Mother-of-Pearl	1	0.1
Metal	Wok	24	472.7
	Coin	6	13.5
	Locks, Widgets, Tools	12	343

	Shovel	7	931
	Nail, Cut	13	42.1
	Ammunition	1	5.8
	Punctured	1	100.3
	UID	30	230.5
Lithic	Projectile Point	1	2.2
Misc	Misc	8	44.7

*Table 3.17 Main Summit Camp Site Combined Evans/Chace and Costello Artifacts*

Given the large number of artifacts, particularly the major ceramic types (Brown-Glazed Stoneware, Double Happiness, Bamboo, and Whiteware), the relative frequencies arrived at (Tables 3.18 and 3.19) can be regarded as representative of their relative ubiquity on the work camp in a non-arbitrary way (despite the lack of MNIs). As such, they can be used to address the major research priorities outlined above.

<u>Waretype</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>(weight)</u>
BGS	69.47%	81.11%
Double Happiness	20.02%	10.01%
Bamboo	6.85%	6.68%
Whiteware	3.5%	1.18%
Celadon	1.2%	.35%
Four Seasons	.56%	trace

*Table 3.18 Frequencies of various ceramic types at Summit Main Camp*

<u>Waretype</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>(weight)</u>
Double Happiness	60.68%	53.03%
Bamboo	20.76%	35.4%
Whiteware	10.61%	6.28%
Celadon	3.64%	1.84%
Four Seasons	1.74%	.37%

*Table 3.19 Frequencies of various ceramic types at Summit Main Camp excluding all Brown-Glazed Stoneware*

First, they can also be assigned a general spatial distribution, and can be associated with previously identified features, based on correlating the various locations reported in the collections and site reports. Accessing the field maps produced by Evans and Chase, Costello, the Loci identified by Baxter and Allen, and the satellite sites identified by Arrigoni et al. facilitated the integration of the data from these four sources (Table 3.20, Figure 3.10).

<u>Costello Site</u>	<u>Evans/Chace Site #</u>	<u>Baxter/Allen Loci</u>	<u>Arrigoni et al.</u>
DPS1	2	11	
-	3	7-10, 12, 13	
-	4	-	CAL-NEV-1715H
-	7	-	CAL-NEV-1380H
-	8	-	CAL-NEV-1380H
-	10	-	CAL-NEV-712H
DP	12	-	
All other prov.	11, 11/12	-	

*Table 3.20 Correspondence of Locations in Evans/Chace, Costello, and Baxter/Allen reports on Summit Camp*

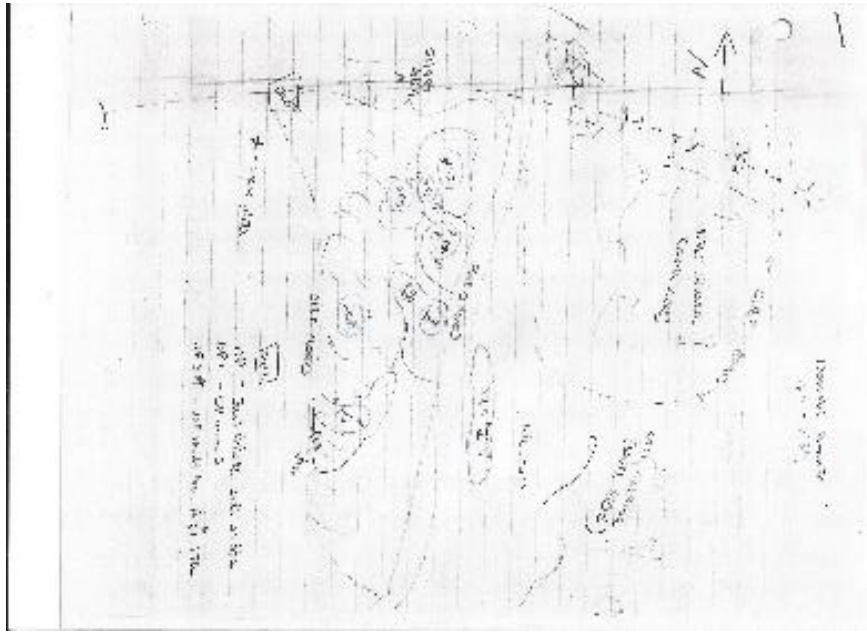
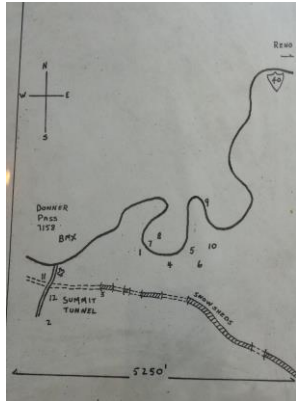


Figure 11. Map of Summit Camp (CA-PLA-2002/H).

Figure 3.10 Site maps from Evans/Chace, Costello, and Baxter and Allen 2008

Baxter/Allen Locus 11, includes several hearths, the footprint of a housing structure, and a significant number of uncollected artifacts (50+) (Baxter and Allen 2008:33). These numbers are dwarfed however, by the associated artifacts as represented by the Costello and Evans/Chance Collections (Table 3.21).

Category	Type	#	weight(g)
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	520	1883.2
	Double Happiness	487	2222.3
	Celadon/Wintergreen, Cup	3	1.8
	Celadon/Wintergreen	31	57.5
	Bamboo	231	1945.8
	Four Seasons	23	22.4
	Whiteware	109	274.9
	UID Non-CBGS Stoneware	1	5.1
Opium	Pipe	104	108.2
	Box	75	261.4
	UID Porcelain	32	294.6
Glass	Medicinal	24	323.8
	Wine Bottle	49	1372.7
	Bottle	6	176
	Pickle Bottle	1	32.7
	UID Embossed Glass	4	13.1
	UID Glass	3	10.4
Personal/Daily	Button	4	3.6
	Mother-of-Pearl	1	0.1
Metal	Coin	3	5.9
	Wok	2	303.8
	Shovel	4	409
	Punctured	1	100.3
	UID Metal	8	79.4
Misc	Tobacco Box	3	36.6
	Rubber	1	1.7

*Table 3.21 Baxter/Allen Locus 11//Costello DSP//Evans/Chace Site#2 Artifacts*

Baxter and Allen's Loci 7-10, 12, and 13 and relatively closely grouped together, and the closest assemblage associated with these areas is Evans/Chace Site #3 (Table 3.22). The total number of artifacts associated with these loci, which include cabin footprints, multiple hearths, and

uncollected artifact scatters, is insignificant when compared to Loci 11. Given the complexity of the features noted here, this is curious. One possible explanation is increased erosion and weather in this particular location could potentially result in most artifacts washing out, though this is not an entirely satisfactory explanation and would require a more sophisticated geoarchaeological analysis.

Category	Type	#	weight(g)
Ceramics	Brown-Glazed Stoneware	7	46.1
	Double Happiness	18	68.7
	Bamboo	8	20.7
	Whiteware	1	1.2
	Sake Bottle	5	32.8
Opium	Box	4	3.1
Personal/Daily	Button	3	2.5
Metal	UID Metal	3	6.8

*Table 3.22 Evans/Chace Camp 3//Baxter Allen Loci 7-10, 12, 13*

The confidence with which we can consider these spatial distributions is debatable. For example, Evans/Chace Site #2 is an outlier, as the only site to have much more tableware than Brown-Glazed Stoneware. I can think of two possible explanations for this. First, it may represent a centralized dining area whereas Brown-Glazed Stoneware storage containers were more evenly distributed across the site. Second, it may be an error of recording, and Site #2 is possibly better interpreted when combined with the other parts of the main Summit Camp (Evans/Chace #11, #11/12, #12, and possibly #3).

The general ratios of ceramics at the Summit Camp main site conforms to the general expectations for a Chinese occupied site of this period (majority Brown-Glazed Stoneware, more Double Happiness than Bamboo, small amounts of expensive wares). The relative

preponderance of Double Happiness and Bamboo is consistent with a site dating to the 1860s and further bolsters the use of this ratio as a temporally diagnostic marker. One significant finding is the small but significant portion of whiteware. Given the wide date range for undecorated whiteware and the unsealed nature of surface deposits, archaeologists should exercise caution in drawing too firm a conclusion about their association with the Chinese workers on the railroad at Summit Camp. However, it is certainly plausible, and given the chronological appropriateness of the vast majority of other artifacts (one notable exception being the Tobacco Boxes, which are all from the 20<sup>th</sup> century), probable that these artifacts were in fact used by the Chinese laborers on the railroad. This is interesting because whitewares comprise a significantly higher percentage of the ceramic assemblage than either Wintergreen/Celadon or Four Seasons, two waretypes which tend to receive more attention from archaeologists. This finding is also consistent with the use of non-Chinese wares on other Overseas Chinese sites including Market Street (e.g. Chan 2013).

Finally, the number:weight ratios of Double Happiness compared to Bamboo suggest that Double Happiness tends to fracture into smaller and less weighty pieces, and thus will tend to be overrepresented compared to Bamboo when compared via number of artifacts, whereas Bamboo may tend to be overrepresented when comparing weight.

While the recording of these collections has not been without flaw or limitation, the procedures I have conducted provide plausible answers to the questions I have posed, and constitute an original contribution to the study of Summit Camp and the field of Overseas Chinese archaeology. My work with the Costello and Evans/Chace Collections has thus:

- Improved the curation of one of the most significant assemblages associated with the transcontinental railroad



- Correlated the assemblages with one another and also features and loci identified by Baxter/Allen, Arrigoni et al., and previous archaeologists
- Conformed to the expected ratios of ceramics types found for a site dating to the 1860s, indicating the collections are not misrepresentative in some obviously significant fashion
- Supported, provisionally, the use of small but significant portions of whiteware among Chinese rural workcamps in the 1860s
- Validated the temporally diagnostic utility of Bamboo to Double Happiness ratios
- Given expectations for breakage trends in Double Happiness and Bamboo wares, with potential consequences for quantitative measurements between them

### Artifact Types - Ceramics

By far the most common ceramic found on work camps occupied by Chinese during the nineteenth century are sherds of Brown-Glazed Stoneware, often called Chinese Brown Glazed Stoneware (CBGS) (Figure 3.11). Brown-Glazed Stoneware is uneven in the quality, coloring, density, and thickness of its biscuit and glaze. Sometimes the glaze is absent from particular sherds, especially in lids and the lower body and base. This variation is more pronounced in some vessel forms than others, particularly the large utilitarian Jar Barrels and their lids.



*Figure 3.11 Chinese Brown-Glazed Stoneware*

Artifacts categorized as CBGS include a number of different forms that often have distinctions in glaze, biscuit, thickness, circumference, and angle that aid in distinguishing form. Based on excavations from Sacramento by the ASC in 1994, Hellman and Yang (1997) distinguish between eleven different CBGS forms: 1) spouted jar 2) liquor bottle 3) wide-mouthed jar 4) globular jar 5) straight-sided jar 6) barrel jar 7) pan 8) rectangular vessel 9) recessed-rim jar 10) lug-handled jar 11) square straight sided jar. The last four types (8-11) are rare, and are not typically used as diagnostic categories in archaeological analyses, though this does not discount the possibility that they are represented (yet unidentified) in the Summit Camp collections.

Given the vast majority of CBGS fragments are body sherds, and given the inconsistency in biscuit and glaze, the vessel form of large proportions of CBGS sherds in both the Evans/Chace

and Costello Collections remain unidentified. More detailed analysis in the future may remedy this situation. However, there are a few generalizations that can be made in order to aid archaeologists who are working with this material. A 'shiny', and 'smooth' glaze and a consistent, thin biscuit typically indicate Spouted Jars and Liquor Bottles. The glaze on larger forms such as Globular and Barrel Jars is typically coarser and more uneven, as is the biscuit.

Brott (1985) and Hellman and Yang (1997) also provide suggestions for the probable uses of these different CBGS forms. 'Spouted Jars' could function as containers for soy sauce, liquor, vinegar, or oil. All of these would be used by multiple people during shared meals, in the sense of a condiment. 'Liquor Bottles' may have been used for a variety of fermented drinks. While Yang and Hellman suggest "the liquor bottles are not known to be re-used for anything other than to be refilled with the liquor that came in them" (Hellman and Yang 1997:61), this may raise more questions than it answers. Why would liquor bottles not be reused for any number of activities unrelated to imbibing? And if they were being refilled with wine, what sort of containers was this wine coming from? I have not seen evidence in the literature regarding casks of wine or liquor being transported to Chinese labor camps, and this also seems to contradict the Congressional testimony of both Charles Crocker and James Strobridge, both important directors of the Central Pacific Railroad who had direct contact with Chinese workers and stated alcohol was not prevalent among them (US Congress 1877). There are, however, a number of examples of CBGS 'Liquor Bottles' from Summit Camp (including one identified as a sake bottle) indicating liquor was used to some degree – though it seems plausible it was used for cooking and was not merely a beverage. 'Wide-Mouthed Jars' were likely used for food storage, including tofu, bean past, and pickled or preserved imported foods. 'Globular Jars' may have been associated with storage of food, but also may have stored liquids such as oil or liquor. 'Straight-sided Jars' are associated with cooking substances as well as potentially storage for medicinal herbs or ointments. 'Barrel Jars' are the largest and heaviest of CBGS vessels, and

thus constitute a significant portion of Brown-Glazed Stoneware sherds. Barrel Jars are associated with multiple uses, including storage of rice and other grains and as rainwater collection devices. They also may have been used to ship the bones of the deceased back to China, and I have observed them in situ in Chinese graveyards dating to the late nineteenth century. The final vessel form, the 'Pan' has a variety of possible uses including food service, functioning as lids for other vessels (Brott 1987, Hellman and Yang 1997:61-2).

CBGS is both the most common artifact type found on Chinese work camps, as well as one of the more difficult to deal with. This difficulty is due to the variety of vessel forms, and the difficulty of identifying form due to variation in thickness, glaze, and biscuit within given forms. Given the fragmentary state of ceramics associated with Summit Camp and the constraints imposed by time, resources, and experience, I have not been able to identify vessel form for much of the CBGS in the Evans/Chace and Costello collections. Future work on the collection should focus on the CBGS portion of these collections in order to come up with a more complete accounting of CBGS vessel forms.

Besides utilitarian stoneware, a number of other ceramic types are represented in the Summit Camp collections including 'Double Happiness', 'Bamboo', 'Wintergreen/Celadon', 'Four Seasons' (Figures 3.12-3.15), ginger jars and a variety of opium pipe bowls.





Figure 3.12 Double Happiness

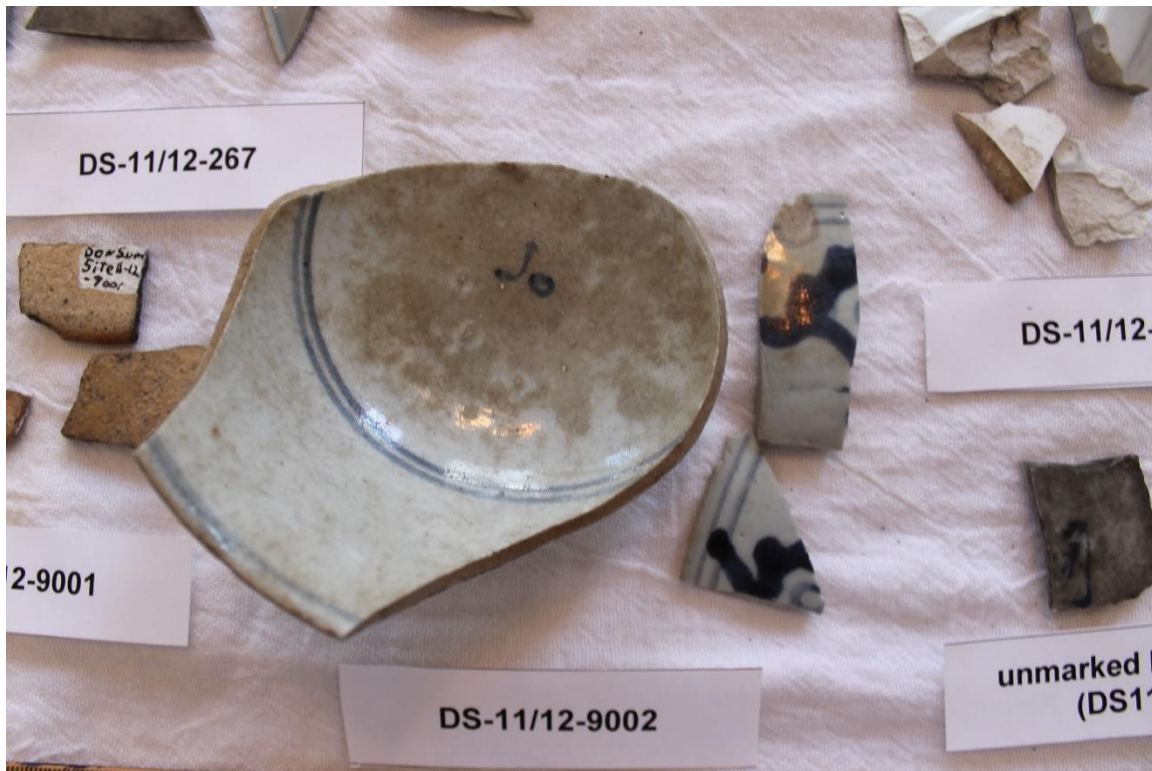


Figure 3.13 Bamboo





Figure 3.14 Celadon/Wintergreen



Figure 3.15 Four Seasons from non-Summit Camp portion of Evans/Chace Collection, Photo by Chace

'Double Happiness' rice bowls constitute the next largest component of the Summit Camp ceramics. Philip Choy (2014) identified a higher quality and more refined version of the Double Happiness pattern and suggests the expedient form we find on nineteenth century Chinese-American sites is a 'degeneration' of this style. The quality of Double Happiness bowls found on work camps varies and demonstrates an uneven and expedient production process resulting in frequent blurring and doubling of the decorative pattern as well as impurities in the glaze.

All of these factors suggest Double Happiness bowls were produced as quickly and cheaply as possible in order to supply a rapidly growing overseas market during the 1860s. Sando and Felton (1993:160, 164) confirm that Double Happiness was one of the cheapest ceramic styles available in American Chinese stores in the 1870s. While Mueller (1987:271) associates the Double Happiness designed with 'wedded bliss' it is difficult to reconcile this symbolism with the context in which they are frequently found – exclusively male work camps far from any semblance of wedded bliss. However, it is conceivable that such discordant symbolism could serve as a reminder of what workers were motivated by – returning home to 'domestic bliss', having 'made it' after long and difficult labors.

The cheap production and rapid distribution of the Double Happiness style can be directly connected with the motivations and strategies employed by Chinese laborers – collective purchasing of cheap but durable and serviceable tablewares in order to simultaneously save money while maintaining familiar diet and foodways.

Double Happiness ceramics are also very useful as a temporally diagnostic artifact (Chace 1979, A. Praetzelis and M. Praetzelis 1982, Felton, Lortie and Shulz 1984:94). Sando and Felton describe them as "one of the few overseas Chinese ceramic styles for which a restricted temporal distribution can be demonstrated" (1993:160). Double Happiness tends to be the

predominant food service ware found in Chinese-American sites prior to about 1870, but then drops off rapidly, being functionally replaced with the 'Bamboo' style. Ratios of Double Happiness to Bamboo in the Summit Camp collections is consistent with this finding, and this indicates that the relative preponderance of these two ceramic styles are a reliable indicator of whether a site is pre- or post- 1870. It is possible that future researchers may be able to refine this observation through comparison of similar sites from the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s. Is there a point in time when both styles were in equal use? Do the ratios of ceramics follow a predictable line or curve, or is the change immediate, perhaps due to changes in production in Guangdong, or distribution networks? A very sudden change would likely indicate these kind of 'top-down' large-scale changes, while a more gradual shift might indicate a changing of taste. These are some of the questions that it may be possible to answer in the coming years through multi-site comparisons.

Besides Double Happiness and Bamboo rice bowls, the Summit Camp collections also contain small numbers of the more expensive 'Celadon/Wintergreen' and 'Four Seasons' styles (Sando and Felton 1993). These styles appear in more forms than either Double Happiness or Bamboo, which are limited to rice bowls, and include bowls, teacups and plates. While occurring relatively infrequently, the relative expense and variety of vessel forms make them a curious addition to Chinese work camps. Kang (2013:14) suggests that Wintergreen/Celadon ceramics were symbolically associated with gentlemen (or aspiring gentlemen), while Four Seasons was associated with wealth (Kang 2013: 18).

The final main category of ceramics associated with Summit Camp is Opium Pipe Bowls. The opium paraphernalia of the Evans/Chace collection was first studied and analyzed by Patricia Etter (1980). Etter compared the pipe bowls found at Summit Camp with pipe bowls from Virginia City and concluded that, while there is variety in form and quality of pipe bowls from



Summit Camp, in general they are simpler and more cheaply made than those found in Virginia City (1980:100). This too reinforces the idea that frugality was a major concern for Chinese railroad workers on the Central Pacific.

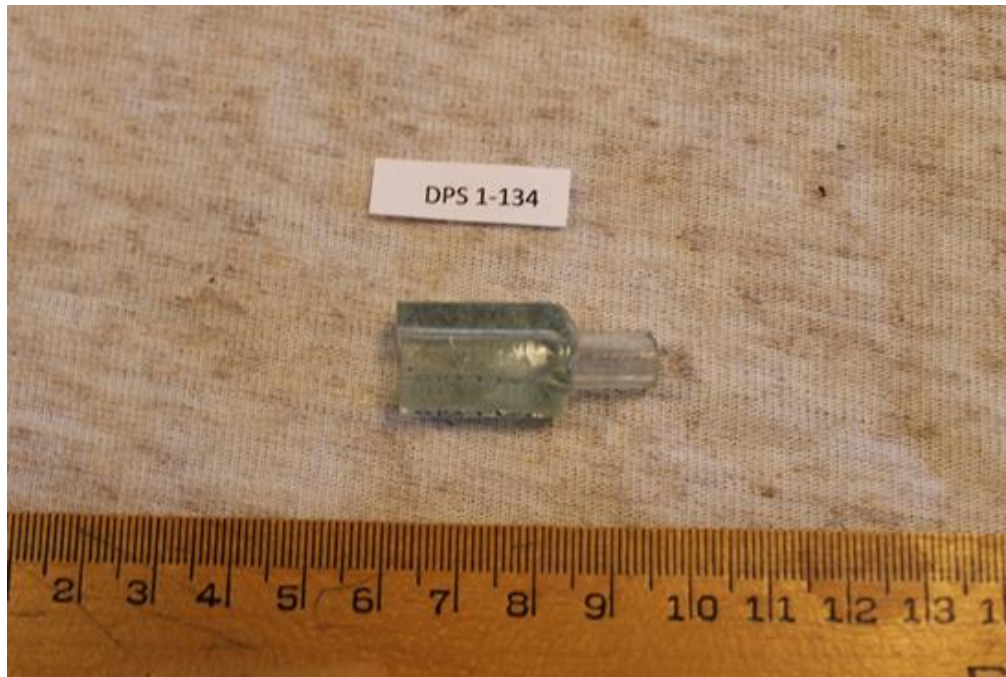
Opium pipes, boxes, and medicinal bottles (some of which likely contained opioid tonics) are distributed across the various sites identified by Evans and Chace, having some presence at Sites #1-4, #7, #8, #11, and #12 (Table 3.23). The wide spatial distribution of opium and opium-related paraphernalia at Summit Camp also supports Williams' (2004) conclusion that, contrary to the popular stereotype, opium use was not spatially associated with 'opium dens'. The variety of forms present in the Summit Camp collections may indicate more 'individualized' purchasing of opium (in other words, opium was likely used by some, but not all, of Chinese workers on the transcontinental, and they probably had to buy it separately, whereas foodstuffs consumed by all workers and their provision was automatic), and multiple instances of incising on the bowls would seem to reinforce the possibility that these artifacts may have been personally owned to a greater degree than tablewares. In any case, opium use should be interpreted as having a medicinal as well as pleasurable aspect to it, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Site#	1	2	3	4	7	8	11/12	12	No Prov.	Total
Opium Pipe (Number)	1	98		1		5	29	25	2	161
Opium Pipe (Weight)	2.6	98.6		2.1		6.2	60.2	77.5	6.6	253.8
Opium Box (Number)	4	60	4		6	30	1	20	11	136
Opium Box (Weight)	7.8	236.7	3.1		24.8	49.1	0.4	40.9	51.8	414.6
Medicinal Vial (Number)	2	23			14	6	7			52
Medicinal Vial (Weight)	8.9	315.7			207.7	66.5	106.7			705.5

*Table 3.23 Evans/Chace Medicinal Products by Site*

## Artifact Types - Glass, Metal, and Miscellaneous Artifact Types

As mentioned above, opium use was also indicated by the presence of opioid tonics and metal opium boxes. Due to the fragmentary condition of the opioid tonic fragments, I have not been unable to definitively date these artifacts, and it is possible they post-date the Chinese occupation. However, given the medicinal use of opium, I suggest it seems plausible that the Chinese were using opium in a variety of forms. Medicinal vials of similar form to those described by Heffner (2015) are also present (Figure 3.16). Other glass items represented in the collection include glass gaming pieces, buttons, and wine bottles (Figures 3.17-3.19).



*Figure 3.16 Medicinal Vial from Summit Camp*



Figure 3.17 Glass Gaming Piece from Summit Camp



Figure 3.18 Glass and Metal Buttons from Summit Camp (Opium Pipe Fragment in Center)





Figure 3.19 Wine Bottle from Summit Camp (upper left) and Ginger Jar (lower left)

Besides opium boxes, a number of other metal artifacts were collected at Summit Camp. These include cut nails, both bent and unbent (Figure 3.20). The temporal range of cut nails overlaps with the Chinese occupation of the site (Visser n.d.), and are likely associated with housing construction.



*Figure 3.20 Cut Nails from Summit Camp*

In addition to nails, the collections also include wok fragments, belt buckles, coins, and two fragments of a door lock (Figures 3.21, 3.22). The door lock is an unusual artifact. The design was patented in 1865, as can be seen on the surface of the artifact itself. It could conceivably have been deposited during the Chinese occupation of Summit Camp. However, if this were the case this would have been a new and likely expensive lock. Either the lock was used during railroad construction when it was a new design, or it was used after railroad construction when it was older. It is possible the lock was somehow associated with the Central Pacific administration, though there is no definitive reason to suggest it was not used by Overseas Chinese workers. If it was used to (for example) secure the domiciles of workers, this would indicate a heightened concern for security and exclusive space.





Figure 3.21 Coins from Summit Camp



Figure 3.22 Door Lock from Summit Camp (center left)

Coins from China and other East Asian countries are common in Chinese-American archaeological sites, and their various functions as gaming pieces, mementos, currency, tokens, and talismans have been discussed extensively in the archaeological literature (e.g. Farris 1980, Akin 1992, 1996, Williams 2011). Like gaming pieces, their presence gives us indications of a thriving social world cohabitating the work environment, and their non-currency uses point to the qualitative and particular ways material objects can mediate exchanges (see Keane 1997 for a detailed examination of these processes in a very different cultural context).

Besides these general categories of artifacts, there are a few idiosyncratic items that merit attention. The collections contain at least one example of a CBSW sherd that appears to have been ground down into a gaming piece after the vessel was broken (#DS1-163-2). This reinforces the picture given elsewhere (e.g. Costello et al. 2004) of the 'slotting in' of coins or retouched sherds to replace missing gaming pieces, and demonstrates both the challenges to social life imposed by life in work camps as well as the ingenuity of Chinese workers in meeting these challenges.

The final artifact I want to highlight here is an inkstone fragment (Figure 3.23, Figure 3.24). According to my research, this inkstone may be the only traditional Chinese writing implement associated with the construction of the transcontinental that has yet been identified. Based on Central Pacific Railroad payroll records available at the California State Railroad Museum, we know that some of the railroad workers were literate, and also that their literacy levels varied from sophisticated (Figure 3.25) to rudimentary (Figure 3.26).





*Figure 3.23 Inkstone fragment from Summit Camp*



*Figure 3.24 Chase and Evans' 'Donner Site 8', where the inkstone fragment above was collected*



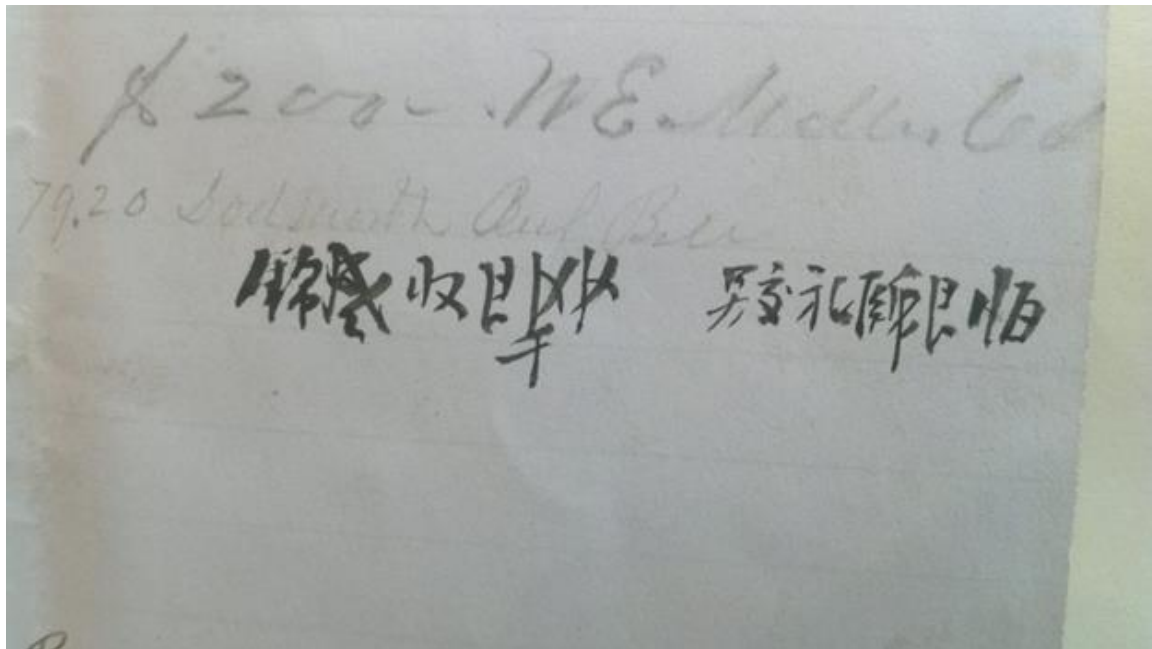


Figure 3.25 Example of Chinese writing from CPRR payrolls

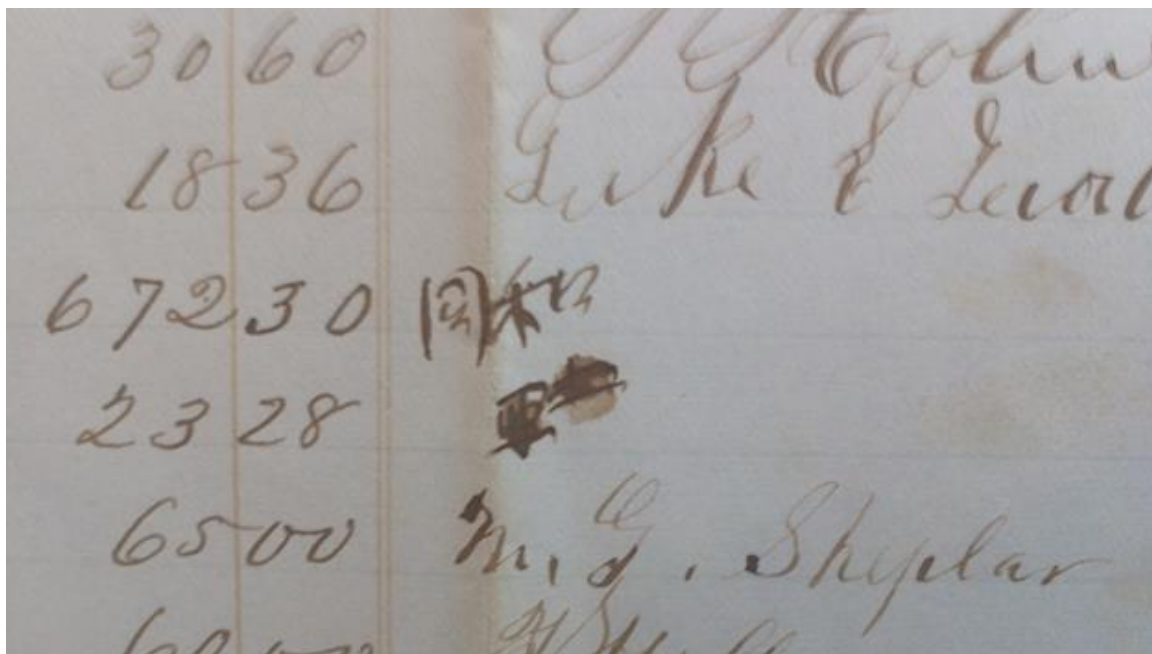


Figure 3.26 Example of Chinese writing from CPRR payrolls

This inkstone fragment provides a link between these textual documents and the material world in which they were produced – instrument and contract manifest themselves from the roles and actions of the Chinese railroad workers.

### Interpreting Summit Camp

While Summit Camp and the artifacts collected there have been examined by multiple archaeologists, the published reports do not synthesize or integrate the data from the thousands of artifacts included in the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections. This is the first document to consider both the Evans/Chace and Costello collections as well as the previously published archaeological investigations. There are significant challenges that limit interpretations of the archaeological materials at Summit Camp, but there are also a number of limited claims that can be made based on artifact ratios and distributions, as described in the Collections Analysis section of this chapter.

There are two main limitations on interpretations of Summit Camp, and these are related to the poor condition of the site, and the issues facing ‘orphaned’ collections. Large portions of Summit Camp were destroyed prior to archaeological work taken place and this severely compromises the integrity of the site (Baxter and Allen 2008). Even without the destruction of large portions of the site through pipeline and road construction, the environmental conditions at Summit Camp are very harsh. While there remains potential for some thin subsurface deposits to contain artifacts (Baxter and Allen 2015), Summit Camp is subject to a yearly freeze and thaw cycle, which erodes away at the site annually. Finally, the proximity of the site to the roads and popular recreational areas results in continued pedestrian traffic and souvenir collecting.

These issues are compounded by the complications that come from dealing with ‘orphaned’ collections. Neither the Evans/Chace nor Costello collections were systematically cataloged

following their collection, and they were collected during periods that had different standards for survey and record keeping than the present day. Various archaeologists have accessed these collections at different times, but there is not a record of this chain-of-possession or what archaeologists did with the assemblages. Some of the proveniences for some artifacts are questionable, and there are notes that indicate some of the artifacts may have been taken for type collections or museum displays.

Finally, there are issues related to preservation. Part of my responsibility in dealing with the Evans/Chace collection was to try to ensure the integrity of the collection was enhanced rather than diminished by my participation. This involved replacing disintegrating paper bags with new plastic bags in order to ensure the provenience of artifacts was not further obscured and other efforts to ensure continued preservation. The cataloging and repackaging of the collections was intended to make it possible for other archaeologists to work with them as cohesive and documented assemblages. Significant complexities remain in using the Summit Camp collections to answer questions regarding activity areas within a work camp, This realization is what led me to try to identify a less disturbed site that could be excavated at some point in the future in order to provide a less convoluted and more systematic understanding of a transcontinental road camp. The initial investigations at 'China Kitchen', as described in Chapter 8, are the first step towards this goal.

### General Conclusions and Future Directions

The limitations of the material, experiential familiarity, and resources has reshaped the direction of this dissertation, and has resulted in my consulting a variety of different information sources. In this chapter, I briefly discussed my initial plans for pedestrian survey and discussed how the project shifted toward collections analysis. I discussed the Evans/Chace and Costello

Collections from Summit Camp both as an introduction to the artifact types found on work camps as well as to analyze what sort of defensible conclusions can be made from a site that is less than ideal in terms of preservation, albeit with significant documented archaeological remains on site. Despite these challenges, I have made several specific claims drawn from the archaeological material, have provided the reasons I think these claims are defensible, and the degree of confidence I have in them.

Frustration with the material also led to my branching out and consulting other sources of information to contextualize Chinese-American life in the nineteenth century, including examining different understandings of landscape (as in Chapter 6). My aim in doing so is to bridge the archaeological material with the major themes I outlined in Chapter 2 (discipline, personhood, etc.). In the next chapter, I will introduce the background literature necessary for understanding the subfield of Overseas Chinese or Chinese-American archaeology, in the hopes that this helps contextualize the archaeological data presented here and in the rest of the dissertation.

## Chapter 4 – Literature Review

### Introduction

The chapter aims at achieving three main goals. First, it will provide an overview of how the subfield of Overseas Chinese archaeology has transformed over the past fifty years. Second, it will provide an update to previous, similar reviews (e.g. Greenwood 1993, Orser 2004, Ross 2013b, Voss 2005, 2015, Voss and Allen 2008) and will integrate some of the latest publications in this rapidly expanding area of research. Third, it will highlight some of the research that is particularly relevant to this dissertation, particularly research located in and around the High Sierras section of the transcontinental railroad. In doing so, it will draw out conflicts and controversies in the subfield regarding two broad categories: controversies over theoretical paradigms, and discussions regarding technical issues.

Issues addressed include what empirical questions archaeologists have asked of the data found on Chinese-American/Overseas Chinese sites, what questions have been definitively answered, and what questions remain. It will highlight the important contributions made towards the construction of artifact typologies and chronologies as well as the excavation and interpretive techniques that have been employed. It will also evaluate the analytic frameworks and theoretical disagreements that have dominated the conversation within the sub-field. Finally, it will provide a description of the state of the subfield as it stands today, and will make apparent how this dissertation intervenes into the current disciplinary situation.

### Pioneers of Overseas Chinese Archaeology

Archaeological attention first turned toward Overseas Chinese communities in the 1960s.

According to Staski, “The emergence and early growth of Asian American historical archaeology

mirrors the emergence and early growth of archaeological studies of ethnicity in general. These were originally inspired by the larger political and social climate of the 1960s” (2007:347). While, “archaeologists were initially slow to conduct research at Overseas Chinese sites” (Voss 2005:424), the origins of the subfield are connected to other historical archaeology projects focused on Americans of non-European descent as a means to correct the overemphasis on European contributions that then (and to a lesser degree now) dominated historical texts.

This cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the political changes that were occurring during the 1960s. The 1965 Immigration Act fundamentally changed how immigration to the United States worked. Prior to this time, various racial quotas were in force which effectively limited the total numbers of immigrants from large portions of the globe including South and East Asia, and Africa. As Ross states, Overseas Chinese Archaeology, “emerged in the USA in the context of heightened interest in civil rights, social history, multiculturalism, and ethnicity in the 1960s, along with the advent of legally mandated resource management archaeology” (Ross 2013b:5676). In other words, new civil rights laws led to increased immigration to the United States from China and other countries and to new demands for histories that reflected the various origins of the American people while cultural resource management laws led to archaeological investigations on previously neglected areas of America’s archaeological record. Concurrent with these developments, historical archaeology emerged as a distinct subfield within archaeology as a whole.

Early archaeological investigations of Overseas Chinese from the late 1960s include Ayres’ 1967 excavation in Tucson (Ayres 1969a, 1969b, 1984, Olsen 1978) and Chace and Evan’s investigation of railway camps near Donner Summit (Chace 1966, 1969, 1976, 2015 Chace and Evans 1969). Reanalysis of the Chace and Evans collection from Summit Camp was discussed in Chapter 3. One of the most significant early excavation featuring Overseas Chinese

components was Roberta Greenwood's work on the San Buenaventura Mission Plaza in Ventura, California (Greenwood 1976, 1980), which included chapters on local history, architectural features, Chinese coinage, and ceramics.

Teague and Shenk (1977) performed excavations at the Harmony Borax Works, investigating features associated with Chinese workers dating to the 1880s. They determined that despite the rural location of the Borax Works, the Chinese workers there “were supplied with goods from San Francisco by an extremely reliable and efficient commercial network” (Greenwood 1993:377). This is one of the earliest instances that notes the importance and efficiency of commercial networks among Overseas Chinese populations, and these commercial networks are also apparent in the constitution of the Summit Camp assemblages as discussed in Chapter 3. Teague and Shenk concluded that ‘acculturation’ had taken place by this time period due to the use of American tools and clothing, in spite of the fact that “more than 99 percent of the ceramics were Chinese (1977:213-7)” (Greenwood 1993:377). This introduces another central aspect of early Overseas Chinese Archaeology – the hold that the ‘acculturation’ framework had on the theoretical imagination at this time. In addition to acculturation, early work in the subfield was shaped by the themes of ‘continuity’, ‘insularity’, ‘difference’. For example, Olsen (1978) analyzed ceramics from Ayres’ Tucson excavation and concluded, “although nearly a century of occupation is represented in the Tucson Chinese ceramic finds, a major theme that runs throughout the assemblage is that of continuity”. Olsen’s explicit goal in this analysis was to “provide a catalogue of basic information to facilitate future studies of this sort” (1978:1). While successful in this, his interpretation of this ceramic continuity as, “one manifestation of [a] traditional value system” (1978:49) seems painfully dated, insofar as it equates stability of ceramic types with an unchanging traditional culture. Greenwood summarized the intellectual terrain of the early field as follows:

“From the inception of Chinese sites archaeology, [a] certain truism had been accepted: that the national origins of things Chinese could be readily recognized even when the function of an item was not identified; that settlement patterns were most often spatially limited and populations unmixed; that the quantity of cultural materials was often very high; that dating of artifacts which were conservative in form, pattern, and technology was difficult; that women were very few or absent.” (Greenwood 1993:377)

Other early studies include Farris' (1979) examination of Chinese coins associated with the Woodland Operahouse, northwest of Sacramento in Central California. Williams credits Farris with recognizing “that coins played an active role in mediating social and economic interactions” (2011:301). Early excavations were also conducted in Lovelock, Nevada, and Idaho City, Idaho (Hattori et al. 1979, Jones et al. 1979). According to Greenwood, “Not all of those who approached Chinese sites were necessarily qualified in historical archaeology, versed in Chinese cultural traditions, or dedicated to the kind of research needed to identify artifacts or behaviors outside of the Euroamerican experience” (Greenwood 1993:378). As a consequence the quality of these early studies is uneven and sometimes difficult to integrate with later studies. Ross describes this early work as “an uncoordinated collection of primarily descriptive site reports” (2013b:5675)

Staski summarized these early excavations by stating, “Little theory of any kind was developed, and research efforts were not coordinated” (2007:348). Orser in turn characterized “the earliest studies involving Chinese topics” as, “neither planned nor operationalized” (2004:82), and “simple in design and facile in findings” (2004:83). Voss is somewhat more generous in her assessment of these “technical studies”, crediting them with “establish[ing] an empirical foundation for the subfield, including developing artifact typologies and identifying chronologically diagnostic materials” (2005:425).

By the 1990s, Greenwood, herself a pioneer in the subfield who published some of the most significant early reports (e.g. 1976, 1980), cast a sharply critical eye on archaeological



investigations from this period. Greenwood criticized the lack of comparisons with material from China (1993:375), the rarity of theoretical constructs (1993:377), and the assumption that “Chinese sojourners maintained the traditional way of life, manifest most obviously in the remains associated with the preparation and consumption of food, various forms of recreation, and the healing arts” (*ibid*). She also criticized the selectivity and lack of systematic reporting of artifacts (1993:377), presaging Mullins’ (2008) later criticism of fetishization of the ‘strange and unusual’ in Chinese-American archaeology. The ‘rescue archaeology’ context of many of the excavations led to “hasty and limited” fieldwork (Greenwood 1993:378), and lack of clarity in laboratory methods complicated comparisons (*ibid*). Finally, archaeological findings were reported without reference to local histories, or with reference to documents from time periods unrelated to the archaeological findings (Greenwood 1993:380). Greenwood concludes, “There was very little which was actually “new” in identification or innovative in approach” (*ibid*).

Greenwood advised archaeologists involved with Chinese-American sites to focus their research designs (1993:375), and cautioned that further excavations would become “harder to justify” given the fact that similar artifact types (including those discussed in Chapter 3) are ubiquitous on Chinese-American sites (1993:397). However, she notes that there is much that can still be learned about artifacts’ “function, date, value, and place of origin” (1993: 397) and specifically mentions ceramic basemarks as an avenue that could be pursued (1993:398) (ironically, there appears to have been little progress in this area even to the present date).

The criticism made by Staski, Greenwood, Orser, Ross, and others can also be applied to the essays found in *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Culture History*, edited by Robert Schuyler (1980), the first edited volume with an explicit focus on the historical archaeology of Asian Americans. In addition to a brief bibliography, this volume includes four chapters on Asian American archaeology focusing on

foodways (Evans 1980), opium pipes (Etter 1980), subsistence and economic networks (Langenwelter 1980), and the Main Street excavations in Ventura (Greenwood 1980). The interpretations in this volume leave much to be desired. Evans characterizes Chinese artifacts as tied to either *food* or *fantasy* (1980:90) and tends towards unfortunate essentialisms such as, “Chinese material culture is a wood, bamboo, and paper culture” (1980:95), while Etters’ paper (though valuable on technical grounds) compares opium pipes from Donner Summit and Virginia City, and declares “the residents of Virginia City Chinatown showed more individuality in their choice of pipe bowls” (1980:100). As discussed in the previous chapter, the variation and presence of incising on opium pipe bowls can plausibly be interpreted as suggesting these artifacts were more personal than some of the other artifact types such as tablewares. However, as I will argue in more detail in Chapter 7, western connotations of individuality are problematic when applied to Chinese-American workers in the nineteenth century.

Elsewhere in the volume, Langenwelter uses archaeological remains from an 1880s Chinese store along the Fresno River in Central California (1980:103) to evaluate the “ethnohistoric record” as exemplified by Spier’s (1958a, 1958b) acculturation model for foodways and tool use. Langenwelter characterizes the choice of tablewares as “conservative” and concludes “relatively little assimilation of culture traits can be seen in the subsistence and table ware refuse” (1980:109). Langenwelter then uses this data to “reaffirm the ethnohistoric record” (1980:110) (i.e. Spier’s 1958a, 1958b model - the acculturation model).

Mullins criticizes this interpretation as one instance of using “the material record ... to fortify the image of Chinese immigrants as zealously guarding traditional culture, if not intentionally excluding themselves from American public space” (2011:131). Greenwood’s article (1980, same volume) has conclusion similar to Langenwelter. As three-quarters of the artifacts recovered from the Ventura excavations were of Chinese origin, Greenwood concludes, “The

Chinese immigrant of this period between 1850-1870 did not intend to establish permanent residence in California, but to accumulate his earnings and return to China. He thus lacked both the necessity to accommodate and the incentive to adapt to new lifeways” (1980:114).

Greenwood concludes “The Chinese culture thus remained essentially intact” (1980:120).

While Greenwood’s essay is firmly rooted in the ‘acculturation model’ and contributes to a view of Overseas Chinese as, “willing outsiders who saw their identities as rooted in China and had little invested in their lives in the United States” (Mullins 2011:130), she *does* express doubt “whether the usual standards of acculturation even apply when there is neither opportunity nor advantage to adapting to the host culture” (Greenwood 1980:114). Greenwood also laments that, “research is sorely needed in the country of origin” (1980:119), though as of the present these transnational collaborations are still in their early stages.

For Orser, Greenwood’s essay is “an excellent example” of the “simple” and “facile” character of early Overseas Chinese archaeology. In particular, he criticizes Greenwood’s use of a schematic chart entitled ‘Summary of traits in Chinese and non-Chinese features’ (Greenwood 1980:118, Orser 2004:84). Greenwood uses this chart to distinguish features associated with Chinese or non-Chinese sites. For example, porcelain spoons (Chinese) vs. metallic cutlery (non-Chinese), pork and seafood (Chinese) vs. beef and sheep (non-Chinese), opium pipes (Chinese) vs. clay pipes (non-Chinese), etc (*ibid*)

In spite of this criticism, Orser attempts to be even-handed when he grants, “this now facile view was somewhat revolutionary when presented” by addressing the assemblage as a whole. Orser credits this “assemblage perspective” with encouraging “historical archaeologists to abandon the individual-artifact-as-ethnic-marker model” (2004:83). To further defend Greenwood, and granting that her division of artifacts into ‘Chinese’ and ‘non-Chinese’ categories is simplistic and essentializing, I would ask the following: In the absence of documentary corroboration, on what basis would a historical archaeologist characterize a site as having been occupied by Overseas Chinese?

I would suggest that despite a lack of philosophical grounding, in practice Greenwood's scheme is precisely the sort of thing archaeologists still do, at least as a beginning and as a pragmatic way to sort sites for research purposes. Greenwood doesn't claim her division is any sort of 'natural kind' but rather a diagnostic tool. I would argue that if we are cognizant of its limits, pragmatic use of such schema do not necessarily lead to essentializing, stereotyping, or equating peoples with distinctive material instruments and residues. However, caution should be used in applying these schemas for two reasons: first, it is easy to slip into essentialized thinking without noticing it; second, multiple assemblages associated with Overseas Chinese communities (e.g. the Market Street Collection, and the collections housed at Sonoma State) contain multiple non-Chinese artifacts. Orser's criticism, while perhaps overly harsh, is nonetheless well taken.

Mary Praetzelis (2004) provides us with a more productive way of addressing these questions. She grants that Overseas Chinese "brought with them distinctive ceramics and foodways", but the important question is "not *which* goods the Overseas Chinese used, but *how* this group used, reused, and adapted them" (2004:259).

LaLande (1982) and Ritchie (1986) offered views of nineteenth century Chinese immigrants that emphasized the "persistence of traditional culture, combined with a limited degree of voluntary and involuntary acculturation. Such acculturation was dominated by functionally equivalent substitutions for unavailable items adopted out of practical necessity" (Ross 2013a:9). Ritchie's study of Chinese miners in New Zealand is the earliest example of Overseas Chinese Archaeology beyond North America, while LaLande's study was focused on ledgers associated with a rural Oregon store dating to the mid-1860s (Ross 2013a:124). These ledgers suggest a number of surprising findings, including the fact that local flour considerable outsold imported

rice (Ross 2013a:116) and “more than 80 percent of Chinese miners” who shopped at the store purchased liquor with 60 percent classified as “steady drinkers” (Ross 2013a:124). Furthermore, most of the liquors purchased were not Chinese. All of these findings run contrary to the story told by the artifacts at Summit Camp and other transcontinental railroad camps, despite the fact that they occurred at the same time. If the findings from LaLande’s study are indicative of a larger trend among Chinese miners in the Northwest, it may indicate distinct lifestyles between miners and railroad workers during the 1860s.

Following his criticism of Greenwood, Orser levels similar charges against Olsen’s (1983) analysis of Chinese coins from Ayer’s (1969) Tucson excavation, stating “Olsen comes dangerously close to promoting the single-artifact-as-ethnic-marker model” (2004:85). Orser characterizes Olsen’s argument in stating, “the late nineteenth-century circulation of Chinese coins, after they were useless as currency, was a social (and probably also political) act intended to project ethnic unity” (2004:85). Olsen indeed states, “The persistent presence of such East Asian currency in the archaeological record after the demonitization of foreign coins ... and the devaluation of Qing currency ... attests to their continued importance as intracommunity tokens of exchange which served to strengthen the traditional cultural bonds which were apparently an important feature in these frontier enclaves,” and highlights their non-currency functions by stating, “the talismanic and oracular properties associated with many of these coins undoubtedly account for their persistence in such communities” (1983:53). However, it is unclear to me why Orser interprets Olsen as suggesting an *intentional* socio-political act with the goal of maintaining ethnic unity.

Another landmark study during this time was *Wong Ho Leun* (1987), an innovative integrated volume with chapters on history, culture, artifacts, and architecture. Of particular interest in this volume is Mueller’s article on *feng shui*, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Foundational

documents on artifact categories are included in the volume, such as Langenwarter and Langenwarter's chapter on faunal remains, Brott's description of utilitarian stonewares (CBGS), Mueller's chapter on tablewares, Wylie and Higgens' typology of opium pipe bowls, and Akin and Akin's chapter on coins (all 1987).

It is excessive and impractical to attempt to summarize or present all the research on Chinese-American/Overseas Chinese sites that occurred during this initial phase of research, but the documents mentioned should provide a starting point for researchers interested in the history of Overseas Chinese Archaeology. Voss summarizes the period as follows, "During the 1970s and 1980s, when Overseas Chinese archaeology was in its early stages of development, many historical archaeologists embraced anthropological and sociological models of acculturation" (2005:427). This concern for issues of acculturation is pervasive in the research of this period and can fairly be described as the overarching research paradigm of early Overseas Chinese archaeology. Voss describes the assumptions inherent in such a model, including "inherent acculturative pressure", the equation of "cultural continuity" with "resistance" and "resistance" as evidence of "agency" (and vice versa) (2005:427). I can add to these assumptions. First, the belief that a coherent American and Chinese national identity was extant during the nineteenth century, a proposition I would argue is highly questionable. Second, the assumption that American and Chinese identities are somehow in a zero-sum conflict where one must come at the expense of the other, and Finally, that changes in identity and/or cultural persistence can be mapped onto changes in specific forms of material culture. As Voss states, "a necessary premise of these methodologies is that there is a clear, archaeologically visible opposition between Eastern tradition and Westernization" (Voss 2005:427).

These early studies have continued to influence the theoretical and methodological decisions made by later researchers, for both good and ill. The typological foundation for all further studies



of Chinese-American sites was established from the 1960s through the 1980s, and all subsequent archaeologists are in debt to these early pioneers for laying the material foundations of the field. However, the theoretical contributions of the period are more suspect. As a result of the acculturation model, and perhaps occasional stereotyping, archaeologists often portrayed early Chinese immigrants as “insular, segregated enclaves” with “minimal interactions” with outsiders (Voss 2005:426). This picture of the Chinese as “static and traditional” has not held up to archaeological scrutiny in subsequent years, yet stubbornly appears time and again, even among conscientious and self-critical scholars. This is likely the result of the unconscious force these prefabricated stereotypes, reiterated in orientalist film and media, have on us all as members of the public.

As such, the scholars must stay on guard against repeating such portrayals. Chapter 5, an in depth look at the cultural milieu of China during the mid-nineteenth century, is in part an attempt to combat such tendencies. As Greenwood (1993) noted, archaeologists typically have not put their archaeological findings into a historical context that is inclusive of events and trends in China and Guangdong Province. We will see that China in the nineteenth century was undergoing comprehensive changes in politics, culture, economics, family life, and its relationships with the outside world. Indeed, a worker who travelled to the US to work on the railroad in the 1860s could have returned to his homeland as an old man and found an extremely transformed social landscape. The series of crises that began to impact life in China in the 1840s, including the Opium Wars, the Taiping Rebellion, the Hakka-Bendi wars, changing marriage patterns (Stockard 1992), and attenuated economic opportunities (Marks 1998) had, by the end of the century, eroded the economic, social, and political stability of the Qing Empire. The Qing, who had dominated China since the seventeenth century, and indeed the imperial system itself would finally collapse in 1912, ushering in a period of political disunity that would only end on the Chinese mainland with Communist victory in 1949. It is hard to imagine a

society further removed from the 'static and traditional' stereotype that still dominates public perceptions of China and Chinese culture.

The main contributions of the next period of archaeological research are not, however, a more in-depth engagement with Chinese history and culture. Rather, the two main contributions of the next period are a reasoned critique against the acculturation model and the struggle to replace it with new, more felicitous theoretical frameworks, and the refinement and expansion of the types of evidence and methods of analysis brought to bear on Chinese-American archaeological material.

### Acculturation and its Discontents

The 1980s and 1990s saw a maturation of Overseas Chinese archaeology with the Sacramento excavations of Mary and Adrian Praetzelis (M. Praetzelis and A. Praetzelis 1981, 1982, 1990, 1997) and later in Oakland (M. Praetzelis 2004), as well as the Riverside Chinatown (Kingston et al. 1985). The Praetzelis' were some of the first archaeologists in the sub-field to explicitly (and sometimes humorously, as in A. Praetzelis and M. Praetzelis 1998) critique the acculturation model. Along with Roberta Greenwood (1976, 1980, 1996, Greenwood and Slawson 2008) the Praetzelis' have made the most sustained and substantive contribution to the archaeology of Overseas Chinese, and it is perhaps in their work that we see a shift in an interest in 'Chinese stuff' to the lives of the people who used it.

Praetzelis and Praetzelis used their excavations to "show how the [Chinese] merchants attempted to create a traditional Chinese environment in Sacramento and used ethnicity as a tool by which to maintain and enhance their influence on both the Chinese and White communities" (M. Praetzelis and A. Praetzelis 1982, 1997:24-5). In so doing, the Praetzelis'

replaced a view of the Overseas Chinese as monolithic with one that recognized internal divisions such as that between workers and merchants, and showed 'individual' Chinese as agentive forces who strategically and actively shaped the world around them. In addition, Praetzellis and Praetzellis threw into question the assumption that changes in material assemblages and culture change are coterminous. They point out that different Overseas Chinese had differential access to material products such as ceramics and that this rather than acculturation or resistance was likely an important determinate of the composition of such assemblages (e.g. M. Praetzellis and A. Praetzellis 1997).

Notably, the Praetzellis' investigation of a particular merchant, Yee Ah Tye, found that while he sold ceramics that were almost all of Chinese origin, he personally used ceramics of both Asian and European origins. The Praetzellis' even recovered a Victorian etiquette manual from his home (A. Praetzellis and M. Praetzellis 2001:649). The Praetzellis' suggest that Overseas Chinese merchants may have strategically used non-Chinese "symbols of gentility" to draw a class distinction between themselves and Chinese wage laborers. This is relevant to this research for a few different reasons. First, it demonstrates distinctions within the Chinese-American community that affected the degree to which particular Chinese immigrants used non-Chinese materials. Second, it illustrates the special intermediary role played by some Chinese. The juxtaposition of different ceramic types not only brings into question the assimilation/resistance dichotomy but also the question of differential access to materials. It also raises the question of whether Overseas Chinese saw a connection between their 'identities' and the 'material culture' they used. As Mullins summarizes, "from the perspective of miners, the Asian goods may have maintained cultural traditions and been unspoken resistance to mainstream material practices, but they also reflected how marketplace access was constrained for Chinese American laborers" (2011:133-4). Finally, the Praetzellis' paint a picture of Overseas Chinese merchants as 'middlemen' who actively used material culture to negotiate

their relations both with other Chinese workers as well as non-Chinese. This provides a counterexample to many previous studies that interpreted Chinese material residues as resistance to acculturation (e.g. Greenwood 1980:121, Fagan 1993, Felton et al. 1984, Staski 1993:138).

The Praetzelis' emphasis on strategy and the individual can be seen as part of a disciplinary shift from a Processual focus on 'systems' to a Postprocessual concern for 'agents'. This theoretical shift was a necessary corrective to archaeological interpretations in which "individuals appear controlled by rituals according to universal expectations," and in which "there is no sense ... they actively manipulate and negotiate ideologies" (Hodder and Hutson 2003:30).

However, I would argue this shift is not without its own perils. For example, Knapp and Meskell argue, "experiencing oneself as an individual entity is part of human nature ... layered upon this is a more culturally specific determination of what [it] is to be a person at a given time and place ... Overlying this second stratum is a finer layer of interpretation, that of individually determined experience" (1997:198). This amounts to (as Julian Thomas (2004) argues) an essentialist position in which 'individual' human beings are a natural category of analysis, a position I argue is mired in Western provincialism and is easily co-opted (particularly in the United States) by the forces of hegemonic capital. In addition, Chinese cosmology issues from different assumptions about the relationship between self and world than Judeo-Christian understandings (Ames and Rosemont 1998, Hall and Ames 1998:39-45).

To explain this further, we can grant that each particular person experiences the sensory world from their own body, and relates to the world and others based in part on their subjective positionality. However, as Thomas argues, "if the contingent aspects of personhood are 'added' to individual human nature, the implication is that the latter is pre-social. ... the universality of

the individual and their body are vested in their primordially, existing before culture and society come on the scene. This, of course, is an essentialist position” (2004:141). Thomas claims such a position entails that “an experience is only valid if it is the experience of an individual,” and concludes, “whenever the attempt is made to insist on the primordially of the individual this dichotomy between the transcendental yet unique self inside and the cultural world outside will recur” (2004:143).

In this, I concur with Thomas’ position rather than Knapp and Meskell’s. Furthermore, as discussed in detail in Chapter 7, arguing for “individual human nature” is at the very least easily transformed into reifying Macpherson’s *possessive individual* as a trans-cultural phenomenon. This should give anthropologists pause both because this position is not supported by the ethnographic archive (e.g. Strathern 1990 and countless others) and also because the *possessive individual* is one of the cornerstones of the ideology of the ruling capitalist class (Leone 2005:34, Matthews 2010:10). As I argue in detail in Chapter 7, reifying individuality, however well intentioned, is far from the ideal framework with which to understand Overseas Chinese of the nineteenth century.

The surreptitious importation of individuality into human nature has reoccurred in anthropological writing at least as far back as Mauss’ *A category of the human mind: the notion of person; the notion of self* ([1938] 1985) with negative consequences both for our understanding of the breadth of variability apparent in human subjectivity and for our ability to mount effective resistance to current structures of power. For these reasons, I emphatically dissuade historical archaeologists, particularly those dealing with Chinese-American communities of the nineteenth century, from using the language of individuality. To put it bluntly, the individual is discursive and should be discussed in terms of the discourse of individuality rather than an assumed universal of human nature. To conclude, while neither Chinese nor

European cosmologies are monolithic or unchanging, they have relatively distinct historical trajectories and foster different ways of being-in and seeing the world. By foreclosing the question of the individual, we may prevent ourselves from understanding precisely what makes the Overseas Chinese most interesting. I will return to this issue in detail in Chapter 7.

In what I interpret as a parallel critique, Voss (2008) expresses concern over automatically privileging particular scales of archaeological interpretation. The Praetzelis' privilege "the smallest of scales, the (re)constructed experiences of families and even individuals" (2004:8), and hold, "to be effective, an archaeological research design should link archaeological deposits with historically documented events and processes so that significant archaeological research questions may be identified" (1997:27). This is all well and good, but in practice means "the 'ideal' archaeological resource is a tightly dated, spatially discrete feature or deposit that was formed through the refuse disposal practices of an individual household and is located within the boundaries of a property that was legally owned or leased by the same household" (Voss 2008:39). For Voss, this "prevalent emphasis on household association poses specific challenges for the archaeology of Overseas Chinese communities. Overseas Chinese sites, especially urban Chinatowns, rarely include deposits that can be attributed to specific household". As a result, "the findings of these projects are often viewed as more coarse-grained" (*ibid*). These difficulties are pervasive in Urban Archaeology, and as the research described in Chapter 3 shows, the material archaeologists have to deal with is not always ideal. Part of the archaeological process is finding out what archaeological resources and materials are available, and then selecting the best available techniques there are to describe and connect these materials to questions of contemporary significance.

Further significant contributions to the subfield during the 1990s include *Hidden Heritage: Historical Archaeology of Overseas Chinese* (1993), a collection of essays edited by Priscilla



Wegars, and *Down By The Station* (1996), an archaeological description of the Los Angeles Chinatown, by Roberta Greenwood. *Hidden Heritage* includes fourteen chapters on topics ranging from rural and urban contexts to analytical studies. One important insight from Stapp's chapter on rural mining camps around Pierce City, Idaho, was that Chinese merchants were socially and materially distinct from Chinese miners (1993:23-5), and that "community overshadowed ethnic categorization" (1993:28).

In his chapter, Sisson presents the findings of a survey project along the Lower Salmon River in Idaho and records a number of chimney features associated with an Overseas Chinese presence. This chapter is notable for Sisson's attempt to use *feng shui* as a framework to interpret the layout of various structures (1993:38), which will become relevant for our discussion of *feng shui* in Chapter 6. Sisson's article is also useful for the trends noted in building construction, including the fact that the chimneys were "generally three-sided with the front open" (1993:52), and were often 'adjacent to the entrance" (1993:59). Sisson suggests these chimney and hearth forms, "may reflect architectural features attributable only to the Chinese" (1993:58). Sisson describes the Chinese associated with the hearth as "resourceful in building their own structures, but willing to obtain housing that was provided or already established," and concludes "the Chinese were adaptable, used a wide variety of building materials, and adopted local building techniques" (1993:58-9). These insights will aid in our interpretation of the hearths found at the 'China Kitchen' site, which will be briefly discussed in Chapter 8. Other authors who have discussed the structure and orientation on hearths, oven, and chimneys include Conwell (1871:134-5), Boyd (1962:83), Hommel (1937:148), Briggs (1974:132), Johnson and Theodoratus (1984:66), and Wegars (1991). Sisson also notes that the Chinese around the Salmon River and elsewhere often used and lived in previously constructed structures, which complicates the expected architectural signature of Chinese sites, as does the "considerable variability" of Chinese habitations (1993:58). One particular detail

Sisson mentions that may be unique to Chinese constructed shelters is the location of “a chimney adjacent to the entrance of the structure” (1993:59). Sisson concludes the style and practicality of Chinese habitations is indicative of their practicality and ingenuity.

This image of the Chinese as “resourceful” is repeated in Fee’s chapter on terraced gardens in Idaho’s Warren Mining District (1993:94) and stands in stark contrast to depictions of Overseas Chinese as insular and unchanging. By 1870, one-third of the population of Idaho were of Chinese origin, while in Warren they made up the majority of the population (Elsensohn 1970:15, Fee 1993:71, US Census 1870). According to Fee, “the white and Chinese people of Warren, compared with those in some mining districts, lived in relatively peaceful co-existence, a co-existence which may be attributed to the fact that the Chinese were the overwhelming majority over a long period of time” (1993:73). This provides a unique picture of early Chinese-American life given the fact that Chinese immigrants were the minority in virtually every other part of the country.

Longenecker and Stapp’s study used documentary data to “describe the manner in which the Pierce Chinese obtained, prepared, and consumed meat products” (1993:97). While Longenecker and Stapp equate ‘traditional lifestyle’ with non-adoption of non-Chinese material culture in an unfortunate way (1993:98) the article is valuable for questioning what sort of butchering techniques would have been used, whether these persisted, or if there were changes, either from “trial and error” by inexperienced butchers or through the adoption of different techniques (1993:105). They also suggest that while pork was purchased in large cuts and then butchered, beef was purchased in its pre-cut retail form (1993:119).

Staski’s chapter in *Hidden Heritage* article explicitly uses the acculturation model with reference to the Overseas Chinese community in El Paso, stating “it is generally accepted that materials

can be sensitive indicators of whether ethnic groups maintained separation, or significantly assimilated with each other or into the host society” (1993:127). He defines *assimilation* as, “a series of processes which, if completed, totally eliminate the need for and operation of the two most significant ethnic group functions,” which he describes as “1) providing individuals with an ascriptive and exclusive group with which they identify, and 2) allowing individuals to confine primary relationships to others within that group”. In contrast, he defines *acculturation* as “merely one of these processes ... which eliminate particular behavioral patterns which serve to identify those who are within or without the ethnic population” (1993:128). In El Paso, Staski found “No significant alterations in social structure are apparent in either the archaeological or documentary data, and the vast majority of Chinese seem to have restricted primary relationships to within their community” (1993:145).

Staski then uses this data to evaluate three theories “regarding the underlying causes of ethnic boundary maintenance”, those of Barth (1969) who “claims that the degree of boundary maintenance is determined by the extent of overlap between each group’s economic activities.”; Spicer (1971, 1972), who “sees boundaries strengthening among minorities as a powerful group increases its attempts to absorb the smaller groups”; and McGuire (1982), who “regards degrees of disparity in the distribution of power as a critical factor determining the strength of ethnic boundaries” (Staski 1993:145). As there was significant overlap in the economic activities of the Chinese and Mexican communities, yet continued boundary maintenance, Staski discounts Barth’s theory. As the non-Chinese community of El Paso did not in any way attempt to assimilate the Overseas Chinese, Staski also discounts Spicer’s theory. Staski is more equivocal regarding McGuire’s theory. However, he concludes “what the El Paso material seems to suggest, is that certain amounts of acculturation can occur even when the disparity of power is great and not decreasing. Put another way, it appears as if behavioral and cultural patterns might not be very important in maintaining strong ethnic boundaries” (1993:45). The

Praetzellis' strongly critique this entire approach, as well as the method of analyzing acculturation through changes in relative frequency of ceramic types (M. Praetzellis and A. Praetzellis 1997). After all, there is no obvious reason that swapping out one's tableware would necessarily correspond with a shifting cultural orientation. While I agree the acculturation model has both analytical and methodological problems, this does not necessarily mean that particular observations of its practitioners are incorrect.

For example, M. Praetzellis (2004) contrasts what she calls assimilationist and revisionist models for understanding Overseas Chinese migration. Using Barth (1964) as the exemplar for the assimilationist stance, which credits "overpopulation, war, natural disaster, and generally unstable living conditions in southeastern China," with "prompt[ing] migration of large numbers of Chinese men to foreign lands", she contrasts the revisionist view which is "more complex: not all emigrants were from the lowest social classes, not all were illiterate, not all were men, and not all were sojourners" (2004:237). These statements are not mutually exclusive. As Chapter 5 will show, living conditions in the Siyi (Four Counties) of Guangdong, and indeed across China as a whole, were far from ideal in the mid-nineteenth century.

Other chapters in *Hidden Heritage* include Gust's comparison of animal bones from five Overseas Chinese sites, Wylie and Fike's study of opium pipes, and Sando and Felton's work on ceramic pricing. Somewhat reminiscent of George Miller's work on CC indexes and economic scaling (1980, 1991), Sando and Felton compared the relative pricing of ceramic types based on store inventories from the Kwong Tai Wo company in California. This single article is the basis for many of the claims made, both in this dissertation and elsewhere, regarding the relative cost of Double Happiness, Bamboo, Wintergreen/Celadon, and other ceramic styles. It also introduces a possible wrinkle in the retail distinction between 'Wintergreen' and 'Green', a distinction which Sando and Felton note has been archaeologically

invisible but which would have an effect on interpretations due to the greatly reduced costs of 'Green' when compared to 'Wintergreen' ceramics (1993:159). Sando and Felton's chapter is successful because it pioneers the technique of using store inventories to make claims about the relative cost of ceramic styles found on Overseas Chinese sites. It is thus somewhat striking to note that we do not see an expansion of this sort of research in the subsequent decades. Expanding Sando and Felton's conclusions by looking at other store inventories and price lists from the nineteenth century would tell us more about how generalizable Sando and Felton's conclusions are, and to whether prices varied from locale to locale or were consistent across the American West.

While Ross criticizes *Hidden Heritage* because its "chapters are often compartmentalized rather than building toward an integrated picture of Chinese immigrant life" (Ross 2013b:5679), this volume represents the most significant publication in the subfield of Overseas Chinese up to that point, with only the Great Basin Foundation's *Wong Ho Leun* (1987) comparable in terms of scale and ambition. The sustained importance of *Hidden Heritage*, especially specific chapters like Sando and Felton's, is demonstrated by the fact that they are regularly cited in the literature over two and a half decades since their publication.

Roberta Greenwood's *Down by the Station* (1996) is the other major publication on Overseas Chinese archaeology of the mid-nineties. These excavations of Los Angeles' Chinatown produced one of the largest assemblages of artifacts associated with Chinese-Americans. The study is notable for dealing with the entire assemblage rather than concentrating on a selected group of artifacts within the assemblage, in a manner similar to the comprehensiveness attempted in the *Wong Ho Leun* (1987) study. The main difference in execution seems to be *Down by the Station* is more integrated than *Wong Ho Leun*, possibly because there were fewer authors involved with Greenwood's volume. *Down by the Station* is particularly valuable for its

discussion of ceramic analysis techniques and analytical approaches (1996:67-86). While the quality of *Down by the Station* is more than admirable, there are a few theoretical quibbles that can be made, in particular Greenwood's engagement (or lack thereof) with Chinese culture beyond describing certain practices as 'traditional' and her understanding of Chinese 'individuality' through the lens of Western understandings of self (which will be critiqued at length in Chapter 7).

Greenwood's volume is thus emblematic of how the field of Overseas Chinese Archaeology had transformed by the mid-90s: While the comprehensiveness and overall quality of archaeological excavations and reporting had exponentially improved since the 1960s and 70s, theoretical constructs (such as 'the individual') continued to be shaped by our Euro-American cultural preconceptions, with only cursory attention given to trying to establish what the indigenous understandings might have been. *Down by the Station* is a decidedly American-centric interpretation of Los Angeles Chinatown. As such, it misses the importance of continued transnational networks and connections as well as the insights that might be gained from trying to think through archaeological data using indigenous Chinese cultural categories. Regardless of these criticisms, *Down by the Station* remains a landmark of 1990s Overseas Chinese archaeology and will continue to be read and referenced by archaeologists in the subfield for the foreseeable future.

Voss describes "two troubling but persistent trends" affecting Overseas Chinese Archaeology though this period and beyond (2005:425). The first trend she observes is that Overseas Chinese studies have been marginalized within the larger field of historical archaeology, while the second trend is the continued interpretation of "Overseas Chinese populations as traditional, bounded ethnic groups that resisted acculturation" (*ibid*). Voss interprets these trends as "outgrowths" of the "implicit acceptance of false oppositions between East and West and

between tradition and modernity” (*ibid*). Historical archaeologies focused on Chinese-Americans continue to be marginal within historical archaeology.

I would suggest this is connected not only to false oppositions, but also to the common understanding of Chinese-Americans as a ‘model minority’. In a sense, Chinese history suffers due to the perceived success of Chinese-Americans. While Chinese immigrants faced violence, coercion, and intimidation, including several massacres (e.g. Los Angeles 1871, Rock Springs 1885), in the public consciousness these events have been obscured by the triumphant story of the progressive overcoming of prejudice and achievement of prosperity. This redemptive story about becoming American is a commonplace in ‘ethnic’ museums in the United States (e.g. the Museum of Chinese in America in New York City) but it can have the effect of sanitizing the terrors inflicted upon these vulnerable communities in the past. To paraphrase Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015), for those who were murdered, who died forgotten, whose dreams were crushed rather than reached, history is forever unjustified. There is no redemptive arc for the (at least) seventeen Chinese tortured and killed in 1871 Los Angeles, nor for the workers who died building the Central Pacific. The fact that Chinese-Americans today have relatively high incomes and education levels compared with other groups does nothing to change that fact, and ironically may inhibit the sympathetic potential of learning about these instances. Compared to other groups, such as Native Americans, African-Americans, or Latinos, both the prejudices faced by Chinese-Americans in the current day and the terrors inflicted in the past are less publicly visible, and I suggest this has an impact on both marginalizing Chinese-American history in the public, and in decision-making regarding grants and publications within the discipline.

Voss’ second critique can be summarized as a critique of Orientalism (Said 1979). Orientalism is a perennial danger in Overseas Chinese archaeology given archaeology’s status as a



discipline with western origins, and I will discuss the balancing act between recognizing and appreciating real differences without collapsing into orientalist stereotypes in Chapter 7.

Despite the persistence of these trends throughout the 1990s, the decade saw a real transformation of the field, both in the quality of archaeological investigations and in the theoretical frameworks used to interpret them. Ross observes that within the subfield, “there has been a gradual interpretive shift toward cultural exchange, fluid and dynamic identities, and strategic adaptation and selective accommodation to local Euro-American culture in particular local contexts” (Ross 2013b:5679). This shift began with the innovative work of the Praetzellis’, who realized “retention of Chinese consumer goods and adoption of Euro-American ones can reflect a variety of factors besides acculturation, including differential access and power relations,” and that, “Rather than simply reflecting a static ethnicity, material goods can be actively used to create and transform identities in particular contexts and to serve particular agendas” (*ibid*).

The theoretical shift initiated by the Praetzellis’ was a necessary step in growing the subfield beyond the confinement of the acculturation model and its emphasis on “boundedness, insularity, and tradition” (Voss 2005:426; see also Orser 2004:86, M. Praetzellis and A. Praetzellis 1997:218; M. Praetzellis 2004:1). However, I want to make one note of caution. The history of dominant theoretical paradigms in archaeology (as in Trigger 1989) is from one perspective a series of negations of the prior paradigm. Emphasis on the particular histories and cultural *Weltenshauung* of disparate groups emphasized in the Culture-History approach was negated by the universalizing and systems-oriented New Archaeology. This emphasis on systems and scientific positivism within Processual Archaeology was itself negated by a Post-processual focus on agents accompanied by a healthy dose of scientific skepticism. To a certain degree, each new paradigm is reactionary in the sense that *problems* with a systems approach

led archaeologists to consider agents (and more recently, networks) as an alternative. In making these shifts, theoretically innovative archaeologists often tend to overly de-emphasize the insights that can be gained from the prior approach, planting the seeds of new but different excesses. Neglecting the agentiveness of Chinese immigrants can and has led to a reinforcing of stereotypes regarding the 'communal' nature of Chinese people. Or to put it backwards, emphasizing the social connectedness of a group of people can potentially lead researchers to assume they lack unique personalities. But in an effort to reclaim this, cultural assumptions about the nature of the self and individuality can become unconsciously imported, and collective decision making (such as that organizing the distribution of goods to Chinese work camps on the transcontinental) can become obscured. Or, in an effort to show that Americans of Chinese and European descent are both human, have much in common, are not naturally 'different' in some essential way, and are deserving of dignity and respect, we can sometimes neglect the real cultural differences that make the anthropological perspective a meaningful approach for understanding the world. As a result of these processes, I would argue the Praetzelis' sometimes go too far in emphasizing the similarities and connections between Americans of Chinese and European descent and as a result sometimes interpret their Chinese subjects through a western lens. As I argue in more detail in Chapter 7, Chinese-Americans were not trying to become 'Victorian' gentlemen but rather *junzi*. Chinese immigrants were neither a faceless 'collective' nor 'individuals', they were *relational persons* (Fowler 2004) and their activities are most felicitously understood in terms of that form of personhood.

Regardless, archaeological studies in the 1990s and 2000s saw the gradual decline of the acculturation model as the primary theoretical framework for understanding Overseas Chinese sites. Studies from this time period include Costello's studies of vegetable marketing and laundering (1999:297-8), Lydon's (1999, 2001) studies of Chinese communities in Australia, and

Baxter and Allen's (2002) study of "town planning, sanitation, utilities and waste management" (Voss 2005:428) in Woolen Mills, California.

## Beyond Acculturation

Since the early 2000s, the sheer number of Overseas Chinese studies has rapidly expanded. The Market Street Chinatown Project, led by Barbara Voss of Stanford, began in 2002 and has played a central role in the development of the subfield since that time. The Praetzellis' continued their engagement with Chinese-American archaeology through a massive project focused on West Oakland (M. Praetzellis 2004) while Costello's excavations of San Bernardino's Third Street resulted in one of the most comprehensive and wide ranging cultural resource management reports on Chinese-American sites (2004). This report describes the material culture associated with San Bernardino's Chinese community in exhaustive detail, with detailed explanations of gaming, foodways, and other daily activities, and shows the breadth of qualitative and quantitative tests that can be employed to understand large assemblages from sealed urban contexts. Lindstrom's work on Chinese-American woodcutters in Old Greenwood (2004) provides an example of excavation methods appropriate for rural sites in the High Sierras, and provides details on how Sisson and other Euro-American entrepreneurs procured the labor of Chinese woodcutters in a large-scale and organized fashion. This system of labor procurement and the mediating role played by Euro-Americans in the process laid the foundations for hiring strategies during the construction of the Central Pacific in the following decade. 'China Kitchen' (discussed in Chapter 8) was also first identified and reported during this period by Gralia and Gralia (2004). New areas of research, such as analyzing Chinese cemeteries (Rouse 2005, Chung et al. 2005) were also pursued. Other studies relevant to Chinese presence in the High Sierras include Smith and Dixon's (2005) study of Heavenly Ski Ranch and Lindstrom and Waechter's (2007) report on Gray's Crossing. Finally, the early 2000s

also saw several reviews and critiques of the subfield, including those by Orser (2004) and Voss (2005).

In 2008, the Journal for the Society of Historical Archaeology published a themed issue focusing on the archaeology of Chinese-American communities. Edited by Voss and Williams, this volume included articles addressing issues ranging from racial conflict (Baxter 2008), agency and scale of analysis (Voss 2008), gender (Williams 2008), funerary practices (Smits 2008), and identity (Kraus-Friedberg 2008, Mullins 2008). Besides the value of the articles themselves, this volume is important because it is the first gathering of disparate archaeological projects focused on Chinese-Americans since Wegars' *Hidden Heritage* in 1993. As such, the publication of this volume marks the beginning of a new period of greater information exchange and collaboration between archaeologists involved in the subfield.

The 2010s saw increasing numbers of PhD dissertation projects focused on Chinese-American archaeology, including Ross' (2009) study of fisheries in British Columbia, Merritt's (2010) exploration of Chinese-Americans in Montana, and Williams' (2011) excavations at Point Alones, California. Ross developed his dissertation into *An Archaeology of Asian Transnationalism* (2013a), which is one of the most comprehensive case studies of a Chinese settlement in North America. He offers networks and transnationalism as a new paradigm through which to understand and interpret Chinese material culture. Ross suggests replacing questions of acculturation with new themes including "migration, racialization, identity, cultural persistence and change, capitalist economics and labor relations, gender and sexuality, urbanization, and material consumption" (Ross 2013b:5679).

Collaboration between scholars has accelerated during the 2010s, culminating in the Chinese Railroad Workers of North America Project at Stanford University, which began in 2012. This

collaborative project has led to conferences, publications, and the beginnings of international cooperation with Chinese scholars. A second themed volume of *Historical Archaeology* was released in 2015, including articles about Summit Camp (Baxter and Allen 2015), railroad camps in Utah (Polk 2015), strategies for excavating railroad camps in deflated areas (Furnis and Manieri 2015), racialization (Sunseri 2015), foodways (Kennedy 2015), and medicinal practices (Heffner 2015).

It is still early to evaluate the lasting impact of these international collaborations and new studies, but generally, studies focused on classes of material culture (e.g. Heffner 2015, Kennedy 2015) have increased in scale, detail, and theoretical sophistication. Heffner's study of Chinese medicinal practices makes the case that Chinese immigrants had some working level of knowledge regarding Chinese medical theory (2015:144), and thus provides a model for how to relate material practices with bodies of knowledge in other spheres, including the spatial practice of *feng shui* (discussed in Chapter 6). Kennedy (2015) uses the concept of 'localization' to account for changes in food practices among Chinese immigrants, which both emphasizes fluidity and flexibility and thus counters an essentialist depiction of food practices. 'Localization' also potentially serves as a model for thinking through changes in the overall archaeological record associated with Chinese immigrants as certain artifacts enter or fall out of use over time. Just as Sando and Felton's article on ceramic pricing provided invaluable insight into the constitution of ceramic assemblages, these studies potentially allow for a reexamination of previous excavations medicinal and food-related artifacts.

Research methods have begun to be disseminated from cultural resource management contexts to the broader community (e.g. Furnis and Manieri 2015) informing the suggested future direction of research at the 'China Kitchen' site, as discussed in Chapter 8. New theoretical frameworks have been offered, focusing on transnational networks (Ross 2013a),

precarity (Voss 2018), and my own emphasis on the construction of subjects (i.e. personhood) and moral economies. The archaeology of Chinese-Americans and Overseas Chinese is no longer a minor subfield within historical archaeology, but has come of age as a fully fledged field of inquiry enriched by past work, fresh ideas, and wider theoretical relevance.

## Conclusion

As a result of the studies mentioned above, the dominant picture of Overseas Chinese has markedly changed from earlier periods. As Voss states, once essentialized oppositions of east/west and traditional/modern are dropped, it becomes possible to consider that Overseas Chinese identities could be simultaneously ‘fluid and contingent, but also remarkably persistent across time and space’” (Lydon 2001:115, Voss 2005:429). Change in material culture is no longer regarded as “necessarily the result of acculturation” (Voss 2005:432) by the Overseas Chinese archaeological community.

Ross sees the current potential of the subfield of Overseas Chinese archaeology as laying in “its potential for addressing themes related to migration, race and ethnicity, cultural persistence and change, and other topics of wider archaeological relevance” (Ross 2013b:5675) and notes “there are currently no dominant research paradigms” (*ibid*).

To summarize, the current state of the field is drastically changed even when compared to a decade ago. Acculturation is no longer a respectable theoretical paradigm, though no overarching paradigm has arisen to replace it. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as a variety of approaches and questions can help us understand the variegated dimensions of the lives of Overseas Chinese, both in the United States and around the world. One aspect of archaeological research on Overseas Chinese sites that has lagged behind has been the

integration of historical and anthropological information on the point-of-origin of international Chinese migrants, and it is this task the next chapter seeks to address.



## Chapter 5 - China and the Four Counties in the mid-Nineteenth Century

### Introduction

As seen in Chapter 4, understandings of Chinese culture within the historical archaeology of Chinese-Americans have increased in sophistication and fluency over the past few decades. However, many archaeological investigations of Chinese-American sites continue to omit any reference to the point-of-origin from which these immigrants came. Furthermore, many of the reports which do attempt to develop an understanding of the historical and cultural background of Chinese immigrants refer to a small and oft-repeated set of references. There are at least three major consequences of this state of affairs. First, in the absence of a detailed and constitutive description of cultural life in the homeland, differences exhibited by Chinese-Americans often appear merely as a negation of characteristics exhibited by European-American populations. For example, if European-Americans exhibited 'individualistic' tendencies than Chinese-Americans exhibited 'communal' tendencies. These sorts of generalized statements often have a shadow of truth about them, but end up being expressed as mere stereotypes. What does it mean to be 'individualistic' or 'communal'? What specific sorts of stances or behaviors are implied through such a comparison?

Similarly, without a description of the historical and cultural situation from which Chinese immigrants emerged, and what ontological and epistemological understandings were embedded in it, archaeological interpretations tend towards merely 'slotting' the Chinese into predefined research programs that have been effective in dealing with other 'ethnic' (i.e. non-white) groups in the United States. As a consequence, the uniqueness and particularity of Chinese attitudes and experiences can be passed over. Chapter 7 deals with some of the consequences of this with regard to understanding and interpreting 'resistance' at Chinese sites.

While not without some commonalities, the experiences and challenges faced by (for example) Chinese- and African-American populations were quite distinct. We should expect that 'resistance' toward the challenges they faced and strategies employed would likewise frequently be dissimilar. In the absence of recognizing these kinds of qualitative differences, we are left with the unfortunate situation of comparing the 'resistance' of distinct groups quantitatively. Given that Euro-American supervisors explicitly described Chinese workers as "more docile" and "with less will of their own against their bosses" (U.S. Congress 1877), this would be an re-inscription of a pervasive and harmful stereotype, necessitating the search for alternate ways of understanding how Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century dealt with these issues. Finally, archaeologists who have made the admirable effort to provide a constitutive description of China and Chinese culture in order to better ground their research questions tend to repeatedly rely on a small set of historical sources. Consequently, descriptions thus constructed tend to follow along well-trodden lines.

This chapter is an attempt to expand in quality and number the references from which archaeologists have built their understanding of China and Chinese culture in the nineteenth century. It is hoped that this chapter can then act as a solid background cultural understanding for future archaeologists, both those who have not had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Chinese culture but whom are dealing with Chinese archaeological sites, as well as other experts. In order to develop this background, this chapter will refer to both historical and anthropological texts, in spite of the fact that ethnographic writings on China necessarily post-date the period under investigation.

In addition to providing a more in-depth cultural background than has thus far been provided in the archaeological literature, this chapter has four main goals: 1) to demonstrate that China in

the nineteenth century was undergoing significant cultural, demographic, and political changes; 2) that in spite of these changes there was significant continuity in some aspects of cultural life including cosmology and socioeconomic strategies; 3) to provide insight into the culturally specific motivations behind emigration and remittances; and, 4) to determine what strategies for mutual aid and maintenance of in-group cohesion were likely dominant among the Chinese laborers along the first transcontinental railroad and in other Overseas Chinese sites.

Historians estimate between 80-90% of the Chinese immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century were from the *Siyi* (四邑), or Four Counties region of Guangdong Province: Enping, Kaiping, Taishan, and Xinhui (Map 4.1) (Lawton 1959, 1987:141, Voss and Allen 2008:6). As such, this is the focal area of this chapter. However, many of the sources cited in this chapter (particularly the ethnographies) focus on other regions of China. This is quite simply a real limitation imposed by both the historical sources available and my capacities as a researcher. However, concern over this should be mitigated by the claim that Han Chinese culture in the nineteenth century was the product of a long-term trend towards increased uniformity (Cohen 2005). While this is particularly the case regarding 'elite culture' (Cohen 1976:11), it is plausible that there is a great deal of similarity between regions in the aspects of life I will highlight in this chapter -- family structure, migration strategies, cosmology, and the significance of labor. This is not to deny the major differences between the southern coastal provinces and the rest of the country in terms of the economic model (export economies), long term international connections to overseas communities (which far outstripped any such connections in northern or central China), and frequency and intensity of foreign contacts. Particularly in these ways, southern China was not in step with the majority of the country.

## Global Significance

Prior to the early nineteenth century (Wolf 1982:255) estimates the shift occurred about 1820), the majority of economic activity and the greater part of the manufacturing capacity in the world were centered in and around China and India. Wolf (1982) describes an interregional trade pattern that had endured throughout the common era -- the mining and export of precious metals such as gold and silver from Europe to 'the East' in exchange for commodities that could not be grown or manufactured in Europe, including spices, textiles like silk, porcelain, and other goods. In this sense, the 'arrow of trade' was pointed from the periphery of Europe towards the centers of East and South Asia. By the turn of the eighteenth century (for India) and the early nineteenth century (for China), a Europe engaged in colonialism, capitalism, and the industrial revolution had altered this situation and shifted the direction of the arrow of trade. Cotton and opium produced in now colonized India was exported to China, and now instead of gold and silver flowing into the country it reversed its direction and began flowing towards Europe. It is not an exaggeration to describe this shift as of world-historic significance, and the world we live in today is in no small way the product of this change.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully explore the causes and consequences of this change, except to state the common ideas held in Europe and North America (among them, the 'racial theory' that European-descended people are somehow superior, and the 'rationalistic' theory that science and increased market rationalization are un-ripostable advantages) are self-serving and retroactive justifications for violent and coercive colonialism. Braudel concurs, stating, "the gap between the West and the other continents appeared *late in time*, and to attribute it simply to the rationalization of the market economy, as too many of our contemporaries are still inclined to do, is obviously oversimplifying" (Braudel 1982:134). As Marks states, "[t]here just is no evidence that Europeans were smarter, had superior culture, or

were better managers of natural and human resources than Chinese, Indians, or New Guineans for that matter” (Marks 2007:125). Both Marks (2007) and Pomeranz (2000) offer a much more compelling explanation that rests upon the convergence of many different historical forces, including plain old luck.

What is important for us here is not to resolve this issue (though the dominance of ‘racial’ and ‘rationalistic’ explanations are important ideological supports for the currently ascendant reactionary worldview), but to consider what the consequences of this shift might be for our Chinese railroad laborers in the mid-nineteenth century. It helps us understand their situation by placing them within global trends that had begun to transform their lives whether they were aware of it or not. The Chinese who immigrated to the United States and elsewhere during the mid-nineteenth century had begun to feel some of the consequences of this shift in relative power between nations. This included the territorial, morale, and monetary losses incurred by the First Opium War, which also created Hong Kong as a convenient port of departure for Chinese immigrants by creating a node connected to the global British Empire (and thus the rest of the world) outside the administrative control of the central government. These migrants of the mid-nineteenth century expanded the already in place intra-national and regional (to Southeast Asia) migratory patterns that had been growing since the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century (with a significant interruption due to the forcible depopulation of the entire Chinese coastal region during the mid- to late-17<sup>th</sup>), but had up to that time been dominated by residents of neighboring Fujian Province and its port of Xiamen (Tan 2004).

The consequences of this shift in global power also included the outbreak of the Taiping Rebellion, one of the most destructive and deadly wars in human history and the (even more locally consequential) Hakka-punti (or bendi) wars, which were occurring simultaneously with the construction of the railroad. Punti simply means the local Guangdong people, while Hakka is

a sub-ethnicity within the Chinese population who gradually migrated south through China, with a major wave of immigration reaching the Guangdong coast in the nineteenth century, leading to conflict (Leong 1997). The causal connection between the shift in relative economic might described by Braudel, Marks, Pomeranz, and Wolf, the disasters facing the point-of-origin of the Chinese railroad laborers, and the explosion of transnational emigration from Guangdong Province cannot be plausibly denied or dismissed.

### *The Longue Durée*

In *Tigers, Rice, Silk and Silt* (1998), Robert Marks provides a *longue durée* (long term) analysis of environmental and demographic shifts in the *Lingnan* (i.e Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces). He thus provides an understanding of how the environment and demography transform the landscape of the *Siyi* over the long term (i.e. the past 3000 years). While this time frame is well beyond the concerns of this dissertation, it is nonetheless helpful for understanding how trends extending over many generations came to a head in the nineteenth century, and how this subsequently transformed the ways of life of the people living in and around the Pearl River Delta, including the *Siyi*.

Marks describes the Pearl River Delta as, “not a true or pure delta, but rather a unique structure” as well as “a very recent creation” (1998:32). “Just 3,000 years ago, the delta was perhaps half its current size and even 1,000 years ago had not increased much beyond that; in the past millennium, though, the Pearl River Delta has doubled in size, largely as a result of human action” (*ibid*).

Han Chinese settlement of the *Lingnan* began as early as the *Qin* Dynasty (second century BCE), though the numbers were small. It is important to note that the *Lingnan* was China's original colonial frontier. As Han Chinese colonized the South, they brought with them their distinctive agricultural practices. Valley by valley, river basin by river basin, the Han Chinese expanded the area under cultivation, transforming forests into wet-rice and wheat agriculture.

Much of what is now currently the Pearl River Delta is 'reclaimed' land, a process which has been in effect for two-thousand years. This shows the pressure to increase lowland rice cultivation areas. By the nineteenth century, development of manufacturing centers (such as Guangzhou) and the increased importance of international trade to the region resulted in Guangdong's economy transitioning away from agriculture (Marks 1998:178). By the late nineteenth century, Guangdong was no longer producing enough food to support its population and was importing rice from other Chinese provinces in the hinterland such as Guangxi (Marks 1998: 130).

The eighteenth and nineteenth century also saw an unprecedented growth in population in Guangdong and the rest of Southern China, far surpassing the previous population peaks before the thirteenth century Mongol and seventeenth century Manchu invasions, each of which resulted in the loss of about a third of the population (Marks 1998:278). By the mid-nineteenth century when Chinese laborers were working on the transcontinental, the population of Southern China was more the three times the size of its previous population peak around 1600 (Marks 1998:278). The expansion of agriculture through extensive means was no longer possible because, first, by this point in time virtually all potentially cultivable land in Southern China was under cultivation, and second, the South China Sea and the malarial tropics provided a barrier to further Chinese expansion to the south. As a consequence, agricultural yields had been increasing via intensification of agriculture and techniques such as double cropping (Marks



1998: 110-2). Of course, intensification of agriculture has diminishing returns on energy input into the system, and as a consequence over time becomes and less-and-less efficient means to increase yields. I would balk at describing the situation in Guangdong as a 'Malthusian Crisis'. However, the *Siyi*, less agriculturally productive than the surrounding areas due to poor soil quality and hilly terrain, was doubtless affected by these pressures.

The nineteenth century proved a kind of 'tipping point' for these long-term trends as far as their effect on people's economic behavior. The number of foreign ships arriving for trade in Guangzhou increased ten-fold over a century from 1740-1840 (Marks 1998: 178). Starting in the mid-1820s, the balance of trade in Guangzhou had shifted and silver began to flow out on a yearly basis (Yan 1953:31-2). Cash crops, particularly sericulture, began to replace foodstuffs, with silk exports more than doubling between 1845 and 1860 (So 1986:80-1).

As a consequence of these shifts, diversifying sources of income became an advantageous strategy for family prosperity while rice cultivation became less feasible. The increased importance in sericulture also led to changes in marriage patterns. Young, unmarried women working in sericulture gained increased clout and control over their lives as their economic contributions to their families increased, and this effectively decreased the number of available and willing brides (Stockard 1992). The increased advantage of diversification, the increasingly international basis of Guangdong's economy, population pressure and the inability to expand agriculture extensively, and the increased difficulty in finding wives led to life becoming more difficult in Guangdong. Out migration becoming an attractive option for making one's way in the world. Emigration meant the possibility of returning home more prosperous. Given these considerations it is no surprise that international emigration from Guangdong increased markedly in the nineteenth century (Mei 1979). In addition to these long term trends is what Braudel calls the *histoire evenementielle* (the history of events). Foreign invasions, beginning

with the Opium War (1839-1842), and internal wars such as the Taiping Rebellion and Hakka-Punti Wars in the 1850s and 1860s exacerbated what was already a precarious demographic situation. The concession on the port of Hong Kong to Britain also provided the people of the *Siyi* with a handy port of embarkation as well as specialized services for transfer of money, property and correspondence. Finally, in 1849 the news that gold had been found in California spread across the globe. With a new destination, new means to arrive there, and significant push factors that made out-migration a sensible strategy for ensuring the survival and prosperity of the family unit, the stage was set for a massive increase in the numbers of young men leaving Guangdong for the United States and other overseas destinations.

#### [Kinship, Patri-corporation, Remittances, and Self-Fashioning](#)

There is of course more motivating human behavior and decision-making than purely economics. As such, the cultural motivations for out migration should also be assessed and contextualized. Previous historians (e.g. Chan 1991, Ma and Cartier 2002) have described early Chinese migrants in a variety of ways, from *monumental* histories describing them as fearless pioneers, to Siu's (1952) sojourner, and even as the victims of quasi-slave trading. It is doubtless there were multiple motivations for and conditions of emigration, from the admirable to the wretched. However, the task here is not to say what every Chinese immigrant was thinking (if that were even possible), but to detach the moorings of the conversation from anachronistic and ana-cultural descriptions resulting from ethnocentrism. As Skeldon states, "whether the Chinese [saw] themselves primarily as Chinese or as citizens of other countries appears to be a nonissue as they clearly can be both at the same time" (2002:55). Given what we understand about the human potential for 'hybridity', and for acting out layered identities, this should be no surprise. We do not have to contextualize Chinese migrants' motivations as

existing on a spectrum between 'sojourner' and 'settler', but in order to recontextualize them we must briefly talk about kinship in nineteenth century Guangdong.

Family structure exhibited a wide variety of forms including uxori-local marriage, tablet marriages, extended families, and lineage villages, and was shaped by various pressures to separate or maintain formal connections (Freedman 1958, Stockard 1992). Overall, the family, or *jia* (家), is best understood as a kind of 'patri-corporation' (Bruckermann and Feuchtwang 2016:61, Cohen 1976:58-61, Cohen 2005, Dos Santos 2006, Gates 1996:29, Kulp 1923:148-50). This means that the family is as much an economic entity as a social entity. This corporate family is managed by the heads of the household, titularly confined to males, though the titular head of the family was not necessarily in charge of managing the finances or activities of family members (Cohen 1976:60).

To explain this in greater detail, Cohen (1976:57-8) provides Lang's (1946:13) definition of the *jia* as, "the unit consisting of members related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption and having a common budget and common property". This is a formal category, in the sense that *jia* "refers to a group which is the basic unit of domestic organization and whose members are united not only by kinship, but also by claims the men in the group have on property we may call the *chia*[*jia*] estate" (Cohen 1976:58). Such families are potentially subject to *fen-chia*, or formal family division constituted by the severing of the estate into smaller units. This general structure does not have a singular expression, but rather encompasses "a great deal of variation in residential arrangements and in the economic ties among its members" (Cohen 1976:58). Cohen describes the "three basic components" of *jia* organization as the *estate*, or "body of holdings to which the process of family division (*fen-chia*) is applicable", the *group*, which is "those persons who have rights of one sort or another to the *chia* estate at the time of family

division”, and, the *economy*, which is the “the exploitation of the *chia* estate (and the benefits derived therefrom) as well as to other income-producing activities linked to its exploitation through remittances and a common budgetary arrangement” (1976:59). The rights that various family members had to the estate varied, with brothers typically being entitled to equal shares.

While the *jia* estate does not encompass all the resources possessed by every member of the family, Cohen notes that “it seems clear that for the members of the vast majority of Chinese families the *chia* estate was much more valuable, and more important to survival, than all other forms of property combined” (*ibid*). The *jia* “is organized to advance the interests of the group as a whole” and all members are “provided for by pooled income” (Cohen 1976:59-60). In order to facilitate this, “the arrangement of economic roles is an important element in *chia* organization” (Cohen 1976:60). The size and composition of *jia* is not uniform, and is inclusive of smaller “conjugal” families, “stem” or “joint” families which included members of multiple generations (*ibid*).

As a consequence of this corporate-familial structure, the cohesion of economic activities within a given family is better understood for nineteenth Chinese not as the result of individualistic choice, but as choice made in the context of other economic activities undergone by other family members. In other words, Overseas Chinese workers on the railroad were not migrating out of some sort of individualistic impulse but were rather “deployed” (Cohen January 12, 2018: personal communication). In a given family, a daughter might work out of the home in a silk factory, while education resources are committed to one son, while another may travel abroad in search of economic opportunities. Having multiple and diverse sources of income within the *jia* was a strategy to avoid putting “one’s eggs in the same basket” and therefore better weather economic reversals in a given domain.

Hill Gates describes this as the Petty Capitalist Mode of Production, or 'petty capitalism', and suggests the structure of the *jia* is (along the Tributary Mode of Production, i.e. vertical extraction by the state that prevented the emergence of overly powerful corporate entities) one of the reasons capitalism as such did not emerge in China (Gates 1996). While this claim has broad implications and has been criticized, not least for being a modern version of Wittfogel's 'oriental despotism', our concern here is for how it and the corporate family impacted both the decision-making and the subjectivity of Chinese who chose/were deployed to migrate and eventually ended up working on the Central Pacific. What is important to take away is that Gates' description of the structure of 'petty capitalism', as well as in depth analysis of how businesses were structured in late-Qing China (e.g. Faure 2006, Zelin 2005) demonstrate that Chinese migrants were emigrating from an economy that was highly sophisticated, complex, and embedded in international networks. Thus, the decision to migrate in this context cannot be reduced to simple motivations that would merit describing Chinese immigrants as either 'settlers' or 'sojourners'. It also means that Chinese migrants to the United States and elsewhere arrived with some level of commercial fluency which was translatable into and aided in dealing with capitalist logics. This fluency is reflected in Chinese business enterprises with multiple levels of corporate management (Zelin 2005), the family-oriented production of commodities such as silk (Faure 2006), the pervasive use of contracts (Cohen 2005), regional economic specializations (Marks 1998), and integrated, large-scale merchant networks (Skinner 1977) – all of which were tied to worldwide networks of trade (Braudel 1995, Wolf 1982).

This picture has specific implications for interpreting international Chinese migration in the nineteenth century. While the laborers on the transcontinental railroad were largely from rural areas in the *Siyi*, we should not mistake 'rural' for 'isolated'. The *Siyi* was a rural and agricultural region, albeit one with regular market schedules, significant regional and interregional connections, and dense populations. The pervasive survival strategy was patri-corporate,

reinforced by extra-familial networking and increased integration of rural and urban regions in the late Qing (Hsu 2000, McKeown 2001).

One essential aspect of this economic structure is the duty of family members to supply remittances to their families (Lawton 1987; Hsu 2000; Costello et al. 2004; Cohen 2005; Voss and Allen 2008). A remittance is the sending of income from a transnational worker back home to his or her family. From the perspective of the *jia* then, the main purpose of emigration was to secure income that could be returned to the corporate family in the form of remittances. From the perspective of the emigrant, the main duty one had when overseas was to return these remittances. The practice of remittances disrupts the contrast between 'communal' and 'individualistic' behavior. This is because by returning remittances, the sender was also enhancing his or her own persona. A quotation from the Analects of Confucius may prove instructive here. In response to a question from a student, Confucius tries to explain what it means to be *ren* (benevolent/humane, 仁): "the *ren* man, wishing himself to be established, sees that others are established, and wishing himself to be successful, sees that others are successful" (Analects 6.30). The mechanism by which the migrant 'established' both himself and others is through remittances and the resulting *mianzi* (face). Ultimately, if family members did not fulfill expectations for their proper contribution, families could be formally separated and their ties severed (Cohen 1976).

'Face' has been discussed within the academic literature as far back as Martin Yang's classic ethnography *A Chinese Village* (1945) where he described its importance in regulating interactions between people from different positions in the social hierarchy. Face is an important but unfortunately banalized topic. However, in spite of the potential danger of engaging with a concept that has sometimes become fodder for stereotypes in the public consciousness, its

importance cannot be denied (Yang 1994). It is important to briefly consider the importance of face because it links one's self-regard and public persona with the quality of one's social relationships. It also highlights the importance of 'gift' and 'moral' economies, particularly in contrast to capitalist economics, and as such has been a classic anthropological topic (e.g. Marx, Mauss). Face is important for understanding Chinese workers on the transcontinental because it is a kind of currency in a moral economy that encompasses familial duties, how one discharges and accumulates debts, and how one composes and presents oneself. This is an important consideration that links the quality of social relationships with one's self-regard and public persona. 'Face' is thus understood not as an independent phenomenon but as part of a moral economy dominated by notions of debt and familiarity.

In addition to disrupting the opposition of 'communal' and 'individualistically' oriented behavior, the *jia* also disrupts the opposition between 'free' and 'unfree' labor. While contract theory in western philosophy is based on a kind of binary opposition between free labor and unfree labor, I contend this opposition is largely an illusion, not only in this situation but generally. This is not to deny there is a difference between the violently coerced labor of the slave and the relatively voluntary entrée into contracts of a free laborer, but it does obscure the fact that contractual decisions are made by real people in concrete social situations rather than by abstracted actors in a theoretically open marketplace. Chinese emigrants were not 'free' in the sense that modern Americans (still largely under the influence of Locke and similar philosophers) often imagine. In contrast, these decisions were taken up by Chinese emigrants who were embedded in concrete and significant social relationships that are constitutive of meaning rather than being merely limits on choice. Furthermore, the decision to migrate in order to contribute to the *jia* was made in the context of an 'ideology of debt' (Chu 2010:7, Oxfeld 2010:114-7).



Focusing on the ideology of debt and blurring the line between free and unfree labor is not to deny the material importance of real debt on shaping people's decisions, nor the fact that Chinese laborers on the railroad were occasionally subjected to violent punishments or coercion (Kraus 1969). It is to extend these concepts to mean that the absence of coercion and monetary debt are not sufficient to declare someone 'free' in the sense that is so often imagined.

The idea here is that we are in debt to our parents and ancestors for our existence, and this debt cannot be fully discharged. This "persistent backdrop of ontological karmic debt" (Chu 2010:198) eliminates the possibility that decisions regarding labor can be made in a 'free market' as imagined and abstracted in western philosophy. It also means that money transactions among Chinese emigrants cannot be understood as "mere surplus" at the "disposal" of its holders (Chu 2010:192) but rather as something involved with qualitative social relationships between concrete persons. These dimensions of participation in the collective family economy (such as remittances) needed to be motivated by sincerely felt *renqing* (human sentiment) rather than as a merely instrumental discharge of duties.

Julie Chu's (2010) ethnographic study in Fuzhou, China, shows how these concerns continue to be important in regulating social relationships in the present. Remittances and funerary offerings cannot be fully understood in capitalist formulations, because they also encompass a moral and spiritual realm that cannot be converted into pure exchange value. In Chinese 'cosmologies of credit' not only the amount but the form of monetary offerings is important (Chu 2010:171-5). This importance of remittances beyond mere economic function should reinforce the conclusion that the material record as received is meaningfully constituted and is also intimately connected to moral and ethical considerations made by Chinese laborers on the railroad. To put it another way, the ways that daily necessities were procured and consumed – in choice in ceramics, use of medicinal products, etc. (as described in Chapter 3) – was the result not merely of economics, but was also shaped by moral and ethical considerations, as was the decision to

migrate in the first place. If one were to insist on a cost-benefit analysis of behavior couched in a binary of pioneer/sojourner, one would miss all of this.

Ellen Oxfeld's (2010) ethnographic study of 'moral discourse' in a village in Meixian County, Guangdong, presents another example of how moral considerations concerning remittances and other forms of exchange continue to play an important role in present day Guangdong. The residents of Meixian continue to have the expectation that their overseas relatives will return remittances, visit, and generally behave in a filial way towards their 'hometown'. This ethnography also highlights to anxiety and insecurity that envelope this expectation, as it is not always fulfilled: "villagers view returnees as family and lineage members with unbreakable ties to the ancestors and living relatives, but they also view them as foreigners who may no longer honor these ties" (Oxfeld 2010:158). It is important to note that just because there was pressure for the workers on the transcontinental to return remittances, it would be a mistake to think they uniformly fulfilled this expectation. Villagers in Meixian saw *renqing* (human sentiment) as both the guarantor that these connections would be maintained, as well as a necessary component of the required 'sincerity' in a successful moral transaction. As Oxfeld states, "people are expected to have emotional connections (*ganqing*) toward their native villages that will automatically generate an interest in contributing" (2010:159-60). This raises the importance of 'affect' and the role it plays in making decision regarding migration and labor.

According to Potter and Potter (1990), who conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Guangdong, suffering is understood as an existential condition of labor, and labor is the main way to demonstrate through action the quality both of one's character (self) and the sincerity of one's emotional life. Thus, when we examine the archaeological record and see the sorts of (inexpensive) goods purchased and used, we can interpret this as a meaningful collective decision that allowed Chinese workers to best fulfill their moral duties and demonstrate they

were filial sons worthy of regard. The insights of these ethnographies into the moral aspect of labor and remittances thus allows us to interpret the archaeological record as evidence of the self-fashioning of Chinese on the Central Pacific as moral beings. Through their suffering and their remittances, these workers both 'established themselves' and 'established others'.

One impression that should be gained from reading these ethnographies and anthropological histories is that the explanatory value of dichotomies like free/unfree labor and individual/community begin to break down. These works also reinforce the importance of affective life, and of participating in networks where morality, cosmological debt, and labor are all intertwined. This is the 'moral landscape' or 'discourse' in which choices were made by Overseas Chinese-Americans in the nineteenth century.

What is at stake here is not merely the historical accuracy or 'realness' of the sojourner or the settler, but how describing an ethnic group as such impacts current claims to Americanness, the right to difference, and the worth of and regard due to Asian-Americans today. To claim that Chinese immigration was unfree is to disparage the significance of the aspirations and motivations of Chinese immigrants and to in essence cast aspersions on their presence both nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. It also functions to cut Chinese-Americans out of the *monumental* history of the 'conquering pioneer' through which contemporary groups claim both a heroic history (though this conveniently ignores the dispossession of native peoples) and ownership over present-day America. In parallel, to claim Chinese were 'communal' (marked negatively) is to say they were all the same, and therefore they are unimportant and/or uninteresting. When used pejoratively, 'communal' can be a way to dehumanize, lessen, and even emasculate Chinese migrants. But to merely negate these claims by saying the Chinese were 'free individuals' is to get stuck in the same rut and the same story. Merely 'reversing the narrative' (Shackel 2013) without challenging the terms with which it is constructed reproduces

rather than undermines the preexisting discourse and fails to account for what we know, through ethnography and anthropological history, to be real differences. I suggest the problem is not merely one of shifting from describing Chinese as 'communal' to describing them as 'individualistic' (or vice versa) but that the very idea of free labor, free immigration, and the individual are themselves historical products and imaginary abstractions. These ideas will be taken up again in more detail in Chapter 7.

The discussion of the importance of kinship, the patri-corporation, remittances, and self-fashioning also shows that we can talk about Overseas Chinese archaeology in terms specific to Chinese culture, social structure, and history, and thus understand it in more on its own terms. It can also act as a model for how to construct culturally specific frameworks for understanding the labor of other immigrant groups to America especially those from non-European backgrounds. Discourses of freedom and individuality are picked up, used, and imbued with difference significances by groups from different cultural backgrounds. The *meaning* of labor is thus not homogenous across the American cultural landscape. However, in spite of these differences, Chinese-Americans were, along with all of the other groups in the United States, being drawn into similar economic arrangements defined by capitalist logic. This is to say that while the motivations for and meanings of labor varied among and within immigrant groups, these meanings circulated in a shared world where capitalist culture progressively determined the 'rules of the road'. The logic of capitalism, and of conceiving of our very selves as resources to be rationally exploited is quite different from the 'petty capitalism' (Gates 1989) grounded in kinship and remittances. The degree to which this way of thinking is compatible or not with capitalist culture as a whole raises two interrelated questions to which I cannot give definitive answers yet nonetheless frame this inquiry: First, to what degree are the patri-corporation, familial duties, remittances, and the importance of sentiment able to persist in capitalism? Second, if the understanding of how this stuff works within Chinese culture still

allows outcomes indistinguishable from what is expected in capitalist exchanges, do these subjective dispositions matter? If rational exploitation of resources (including people) is as much a part of Chinese culture as any other culture (and I would affirm this), is too much being made of the distinction between capitalism 'proper', and the economic framework operative in nineteenth century China?

### Transnationalism and Migrant Networks

Recent work in Overseas Chinese archaeology has highlighted both multi-scalar approaches (Voss 2008) and transnational networks (Ross 2013a). Historians such as Madeline Hsu (2000) and Adam McKeown (2001) have written histories that highlight the importance of network or association building among Chinese migrant communities. The formation of both formal and informal associations or organizations through the use of place of origin, fictive kinship, shared surname, or other commonalities were often used to establish social relationships on a proper basis (that is, as previously explained, through *renqing* or human sentiment as well as pragmatic considerations).

These associations had several main purposes, including facilitating the transportation of money and goods, helping migrants getting set up upon arrival to a new area, or in getting 'deals' or favored trading terms for needed items. They also helped Chinese immigrants find jobs, lent money at interest, provided for the transportation of bones and effects back to China in case of death, and as a platform for general socialization such as gaming. McKeown (2001) documents the pervasiveness of these organizations in multiple locals including both North and South America, and their presence and importance is widely documented (e.g. Chinn et al. 1984). Overseas associations were connected with associations located in Guangdong, and wealth in the form of remittances flow through these organizations back to Guangdong where it financed schools, railroads, gardens, and other public works (Hsu 2000).

To reiterate what has been argued in the previous section, these networks were both societies for mutual aid as well as personal advantage. These networks formed the basis upon which both Chinese- and Euro-American labor contractors were able to gather large numbers of Chinese immigrants to work on the railroad following the labor shortages of the early 1860s. Laborers as well as a nascent managerial class among Chinese immigrants acted as nodes in a network that included associations based on established networking strategies that also included partners from the Euro-American population (A. Praetzellis and M. Praetzellis 1998). One's embeddedness in these networks also determined one's access to power. As McKeown explains, "The man without an association was the most isolated of men, and men who belonged to small associations were men without access to power" (2001:80).

In summary, Chinese immigrants were embedded in transnational networks which imposed burdens and provided opportunities. Relationships were based on both instrumentality and human sentiment. From the ethnographic and historical record, we can see these impulses were seen as not necessarily in conflict or even clearly distinguishable. Given the qualitative and particular social bonds involved in one's connections, they cannot readily be understood as merely rational (in the narrow sense) choices made by free agents. At the same time the networking McKeown describes involves a great deal of flexibility. One is not forced into a certain arrangement of associations but rather manages from among the *available* possibilities, which due to the density of possible social connections are innumerable.

The economic choices and strategies for the procurement of goods among railroad workers on the Central Pacific should be understood as occurring within this network context. We should also understand that while the procurement of ceramics and other daily necessities appears to have been organized at a large scale and in a relatively centralized way, this does not

encompass the whole of the exchange and use of these goods on a day-to-day basis. The presence of artifacts associated with gaming and other types of social exchange (sharing, lending, etc) are indicators of the wide ranging exchanges occurring on a daily basis between Chinese workers on the railroad. The anxiety that both Oxfeld (2010) and McKeown (2001) note in their respective anthropological and historical studies regarding the return of remittances also demonstrates the contingent nature of their return and thus indicates the presence of choice and agency among remittance senders.

### Means of Maintaining Order

This section is an attempt to address the question of how discipline was potentially maintained within Chinese work camps along the Transcontinental in specific and in Chinese-American work camps more generally. The question is not how Euro-American supervisors disciplined the Chinese, but rather how social distinction and ranking within the Chinese working community may have been maintained. Congressional testimony from Crocker and Strobridge, supervisors of the construction of the railroad, attests to the fact that relations on Chinese camps were not always peaceful, and that disagreements sometimes erupted into argument and occasional violence, specifically between 'clans' and over gambling (U.S. Congress 1877). We should not be surprised by this. The Chinese-Americans who built the railroad were, after all, human. They were engaged in a physically and mentally taxing endeavor in a foreign land surrounded by often hostile racism. The ceramic record as described in Chapter 3 indicated centralized distribution mechanisms and thus decision-making on behalf of the group. How were such decisions enforced? How were the inevitable disagreements resulting from difficult circumstances resolved?



I will offer here a few potential candidates for how discipline may have been enforced and will then give a justification for which I think is the most likely explanation, an explanation which leads back into the interpretation of the material record at Summit Camp and potentially other work camps along the transcontinental. First, there is the possibility that violence or coercion was used by Chinese to sanction other Chinese on the railroad. This seems to have at least occasionally been the case, given Crocker and Strobridge's testimony (U.S. Congress 1877).

Second, discipline may have been maintained by segregating different 'networks' of Chinese (again, based on place of origin, or even potentially whether one was Hakka or punti) physically. The different loci on Summit Camp, the separate hearths at 'China Kitchen' (Chapter 8), and the satellite camps found at both Summit Camp and Camp #5 (Appendix) can be interpreted as necessary given the limitations of the terrain and the raw number of workers inhabiting it, but that doesn't mean that people settled into particular loci randomly. Given the importance of networks and the shared background and *renqing* (human sentiment) necessary for proper social relationships, it seems more likely work gangs were, as much as possible, made up of Chinese immigrants with formal and informal connections to one another. The possibility that such distinctions could be discerned through loci-to-loci comparisons is intriguing, but impractical without both intact work camp deposits where activity areas or at least activity concentrations could be identified, as well as additional documentary evidence about specific work gangs. While 'China Kitchen' may in future years provide the former, but in the absence of new texts coming to light, the latter is likely impossible.

A third possible method of ensuring discipline within Chinese work groups is panopticism (Foucault 1975). In work camps, this would mean that managers were positioning themselves in places where they could oversee their area without themselves being observed. This would manifest itself archaeologically by artifacts associated with the manager class being located in

positions that commanded a wide view of the camp around them (in other words, high vantage points). This is currently difficult to evaluate archaeologically, because it is difficult to say who was living in what area. On the face of it, panopticism seems to make little sense for maintaining in group discipline among Chinese laborers. One possible piece of counter evidence to this is the presence of the inkstone artifact found at Evans/Chace Foci #9. This location does indeed offer a commanding view of the terrain below (Figure 5.1). However intriguing this possibility may be, I believe there is sufficient ethnographic evidence to discount it as a generalizable explanation for in-group discipline in work camps.



*Figure 5.1 View from Evans/Chace Foci #9, facing South*

Lisa Rofel's (1999) ethnography of three generations of silk factory workers in Hangzhou is informative on this point, though it may seem far afield from 1860s work camps. The central point from Rofel's ethnography that is relevant for interpreting maintenance of discipline on work camps is her explanation of how discipline is maintained in the factory. According to Rofel, discipline in the factory setting was maintained not through panopticism but through display of

hierarchy. We can have confidence that this finding also applies to transcontinental work camps in the 1860s for two reasons. First, factory space is easier to organize and control under panoptic principles if desired when compared to the untamed terrain upon which the transcontinental railroad shot and upon which Chinese immigrant workers lived. Second, panopticism is a specific spatial technology with a historical origin in European penal, health, and educational facilities, (Foucault 1977). While it may have similar instantiations in the Chinese tradition in, for example, Imperial architecture, as well as the defensive *diaolou* towers (often built with remittances) dotting the Guangdong landscape, I find no indication in the literature that it was a technique with any widespread vernacular use in Chinese communities. On the contrary, the architecture associated with Chinese communities described in the literature (e.g. Mueller 1987), and the formal landscapes described in the next chapter seem to control visual range through purposeful obstruction, the diametric opposite of panoptic landscapes.

Rather, Rofel offers a different explanation for how discipline was maintained in twentieth century Chinese factories (at least silk factories in Hangzhou over three generations), and that is through the 'display of hierarchy' (the fourth explanation for in group discipline). Display of hierarchy is inclusive not only of materially distinguishing oneself, but also revealing oneself as someone worthy of respect through bodily movements, speech, hygiene, air of composure, etc. Through the consumption of certain items, mediated by a particular etiquette or outward orientation, one shows that they are the correct person for the position of authority and respect they aspire towards. This is not quite 'fake it til you make it', because (contrary to the expectations of those immersed in the western philosophical tradition) there is ontologically no distinction between a social gesture and a personal expression. One is what one does, one is what one shows, one makes manifest one's authority through being and doing in a certain way that has recognized social significance. This may include a material component, such as the

consumption of certain beverages, foods, or the use of particular artifacts or ware types. At the present, I can only present this as a possibility, albeit one that is ethnographically informed.

## Conclusion

A reading of the historical and ethnographic literature on late Qing and Modern China led to a quest to try to better understand Chinese culture anthropologically, and to resist archaeological interpretations that would reproduce previously adopted explanatory frameworks. As seen in Chapter 4, engagement with anthropological texts on China has been underdeveloped in Overseas Chinese archaeology while artifact typologies are well established and large comparative collections are available for Overseas Chinese urban contexts in the decades following the construction of the railroad. This led me to question how I could make a unique contribution to the field given the sparse archaeological findings from my pedestrian survey and my analysis of previously collected assemblages. The careful reading of histories and ethnographies in this chapter is one part of the answer, as are the explorations of the meaning of landscape and morality in the next two chapters. In writing these chapters, it has been my conviction that an anthropologically and historically oriented archaeology may lend insights that a more traditional archaeological exploration and description of a site may not.

In this spirit, I want to introduce a few ideas that will be expanded on in the coming chapters. Over the course of my archaeological surveys, site mapping, and collections analysis, I became interested in the cosmological and ontological differences between Chinese and European immigrants to the American West. As previously discussed in this chapter, the meaning of economic exchanges, the significant units at which particular decisions are made, and the form of achieving social excellence among Chinese immigrants were culture specific and at variance from other groups they came into contact with. The pervasive practice of remittances, based on a moral economy, patri-corporate family structure, and specific demographic and historical

processes at work in Guangdong are all strands of a story that is completely uncaptured in much of the archaeological literature due to factors including disciplinary research directives, the occasional nature of marginal archaeological sub-disciplines, the lack of focused doctoral and graduate training on Chinese and Overseas Chinese culture specifically, and of course the fact that it is after all difficult to do something new in any case. Understanding cosmological differences is vital for understanding how Chinese immigrants were embedded in spatial and moral understandings at variance with dominant European-Judeo-Christian ontology (i.e. the western philosophical tradition).

The next chapter will use new sets of evidence to discuss spatiality and landscape, with an eye towards eventual application in archaeological contexts. Most of the evidence, however, will come from the analysis and comparison of Chinese and Western landscape depictions in painting, ceramic decoration, formal garden architecture, and funerary practices. Referencing these broad categories of evidence may seem disjointed, but I prefer to think of it as a historically and materially oriented comparison of distinct cultural expressions of spatiality in order to draw out a general heuristic tool (*transcendent vs emergent order*) that can potentially be developed to analyze less formal contexts in the future.

This exploration of ontological difference and its importance for archaeological interpretation continues in Chapter 7 with an analysis of variant moral discourses and forms of personhood that I propose should be considered when writing histories of the Chinese workers on the transcontinental railroad and Overseas Chinese more generally. The dissertation will then conclude with a re-evaluation of the aims outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, a summary of the substantive findings of the research, and guidelines for future researchers within the subfield of Overseas Chinese archaeology.

The *Siyi* in the mid-19th century was at the crest of long term demographic changes that produced an environment where large numbers of Chinese immigrants came to California (among other places). These migrants were equipped with tools that allowed them to succeed that can be historically and anthropologically traced, and described. This chapter offered such a description, characterized by formal networking, expressed materially through bulk purchasing, but also through making hierarchical distinctions within the group. This network was partially constituted by moral economies in which remittances played a large part. Interpreting work camps can thus legitimately be understood as studying the intersection of capitalist rationality and a variant but not opposite (and often compatible) cosmology.

The reality that Chinese immigrants to the United States were oriented by different ontological and cosmological assumptions, and by historically constituted moral discourses than European-Americans does not mean the Chinese are or were representatives of some sort of eternal type, nor that there is an unbridgeable gap of understanding created by difference. It does mean that the rationality which shaped their decisions emerged in different conditions than that of European-Americans. We will return to this idea in Chapter 7. The Chinese workers on the transcontinental railroad migrated from was in the midst of massive changes, and a Chinese immigrant who spent his (or her) working life in America before returning would have encountered a China very different in some ways than the one that he (or she) left.

## Chapter 6 – Spatiality and Landscape

### Introduction

Chapter 3 of this dissertation has given us a sense of what the material record of Chinese workers on the transcontinental consists of. Chapters 4 and 5 advanced ethnographically and historically informed interpretations of the cultural context in which decisions about the procurement and use of these artifacts was made. Distribution methods were centralized and likely controlled by brokers also involved in procuring labor for the railroad in major port cities like San Francisco. Ceramics and many foodstuffs were imported directly from Guangdong Province via established trade routes. Consumer choice in selection of goods (ceramics, foods, medicines) was unlikely to have existed at the personal level, except possibly in opium paraphernalia (due to irregularity of form and frequent presence of incising). Supply-side decisions were likely made in urban centers such as San Francisco where the Chinese merchant class was most entrenched. It is unclear what if any role work gang specialists such as accounts managers or cooks had in procuring supplies for their units, but in any case this would be difficult to see archaeologically due to the presumed intercourse between different work gangs on larger more permanent camps such as Summit Camp. It is possible more variation between archaeological foci is apparent on smaller work camps with intact deposits (the best candidate for this is 'China Kitchen' as discussed in Chapter 8) so that discernable activity areas could be established, but in lieu of further research this must remain speculative. The primary motivation involved in these purchasing selections appears to be frugality, due to the generally low quality of 'Double Happiness' style ceramics. The presence of more expensive wares is difficult to definitively explain: it is possible they were used in shared dining contexts, but no Wintergreen/Celadon or Four Seasons spoons or plates (which would be used for service) have been positively identified. It is also possible that the bowls and teacups made from



expensive wares were used by an aspirational group within the work gang.

Use of opium, opioid tonics, and other medicinal products are interpreted as largely means to maintain bodily health, and the lack of activity areas (represented by a concentration of opium-related products rather than a generalized distribution) specifically dedicated to its use. Chapter 7 will explain in greater detail the different significance of bodily maintenance and will break down the common expectation (drawn from the Judeo-Christian tradition) that self-abnegation and bodily mortification is a sign of people working towards the good of others. This material background gives us a concrete foundation on which to construct interpretations of how Chinese laborers on the railroad saw and moved through the landscapes they encountered in the American West.

Landscape has been an important topic in historical archaeology in recent years. Cassell (2005) discusses how disparate landscape of indigenous and Euroamerican peoples relate to one another among the Inupiat in Alaska. Lawrence (2005) discusses the role of colonialism on the landscape of Australia's gold rush. Behrens (2005) explains the different ideas of landscape and how it is related to industrial organization in the context of capitalist colonialism in South Africa. Botwish and McClane (2005) describe oyster tongers on the Chesapeake Bay and how the landscape they inhabit is related to their identities, as well as their resistance to new forms of industrial organization. These and other contemporary articles on landscape (e.g. Whitridge 2004, Zarankin and Senatore 2005) describe landscape as a field where social practices, material things, personal identities, and public representations intertwine in complex ways that are obscured by dichotomies such as space/place.

The central issue to be explored here is *fēng shuǐ* (風水, literally 'wind and water'), a body of practical techniques for landscape management that has thus far largely bedeviled archaeologists attempting to address it. We will compare and contrast four different expressions

of spatiality: 1) in paintings and ceramic decoration; 2) in formal garden landscapes; 3) in mortuary practices; and 4) in informal work camp layouts.

### *Feng Shui* in the Anthropological Literature

The first major anthropological figure to address *feng shui* was Maurice Freedman, who discussed *feng shui* primarily as a means ensure prosperity, and as something that was out of the reach of the poor (Freedman 1979a:195). His primary focus was on what he saw as a system, particularly prevalent in in mortuary practices. It was simultaneously “a standard system of metaphysics and a form of divination” (Bruun 2003, Freedman 1979b:331) the aim of which was to simultaneously worship and manipulate the ancestors for one’s own benefit. While structuralism’s fortunes are somewhat independent of Freedman’s insights, his emphasis on an almost cynical pragmatism involved in *feng shui* is a valuable insight that retains its importance. It is important not to divorce *feng shui* as an idea from *feng shui* a something people do, often for instrumental purposes. This is related to the criticism levied by Clunas (1996) later in the chapter, which describes landscape practices related to *feng shui* as a form of commodified knowledge.

Freedman’s (1979a, 1979b) accounts of *feng shui* provide a number of important insights. Freedman notes that *feng shui* can “not be made consistently to work if people [are] generally cynical in their claims” (1979a:190). Freedman argues that the people who practice *feng shui* must generally believe in it, else “the system would break down” (*ibid*). However, this also means that “because faith is general a few people can manipulate it to their advantage” (*ibid*). For Freedman, *feng shui* is “an assertion of rights: to home territory and to individual access to rank and riches” (1979a:211). Given that ‘rights’ are often in conflict, *feng shui* can function to both “suppress claims as well as support them” (*ibid*). Furthermore, *feng shui* “is a belief which entails certain actions”, which often involve making “economic sacrifices” (1979a:191).

Freedman offers several different definitions for *feng shui*. It is, “a complex of beliefs concerned with a central theme in Chinese metaphysics: man’s place in nature and the universe” (1979a:191), “the craft of adapting the abodes of men (buildings and graves) to the landscape” (1979a:192), “a body of learning the complexity of which is represented to the layman by the compass, the books, and the experience of the practitioners” (1979a:194), “a preoccupation with success” (1979a:195), “a self-reinforcing system of ideas” (1979a:200), “concern with the forms of the landscape and buildings” (1979b:314), “a pseudo-science” (1979b:325), “a technique of divination” (1979b:326) “an instrument of competition” (1979b:329), and “the ritual of a society not yet overborne by its architectural technology” (1979b:333). In addition to being an “assertion of rights” (1979a:211) it is also “an amoral explanation of fortune” (*ibid*), and “an intrinsic part of the cult of the ancestors” while also being “the opposite of ancestor worship” in the sense that “in geomancy the ancestors have no moral status but are pawns in a game played by their descendants” (*ibid*).

Freedman thus emphasizes the complexity of *feng shui* and its status as an embedded practice. He asserts that “*feng-shui* cannot be treated entirely on its own, as though it were some independent feature of Chinese thought and life” (1979b:331). As Freedman describes, “the complexity of *fung shui* is a guarantee of its continued credibility. If it works, well and good. If it fails to work, a neglected principle, an ignorant geomancer, an undetected alteration to the landscape can be held responsible” (1979a:194). As such, “In *fung shui*, prediction and results are ... in a strange relationship of mutual causality” (1979a:199). Freedman describes this as “retrospective *fung shu*” (*ibid*), in which “what is predicted is nearly always likely to be justified, because what is foretold is vague, or inevitable, or subject to frustration which deny a part of the system or the competence of a practitioner without damaging the system as a whole. Retrospectively it can be demonstrated to be valid because the material can be read a number of different ways to justify any collection of events” (1979a:200).

As such, “from the point of view of the outsider, geomancy seems completely irrational” (Freedman 1979a:194). This is the essence of the problem that I am trying to address in this chapter. *Feng shui* ‘works’ in the sense that, ultimately, it is about how one’s “mind is responding to a mysterious field of forces set up in a given place” (1979a:192) aimed at making one feel “at ease and at peace”: it is “psychological” but not an “illusion” (*ibid*). But in what sense can something be psychological but not an illusion? In what sense can something lack causal consistency and still be regarded as real? This chapter is one explanation for how *feng shui* works in making people content by relying on phenomenological insights.

Further anthropological approaches to *feng shui* include studies by Feuchtwang (1974) and Potter (1970). Freedman’s student Feuchtwang (1974) was concerned with answering whether *feng shui* mirrored society in some deep or structural way, and discusses how an analogical and mythic lexicon [maybe wrong word] becomes “clichés in the stock of proverbial knowledge which constitutes the metaphoric system by which life is described” (Feuchtwang 1974:254). The apprehension of structural mirroring between such practices and a society’s structure retains a strange fascination, but it is not the sort of claim anthropologists generally feel comfortable about making in contemporary practice.

Potter (1970) offers another take on *feng shui* when he suggests that the “impersonal” nature of *feng shui* as an explanation for prosperity or misfortune functioned to “soften” the impact of unfortunate events or circumstances. This of course can work both to mitigate suffering and to inure oneself to one’s lot – it has the potential to be life-affirming, but also can work to reinforce power structures. Potter’s emphasis on the social effects of *feng shui* practices, and Freedman’s recognition of its instrumental and even cynical aspect retain their validity in approaching *feng shui*.

## *Feng Shui*, Landscape, and Spatiality in Chinese America

How can we take *feng shui* seriously - as a spatial practice on equal footing with western understandings of physical space? Even assuming this is possible, it is no simple task. After all, the dominant western understanding of spatiality has proved itself wonderfully efficacious. Descartes took "bits of objective space (*res extensa*) as the elements in terms of which to explain everything in the world" (Dreyfus 1991:128). Geometric space and the Cartesian coordinate system (x,y,z) allow us to place any [material] phenomena in physical space.

In contrast, *feng shui* manuals (more scholarly examples include Lip 1995, Mak and So 2011, Rossbach 1983, and Skinner 1982) describe exotic and mysterious terms such as the 'five elements' and 'eight diagrams'. They posit the existence of *qi* (氣, 'breath') as a force animating the landscape and understand difference and change through the (by now thoroughly banalized) correlative contrasts of *yīn* (陰) and *yáng* (陽). They see dragons and tigers where western eyes perceive inanimate mountains made of dead matter. They use 'numerology', 'geomancy' and 'talismans'. These terms associate *feng shui* with the sort of practices the west has been attempting to purge itself of for the past five hundred years. All of this can potentially work to marginalize *feng shui* as something suited to 'new age' hucksters and fools but not the serious minded.

Focusing on these aspects of *feng shui* can have the effect of neutering it as a serious alternative to dominant western spatial practices -- practices supporting a perception of the world as passive objective matter to be manipulated and controlled in an instrumental fashion by discrete, rational, self-interested subjects.

Through its commodification and marginalization, *feng shui* is rendered safe for capitalism. That which can be turned into a commodity becomes subject to capitalist logic. By being translated in

orientalist (Said 1979) terms, it helps reinforce the dominant western self-interpretation as rational and freed from false consciousness and magical thinking while simultaneously reinforcing an understanding of Chinese culture as superstitious, mystical, and ultimately illogical, erroneous, and inferior. As a consequence, dominant western culture is unable to take the cultural practices of others seriously and is blinded to the value of cultural differences as resources to help us be in and see the world, others, and ourselves in other ways - particularly when it comes to our understanding of space.

So the stakes are high and the challenges significant. How can we genuinely take *feng shui* seriously, and by doing so open up forms of spatiality that have been marginalized in modern life? Not just in the *weak* sense that citizens of the modern liberal west feel the obligation to 'respect the beliefs of others', even while in their heart-of-hearts they dismiss them. But rather to understand them in a *strong* sense as available alternatives and serious challenges to western cultural preconceptions and the structures of power which rest on them. In doing so, this investigation explores similar territory to writings on *perspectivism* (Viveiros de Castro 1998) and ontology (Alberti et al. 2011). In "World's Otherwise", one of the topics Alberti et al. discuss is the inherent difficulty in taking apparently alterior modes of understanding seriously. As anthropologists, it is our inclination, training and duty to take cultural difference seriously, but this openness can sometimes be challenged by claims that on some level we cannot take in the same way that our ethnographic informants present them (Alberti et al. 2011).

My basic strategy is comparative. I aim to show not only what makes *feng shui* distinct from Cartesian spatiality but also the many ways in which they are similar. Both are culturally embedded historical phenomena. Both are products of our spatial engagement with the world and can only be apprehended through the application of specific techniques. Both are ways of managing *real* aspects of the landscape. Showing their historical emergence demonstrates these spatial stances are not self-evident but culturally contingent. Showing their dependence

on technique reveals neither mode of spatiality is 'there' for us in an unmediated fashion: we do not perceive a Cartesian grid any more (or less) than we perceive dynamic flows of *qi*. By understanding the way landscape 'shows up' or *presences* itself for us, we can understand how both techniques manage real aspects of our spatial engagement with the world. All of these comparisons work towards putting both modes of spatiality on equal ontological footing. This move runs contrary to the assumption, common in the west and increasingly so across the world, that Cartesian space is 'real space' and all other spatial understandings are somehow secondary or derivative.

I suggest instead the decisive difference between Cartesian space and the dynamic field of *feng shui* is not between the objective and subjective, the real and the made-up, or the modern and traditional, but rather what sort of ordering lends them intelligibility and sense. While Cartesian space is dependent on a *transcendent logical order*, *feng shui* relies upon an *emergent aesthetic order*. Both are techniques for managing and manipulating the landscape, and both are historical phenomena, the development and codification of which can be traced. It should be emphasized that the way people experience space is not intended to be confined to these admittedly abstract forms. What makes the phenomenon interesting to me is how the idea of absolute distance has achieved a kind of existential priority over our own primary experience of spatiality and what possibilities have been foreclosed by this hierarchy.

This is not a manual for how to do *feng shui*. The aim is to show how *feng shui* works and why we should take it seriously rather than to show how to become a *feng shui* practitioner (which is beyond my capabilities in any case). Nor will I provide a tabular checklist or series of properties in order to systematically determine the presence or absence of *feng shui* in archaeological contexts. Not only has this been attempted by previous historical archaeologists (e.g. Mueller 1987) and thus would be a mere retreading of previously explored ground, but establishing the presence or absence of *feng shui* would be useful mainly to ask questions about acculturation



and assimilation that have been convincingly shown to be problematic, as discussed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, one of the main points I hope to demonstrate is why such a systematic approach to *feng shui* is misleading and the product of misunderstanding the source of *feng shui*'s intelligibility. *Feng shui* is not something that is present or absent but is rather a pervasive aspect of the landscape present regardless of whether it is adhered to or not: everything has its *feng shui*, whether it is beneficial, benign, or detrimental. One accesses this aspect of the landscape through *aesthetic attunement* rather than through the application of context-free rules or principles.

I want to place *feng shui* in a position of parity with Cartesian spatiality in order to take it seriously on a deep level. In order to make this as easy as possible, I will also avoid (at least temporarily), speaking of the elements of *feng shui* that most strongly evoke mystical stereotypes. Thus, I will not discuss the 'five elements', 'eight diagrams', 'spirits and ghosts', 'tigers and dragons' and the like. It is these aspects of *feng shui* western skeptics latch onto in order to reproduce the mystical-rational and traditional-modern binaries and to present all other spatialities as illegitimate, inferior, and derivative. Rather, I will translate the intelligibility and sense of *feng shui* by relating it to the general western philosophical discourse regarding 'phenomenology' (e.g. Dreyfus 1991) and the more specific anthropological and archaeological engagement with 'landscape' (e.g. Bender 1993, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Hayden 1995, Johnson 2012, Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga 2003, Rouse 2005). It is my hope that by the conclusion of this piece the reader may be in a position to reconsider these 'mystical' aspects *feng shui*, but with fresh eyes.

### Cartesian Space and Phenomenology

The decontextualized fashion in which we imagine spatiality in the Modern West finds its historical roots in fifteenth century Italy, specifically in techniques for painting landscapes

developed by Filippo de Ser Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti (Alberti 1972, Edgerton 2006). Sometime around 1425 Brunelleschi developed what we now know as linear or western perspective “with no scientific application in mind, but solely to help solve a very medieval theological problem” (Edgerton 2006:157). This problem was to devise methods of visualization that, in the wake of the European disasters of the fourteenth century (plague, schism, etc), would “make people feel that God and his saints were once more immanent in their daily lives” (*ibid*). It was in this context that Brunelleschi “painted a small picture of the Florentine Baptistery to be viewed by looking at its mirror reflection through a small hole drilled in the back of the picture with the mirror held at arms length in front” (Figure 6.1, Edgerton 2006: 159). This depiction, now lost, is generally considered “the first painting in all of world art history to have been constructed according to the geometric laws of what we now understand as artistic ‘linear perspective’” (*ibid*).

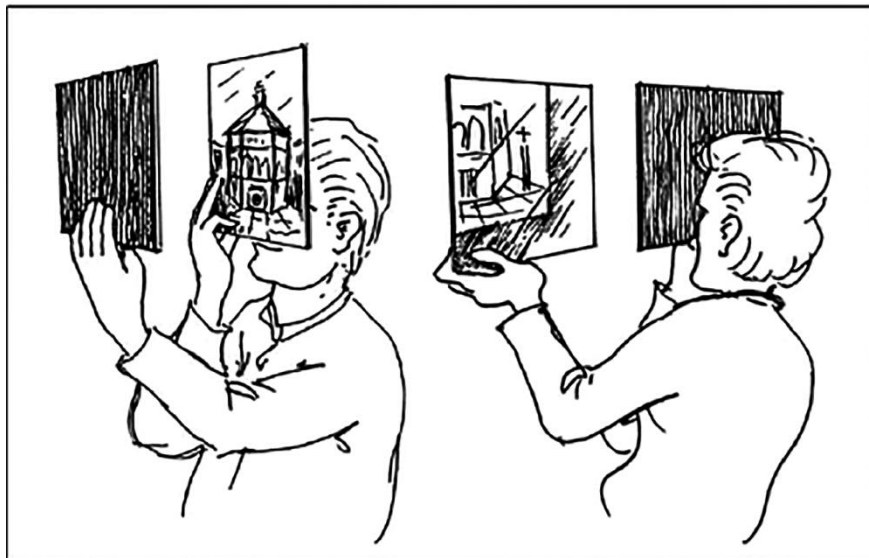


Figure 6.1 Brunelleschi's Mirror. From Saalman, (1970:10-1)

Within a decade of Brunelleschi's invention of this technique, it had spread to a number of other artists in Italy, and eventually found elaboration and codification in Leon Battista Alberti's *De*

*Pictura*, written in 1435 (Edgerton 2006:161). In addition to codifying these techniques for producing linear perspective depictions, Alberti also invented an altered technique for depicting landscape known as ‘Alberti’s Window’ (Figure 6.2), “an open frame gridded by perpendicular threads through which the artist should view the scene to be painted, and then transfer the coordinate details in scale onto his similarly gridded picture” (*ibid*). This also “shifted the purpose of perspective painting not as a depiction of divine mystery revealed by geometry, but as worldly perfection framed by geometry (*ibid*).

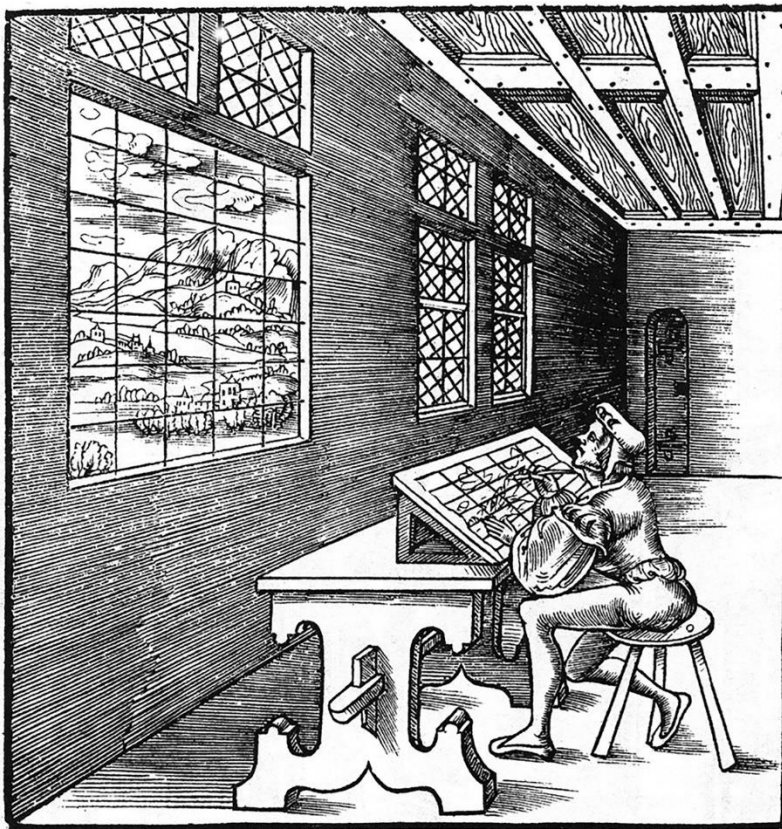


Figure 6.2 Alberti’s Window. From Edgerton (2006: 162)

What makes these techniques so transformational is their *externalization* and *decontextualization* of the rules of composition. Geometry becomes determinative of how

objects represented show up in relation to one another. It no longer matters what the content of the composition is, its order is predetermined by a *transcendent logical order*: the standard is outside or behind the order of things, yet is not determined by what those things are. The relationship between form and content is uni-directional. This is indeed a technique that allows the viewer to see a *real* aspect of the landscape – the relations of occurrent physical objects as *res extensa* – and it has proven its usefulness in many different fields as it proliferated through the centuries, including mathematics, cartography, and archaeology (Rowe 1965).

But there is something important about the human spatial engagement with the world that is lost in the process. In order to represent the occurrent relationships of physical objects in space, we are obliged to set aside the way in which humans actually experience the phenomenon of spatiality. It is precisely the sense of affectedness, of nearness and remoteness, and of orientation 'being-there' brings that is bracketed out of Cartesian space. These too are real aspects of the human spatial engagement with the world, but for complex reasons they have been progressively marginalized in the western tradition. This has proceeded to the point that subjectivity and falseness have become near-synonyms, while the real has come to be identified with the objective.

Understanding spatiality in terms of objective physical space remains a popular understanding amongst many archaeologists (e.g. Fleming 2006), in part because accounts of occurrent spatial relationships are falsifiable, as well as reducible to a singular reality. They are measurable, and given the same data set, different archaeologists can independently reproduce the same results. Given the great prestige of the physical sciences and the dominant belief that scientific methods are the one and only road to the truth, it is clear why such a procedure continues to attract adherents.

But it is precisely this understanding of spatiality as reduceable to (singular) objective space that has prevented archaeologists from apprehending the source of *feng shu*'s intelligibility. The

distinction between the aspect of the landscape captured by Cartesian coordinates and the aspect managed by *feng shui* can be understood as the difference between *physical space* and *existential spatiality* (Dreyfus 1991:128). This difference between geometrical and lived space can also be understood as the space of the *occurrent* (which is effectively captured by Cartesian coordinates), and the space of the *available*, which is necessarily effaced in order to arrive at the *occurrent*. This is because “theory requires decontextualizing characteristics from the context of everyday practices” (Dreyfus 1991:80; for a detailed explanation of these *modes of being* see Dreyfus 1991:60-87).

The available and occurrent are Dreyfus’ translation of the Heideggerian terms *zuhandenheit* and *vorhandenheit*, sometimes translated as *readiness-to-hand* and *presence-at-hand*. The *available* cannot be dismissed as purely subjective and arbitrary because, first, it is the primary way we engage with the world, in the sense that we are always already pressing into possibilities, and second, because it resides in public and inter-subjective cultural practices rather than a privative ‘mind’. What is *available* for us is constrained by our culture and presupposes a particular background understanding of being, one that we cannot be fully conscious of or completely represent in formal rules because we exist within and amidst it. We cannot step outside of and dispassionately decontextualize the *available*, as western science often imagines, because cultural context is the very sea that it swims in.

Critics of phenomenological approaches in archaeology have voiced a number of valid concerns, the most worrying of which is evidentiary (Johnson 2012:276). Fleming (1999, 2005, 2006) repeatedly raises this issue in his critiques of phenomenologically informed landscape archaeology. Specifically, Fleming returned to many of the same archaeological sites visited by Christopher Tilley as described in *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994), the first archaeological text to explicitly consider the subject. Fleming, asked “If ‘trained’ phenomenologists studied the same landscapes independently, in all the intensive detail

advocated by Tilley, would they achieve similar outcomes?” (2006:273), and upon visiting the same locations, receives distinct and different impressions than those described by Tilley.

Fleming considers this evidence that phenomenological approaches are hopelessly arbitrary and subjective. But what Fleming does not appreciate is this *perspectival* aspect of reality is precisely what phenomenology reveals. As Dreyfus states, “things are always already understood” (1991:197). But they are not understood in the same way by people with variant cultural backgrounds and subject positions. There may well be only one *occurrent* cosmos, but there are by *necessity* multiple *available* cosmoi. It is because of our own cultural expectations (historically conditioned) and the great prestige of the physical sciences that we have the expectation that the whole of reality is reducible down to a singular description, and that the same techniques used in the physical sciences can be used to understand the human world. But if reality primarily presents itself in terms of availability, this simply cannot be the case.

This evidentiary issue ironically becomes most problematic in those situations where we have limited understanding of the cultural context of archaeological remains because of temporal remoteness, lack of direct historical connections, absence of textual and discursive records, and extremely fragmentary preservation: precisely the dilemma of British Neolithic Archaeologists with whom phenomenology has found such favor. As a remedy and better test case for the interpretive potential of phenomenologically informed archaeology, Johnson suggests we “develop understandings of experience in contexts drawn from societies that were more complex than the Neolithic where a range of contextual information can be brought to bear on the question of how humans experienced the landscape around them” (2012:279). The Chinese technique of *feng shui* is just such a case. By taking phenomenology seriously, we can see there are aspects of the landscape the mere *physical space* cannot capture.



## Landscapes in Painting and Ceramic Decorations

Spatiality in Chinese painting typically serves a narrative purpose. Brunelleschi or Alberti-style illusion of 'depth' is absent, and the size, placement and orientations of objects are not determined by a transcendent logical order. Take for example the painting in Figure 6.3. It is obvious that, as far as linear perspective is concerned, it is not operative nor needed in this composition. It is easy to see the difference between this form of spatial depiction and that found in paintings organized by linear perspective when looked at side by side. For comparison, look at Raphael's Academy (Figure 6.4). The size and orientation of every figure and object in the painting is determined by rules of depiction that allow the creation of the illusion of spatial depth. The painting becomes a three-dimensional box one can enter rather than a narrative and aesthetic landscape in which one can wander. For certain, Raphael's landscape is beautiful as well, but it is a beauty that draws its strength from a technique that gives the illusion of being true to life while at the same time, in a reduced sense it is pure fabrication, paint on plaster. As Magritte would say, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe".



Figure 6.3 Section of scroll by Wang Hui, 1698 (From The Metropolitan Museum of Art)





*Figure 6.4 Raphael's Academy*

Of course not all western art follows the rules of perspective that Brunelleschi and Alberti uncovered and codified. The purpose of this comparison is not to draw essential differences between cultures but to point out the historical origins of contingent differences which nonetheless structure our lives, or at least provide us with the (by necessity) background understanding of space and spatiality that is required for our actions to have and social or personal sense at all (Dreyfus 1991). The distinction I am making here is not about inscribing essential oppositions. Non-western people use Cartesian spatiality to do things, and there are other sources for the way we experience the landscape even within western societies (e.g. the romantic landscape tradition of Wordsworth and Hoskins (Johnson 1996)). The point is to show how a new way of looking at things emerged historically, was useful in many different fields, and eventually proliferated to the degree that it was granted a privileged position in our understanding of space and spatiality to the degree that other possibilities have become difficult to take seriously or imagine within western culture – especially those disciplines dominated by 'scientific' thinking, including to some degree certain varieties of archaeological practice. The goal is to unspool this process so that we can again take a look at the practice without being

unduly burdened by these suppositions.

This is complicated by the findings of Stephanie Chan (2013), who did an in-depth study of British-produced transfer prints associated with the Market Street Chinatown. Chan conducted “a multiscalar analysis that incorporates historical documentation of site change and theories of negotiated identities, cultural ownership, and postcolonial conceptualizations of boundary crossing and maintenance” in order to “examine the ways in which the Market Street Chinese may have integrated Euro American transfer-printed wares into their material culture without necessarily consuming the prescribed ideals that these wares represent in a wholesale fashion” (2013:136). Chan makes a plausible argument based on spatial proximity and likelihood of reuse that the transfer-print sherds studied were used by the Chinese-American residents of Chinatown. The Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State also includes collections associated with Chinese-Americans that include substantial numbers of ceramics of non-Chinese origin. As a further example, Greenwood’s excavations of Los Angeles Chinatown also uncovered large amounts of Euro- and American-made ceramics mixed in with wares of Chinese origin. At the Summit Camp main site, whiteware constituted the fourth largest component of the ceramic assemblage. While significant numbers of transfer-prints studied by Chan do indeed exhibit linear perspective (contrary to my expectations) they are also in the Romantic landscape style (Chan 2013:107), which has more in common with Chinese landscape motifs than the depictions on Chinese Export Porcelain because both Romantic and Chinese landscape traditions emphasize the aesthetic aspect of the landscape with realistic spatiality being secondary. In any case, none of the ceramics used by Chinese laborers on the transcontinental that I have documented in this dissertation have spatial depictions in linear perspective. The closest any of the ceramic decorations get to depicting a landscape rather than isolated items (such as the Four Seasons pattern) is the Bamboo pattern, which gives the impression of looking at foliage through a mist (an artistic technique common in Chinese

landscape painting).

Chan points out the Romantic landscapes depicted in the Market Street transfer-prints present vistas and vegetation that evoke *chinoiserie* or *arabesque* traditions in western art (2013:52-3, 107). As she states, these are of course orientalist reimaginings of an exotic other, and it is this sense of fascination and retroactive nostalgia that makes them work on the imagination of western consumers. There is a certain irony in Chinese-Americans using western produced ceramics with decorations that use techniques for spatial depiction dating to the Renaissance but which depicted landscapes inspired by an imaginary oriental world.

In conclusion, the use of *physical space* and western depth-perspective on the transfer-print ceramics found in Chinatown is perhaps secondary (or tertiary) to their *romantic* style and their functional and pragmatic use. In other words, the best (though not necessarily exhaustive) explanation for their presence is they were likely cheap because they were decades old and secondhand by the time the Chinese of Market Street got them (Chan 2013:105). Nonetheless, the *romantic* style of landscape depicted in the ceramics is not wholly different from that of *feng shui*.

While difference in landscape depiction is apparent in painting styles, archaeological evidence regarding landscape depictions on ceramics presents a more complicated picture. In order to better understand the general concept of *feng shui*, I will now turn to an analysis of formal landscapes including gardens and cemeteries. The aim of this is to provide the clearest examples possible for the distinct approaches to landscape I have identified in this chapter.

### Formal Landscapes – Gardens

In order to understand why *feng shui* cannot be understood in terms of occurrent physical space, but neither can it be dismissed as merely a cultural fiction, we turn to the first known Chinese manual for designing formal gardens: the *Yuán yě* (園冶), or Craft of Gardens, written

in 1631 during the Ming Dynasty by Jì Chéng (计成). Formal and planned landscapes have proven their potential to provide semiotically dense and emblematic expressions of social relations and cosmologies that extend well beyond their particular instantiations (e.g. Leone 1984). Aspects of the landscape and techniques of manipulating space that in other places may be ambiguous or muted often become intentionally highlighted (or conversely, concealed). For this reason they are a good place to start if we want to understand what aspect of the landscape *feng shui* manages.

Readers of the *Yuan ye* expecting a step-by-step guide to garden design, or context-free principles that apply in general situations will find themselves disappointed. Ji Cheng's standard for garden design does not issue from a *transcendent logical order* like the geometrically determined landscape paintings of Brunelleschi or Alberti, or the gardens of Versailles or Annapolis, but rather from a sense of *kairos* or 'fittingness' (當, *dāng*) that emerges from the particularity of a given context; what I call an *emergent aesthetic order*. To briefly contrast these two ways of ordering things, we can compare a chessboard and a bouquet of flowers. The squares on the chessboard alternate between two colors with every other square being the same color. If one square is white, then it will border non-white squares on each of its four faces (as long as it isn't on the edge of the board, of course). Any variation from this is an error. Regardless of what colors are used or any qualitative considerations, there is only one correct sequence of squares, determined *a priori* by formal rules. Now consider a bouquet of flowers. Because of our shared background practices and cultural competency, we can see when flowers are arranged well and when they are not arranged well, we might even be able to describe regularities in technique, but this does not mean there is only one correct way of arranging flowers. The order of the composition is not determined in a singular way *a priori*, but rather emerges because of the particular qualities of the elements that make it up (of course, capitalist commodification may systematize this to the degree there is no longer any significant

aesthetic touch to a given technique). This in a sense is precisely the opposite of the decontextualized and external source of order we find expressed in western landscape painting and formal garden design: the order emerges internally, and simply cannot be severed from its particular context without draining it of the very source of its vitality and sense.

This is the reason that I believe Mueller's (1987) attempt at creating a tabular checklist to which an archaeologist can refer in order to determine the presence or absence of *feng shui* does not capture its sense and in fact perpetuates a misunderstanding of *feng shui* as a set of principles or rules that may be either adhered to or strayed from. This implicit understanding of *feng shui* as "principles guiding the orientation of manmade objects and structures within the environment in order to maximize good fortune" (Marmor 1998:17) is pervasive in the archaeological literature on the subject (e.g. Greenwood 1993:395; Mueller 1987:1; Ritchie 1993:366; Rouse 2005:86). But here we should note the objections of Bourdieu and others in conceiving of cultural entities as sets of rules:

So long as he remains unaware of the limits inherent in his point of view on the object, the anthropologist is condemned to adopt unwittingly for his own use the representation of action which is forced on agents or groups when they lack practical mastery of a highly valued competence and have to provide themselves with an explicit and at least semi-formalized substitute for it in the form of a *repertoire of rules*" (Bourdieu 1977:2)

In contrast, Ji repeatedly advises the garden designer to heed and be receptive to the particular qualities of a place, something akin to what we might call its *genius loci*, which Ji is aware cannot be captured in formal rules:

园林巧於因界,精在体宜,愈非匠作可为,亦非主人所能自主

Skill in landscape design is shown in the ability to 'follow' or 'borrow from' the existing scenery and lay of the land, and artistry is shown in the feeling of suitability created

(Ji 1989:39)

What we see here is a concern for an aspect of the landscape (the affective capacity of a

particular place) that is uncapturable by our understanding of *physical space* and is necessarily effaced if we understand our encounters with the landscape as following context-free principles. Ji suggests sensitivity to this aspect of landscape: the particularity of place and its capacity to move us, is the source of skill in landscape design. We know we have been skillfully manipulated by the designer when we (or rather, the culturally embedded person with competence in a particular vernacular) experience a “feeling of suitability”. This feeling of suitability has no source outside itself, it is not determined by a *transcendent* order, but rather obtains in our *emergent* affective and aesthetic relationship with the landscape. To look for *feng shui* in the landscape as though it were a set of principles and properties is like trying to find formal chess-like rules in flower arranging. Why do we assume such rules are there to be found? And by looking for such rules, are we perhaps misunderstanding the way it actually works? This is my basic contention.

是在主者,能妙於得体合宜,未可拘牽

“Craftsmanship is shown in the design of something appropriate and fitting to the site, so [the garden designer] cannot stick closely to convention” (Ji 1989:39)

The process of garden design finds its source not in context-free rules but in *attunement*. Thus, *feng shui* cannot be properly understood as a set of determinative rules that can be elaborated and then looked for in archaeological contexts. Even in formal garden design, Ji instructs us:

选向 非拘宅相,安门须合厅方

“In choosing the direction the buildings face in, do not be bound by what the geomancer tells you” (Ji 1989: 54)

Ji consistently emphasizes the determinative role of receptivity to the particularity of place rather than following external, decontextualized rules:

相地合宜,构园得体

Literally, this translates to 'examine ground fit proper, structure garden fit proper', which means something like 'Examine the land (to make sure that) it is proper. Structure the garden (so that) it is proper.'

Hardie renders it as:

"To sum up, if one chooses an appropriate site, the construction of the garden will follow naturally" (Ji 1989:46)

Given his critique of Tilley's use of phenomenology, such emphasis on particularity and place might cause consternation to an empirically and objectively oriented landscape archaeologist such as Fleming. But such emphasis is sufficient to show there are real aspects of the landscape that are publicly (though not necessarily cross-culturally) available that will never be captured by the sorts of techniques Fleming espouses. Rather, it is precisely the sort of thing that a historical archaeology of non-western people can explore and point out. And by checking our interpretations against an articulated body of cultural knowledge in addition to the archaeological record, we will be constrained by the evidence, making our interpretations falsifiable and meeting the evidentiary challenge raised against phenomenological approaches.

Ji is steadfast in his refusal to offer formulas or *a priori* rules for garden design, and in this he could not be more different from western garden planners, whose mastery of 'universal law' was part of the message of their design. In contrast, Ji emphasizes the breadth of possibilities available to the garden designer. Ji discusses the various places in which one can build garden pavilions, including in the middle of flowers, next to water, in a bamboo forest, etc. He states any of these placements can be made to work, concluding:

亭安有式,基立无凭

This means that 'while there are forms or models for pavilions, there is no rule to obey when it comes to how or where they should be laid out'.



Yet anyone who has been to a Chinese garden realizes there is definitely a discernable style that is not the product of illusion or mere opinion, something they have in common with one another, even as they respond to the particular needs of place. For Ji,

曲折有条,端方非额,如端方中须寻曲折,到曲折处环定端方,相间得宜,错宗为妙

“they must have order in variety and yet their orderliness must not be too rigid: even this orderliness should have a pleasing unpredictability, and yet at their most diverse there should be an underlying consistency” (1989:75)

The method of evaluating a garden is *aesthetic attunement*, and the test of fittingness is *affectedness*. The whole of Ji’s philosophy on garden design can be summed up in the final lines of the *Yuan ye*:

因借无由,触情俱是

This means, ‘borrowing has no (clear) reasons. (As long as) it touches the feelings, it is right.’ Here the traditional landscape archaeologist may cry out in frustration: ‘If *feng shui* is not a set of elaborate and determinative rules, and if there are multiple solutions to any given difficulty, and if we are not culturally embedded observers, how are we supposed to apprehend *feng shui*? Just stand there and be receptive?’

My reply is that only those embedded in a shared practical background, and a shared cultural vernacular stand in a truly *emic* position. We access this aspect of the landscape *feng shui* manages (its affective capacity) only *through* culture. We cannot say with specificity just *what* the experience of place was *like*, except insofar as we share a practical background of “mindless everyday coping skills” (Dreyfus 1991:3) regarding spatiality. We can only “*point out* the background practices and how they work to people who already share them- who, as [Heidegger] would say, dwell in them. [We] cannot *spell out* these practices in so definite and

context-free a way that they could be communicated to any rational being” (Dreyfus 1991:4).

This does not mean if we are not a part of a given culture we cannot understand the landscapes of cultural others, but it does mean we will inevitably be able to adequately explain or even be able to verify our conclusions in an absolute sense. By learning the details of a culture and the areas where orientations towards landscape have commonalities or differences, we can potentially achieve an imperfect but informative insight context specific landscape practices.

Yet inevitably, some but not all aspects of *feng shui* will be understandable to outsiders. Where there is cross-cultural overlap in shared practical background understanding, *feng shui* appears rational, or else is transparent. But it is most conspicuous when there is no such overlap. This is what the 'five elements', 'eight diagrams', 'spirits and ghosts', and 'tigers and dragons' are: they are not rational or irrational but practical aspects of *feng shui* that are not *available* to outsiders because they do not *fit* in our already given cultural horizon. Thus, westerners tend to not notice *feng shui* when it appears to make sense (within their own cultural framework), or when they can ascribe underlying rationales that would make sense to observers embedded in capitalist culture (e.g. 'it makes sense to have entrances to the south in the northern hemisphere because it maximizes light and heat'). Yet it seems to pop out at us when it does not (Figure 6.5). This reproduces a cultural understanding of *feng shui* as irrational and conversely reinforces the western self-image as rational beings. This in turn contributes to the larger process of the progressive economic rationalization of cultural practices we see under global capitalism.



Figure 6.5 A feng shui practice that does not readily translate to outsiders

How then should archaeologists approach *feng shui*? First, we should recognize that *feng shui* is a pervasive aspect of the landscape in the same sense as Cartesian coordinates, not something that is sometimes present and sometimes absent nor a mere cultural fiction. It is a dynamic field of encounter that responds to changes in the environment around it rather than a stable property. Because it is vulnerable to change, it must be managed. *Feng shui* is the body of practices developed to manage this affective capacity.

Second, we should recognize western culture has its own 'feng shui', that is, its own techniques for achieving a sense of spatial 'fittingness'. The difference is not that Western culture is based on transcendent logical reasoning while Chinese culture is based on emergent aesthetic reasoning but rather the dominant western tradition has not articulated and made explicit its reliance on a culturally-bounded sense of aesthetics to the same degree the Chinese tradition

has. This is why the Chinese intellectual tradition is so useful not only for understanding Chinese landscape practices but can also show westerners something about themselves they have not articulated nor developed the tools with which to do so. Practices, including particular spatial practices, may be marginalized in a given cultural milieu, and engaging with another that takes a given marginalized practice seriously can potentially help reevaluate the significance of similar practices within one's own culture.

This leads us to a question of *method*. The easiest way to 'see' *feng shui* in the landscape without reproducing rational/mystical binaries is to use the *comparative method* to contrast practices westerners know in their own self-interpretation to not be externally rationalizable. That is, we can most easily see the archaeological consequences of the differing spatial stances and emphases while still avoiding *orientalism* by looking at contexts where westerners are self-conscious of the somewhat arbitrary and historically contingent nature of their practices. In other words, practices which have not yet been fully commodified and taken over by capitalist economic rationality, are the best cases to refer to in order to expose ourselves as not rational by our own standards. For this reason I have mentioned differences in painting and ceramic decorations, and formal landscape gardens. Compare the layouts of the *Wǎngshī Yuán* (網師園), or Master of Nets Garden, with William Paca's Garden in Annapolis (Figures 6.6 and 6.7).

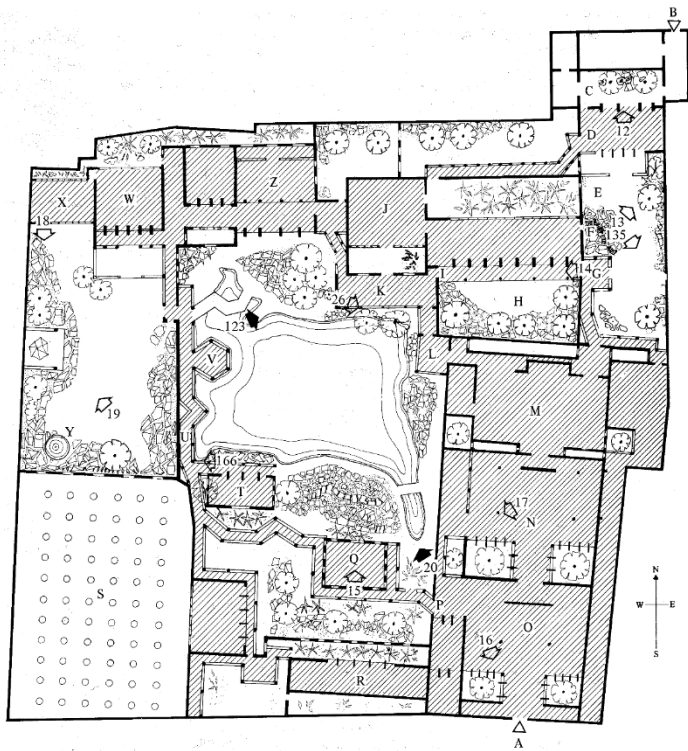


Figure 6.6 Wǎngshī Yuán 網師園 , or Master of Nets Garden, Suzhou (Keswick 2003)

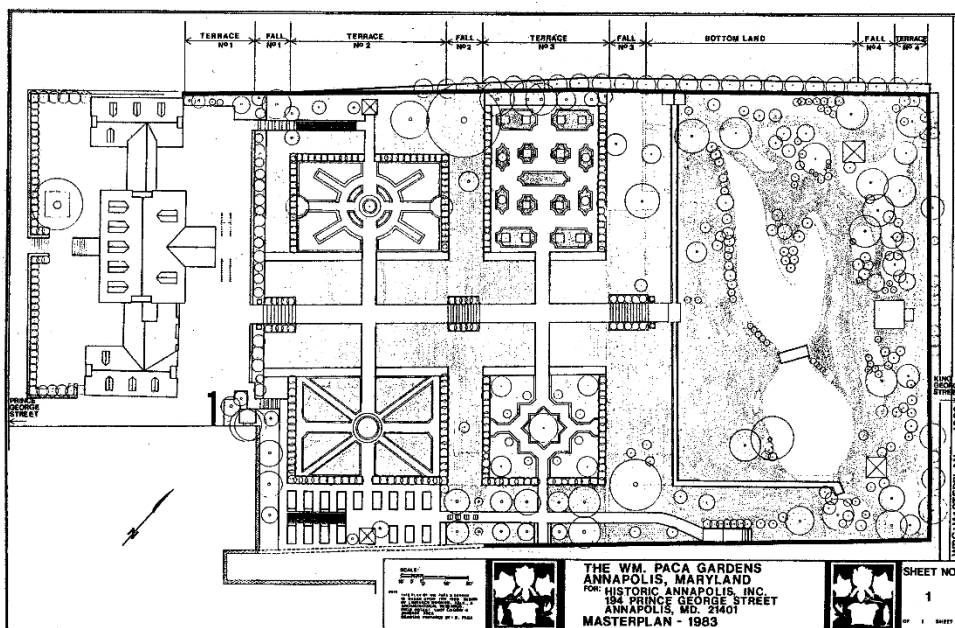


Figure 6.7 Paca's Garden, Annapolis

It is clear the *Wangshi Yuan* does not follow the rules of western perspective or geometric principles in the same sense as Paca's garden. While Paca's garden is dominated by right angles and relatively rigid organization of space (with the exception of the "wilderness garden" area which pointedly includes a "Chinese style bridge"), there is a certain purposeful irregularity in Chinese gardens. The acute and obtuse angles on *Wangshi Yuan* are not the result of imprecision in the garden designer, but rather have "order in variety" without being overly rigid, as Ji (1989:75) suggests. The differences between these gardens are of course more complicated, and I have purposely chosen to strongly contrasting gardens and other examples for heuristic purposes – to make the point as clearly as possible. The cost of this tactic is in overstating the difference. Geometrically rigid gardens still contain aesthetic flourishes and geometry does not explain the innumerable aesthetic choices Raphael made in painting *The Academy*. This is about drawing a strong contrast about one particular aspect of spatial depictions and architecture which can be seen in multiple areas of spatial expression, not



offering a totalizing explanation for an essential contrast. The Romantic tradition of painting and architecture in Europe is of course marginalized by this contrast, but it can also serve to illustrate that Chinese spatial depictions, whatever superficial resemblance they have to Romantic rather than classical landscape, are not a *reaction* to a dominant trend like classicism in the same way that western Romanticism was.

There is no self-evidently 'rational' way to make a garden, though this is exactly the illusion created by transcendent orders. Paca's Garden is not 'ordered' while the *Wangshi Yuan* or *Li Yuan* is 'disordered', they are ordered *differently*. The transcendent order that gives Paca's Garden its ideological force contrasts with the emergent order we find in Chinese garden design. But this is not to say Chinese Gardens are innocently concerned with aesthetics while western gardens are techniques of power. Aesthetic sense can be used as a means of political legitimization, and its cultivation as a form of personal discipline (Foucault 1977, 1997). Clunas critiques Ji Cheng for completely passing over this aspect and use of gardens:

By 1630 it is possible to assert, by means of completely ignoring any other possibility, that a 'garden' is purely a place of rocks and pavilions. This is what Ji Cheng does. By associating gardens above all with painting, from which the mimesis of productive land is excluded, this assertion is reinforced. But it is an assertion that is in an insoluble tension with the market forces that actually govern the ownership and transfer of *all* property, gardens included, despite appeals to 'nature' as the ultimate validating principle for the kind of cultural product Ji Cheng was manufacturing"

(Clunas 1996:175)

While I have tried to explain *how* these gardens work, Clunas provides a valuable corrective to naïve understandings of *what* gardens are working *towards*:

While the exact purpose of 'The Craft of Gardens' remains open to debate, a number of commentators accept it as an artefact in which gardens and skills relevant to the creation of gardens are themselves commodities, and the text is therefore assimilable to what I have elsewhere argued as 'the commodification of knowledge' in the late Ming. The presumed audience for this lay text is among those for whom increased prosperity made it possible to consider the emulation of consumption patterns that had previously been restricted to a few. The text stresses again and again [...] that, for those who lack the correct degree of taste, it is highly dangerous to lay out a garden according to one's own inclinations. The litany of egregious errors in which it is possible to fall is backed up



by the claim that it will be much safer to employ a 'master' of the craft [...] This role is clearly intended for none other than Ji Cheng himself"

(Clunas 1996:174-5)

Speaking of Paca's Garden, Leone states, "The formal garden was not an adornment, the product of spare time; it was not for food and still less for idle fashion [...] it was very active, for by [...] using it [...], its contemporaries could take themselves and their position as granted and convince others that the way things are is the way they always had been and should remain. For the order was natural and had always been so" (1984:34). Though the source of the order in Chinese and Western gardens differ, their potential ideological effects do not.

Chinese Gardens *were* indeed sources of pleasure, places of contemplation, and sites where urban elites could cultivate a sensitivity to nature that was an essential part of being a gentleman. But they were not *only* this. They were also demonstrations of superiority, both economic and cultural. Cultural superiority, the capacity to be "properly human" rather than "merely human" (Davies 2011), has been one of the ultimate source of legitimization in Chinese tradition, and formal gardens (along with the other 'arts') are one of the main means to lay claim to such authority.

Gardens could be used to make claims to mastery and the right to political power, but just as they are ordered differently, so too does the source of this mastery differ. While Paca utilized the principles of perspective to create visual illusions and claim the right of mastery through knowledge and control of natural law (Leone 1984), Chinese Gardens aid claims to mastery by demonstrating the cultural superiority and sensitivity of the owner. Whereas the message of Paca's Garden is 'I have the right to dominate because of my mastery and knowledge of natural law', Chinese Gardens say 'I have the right to dominate because my capacity to be attuned to the numinous flows of nature demonstrates my superiority as a human being. I am *jūnzǐ* (君子, a gentleman, or 'properly human') while you are merely *xiǎorén* (小人, a small person, or

'merely human')'(Davies 2011). We will return to this issue of *junzi/xiaoren*, the importance of self-fashioning, and the use of material culture in order to do so in Chapter 7.

## Formal Landscapes – Cemeteries

Besides painting and formal garden landscapes, there is another spatial practice ideal for showing the difference between dominant Chinese and Western sources of spatial order without reproducing orientalist stereotypes. This is mortuary practice. Just as in painting and formal gardens, mortuary practices have not yet been wholly taken over by capitalist economic rationality, and there is no self-evidently rational way to dispose of the dead. Contrasting burial practices thus creates an opening in which we can see the empirical consequences of differing understandings of spatiality without placing either in a position of superiority or inferiority.

The clearest example of different spatial stances and their material consequences in archaeology thus far is Wendy Rouse's (2005) comparison of Chinese- and Euro-American cemeteries in Virginiatown, California.

These cemeteries were excavated in the 1990s by a team of archaeologists from California State University, Sacramento led by Johnson and Farncomb (Rouse 2005:81). One of the main research questions of the excavators was "Is there evidence for a deliberate orientation of the cemetery or individual graves according to the principles of *fengshui*?" (Rouse 2005:83) to which Rouse answers in the affirmative. And there is indeed a striking difference in grave orientation between the Euro-American and Chinese-American sections of Cemetery 1 (Figure 6.8).

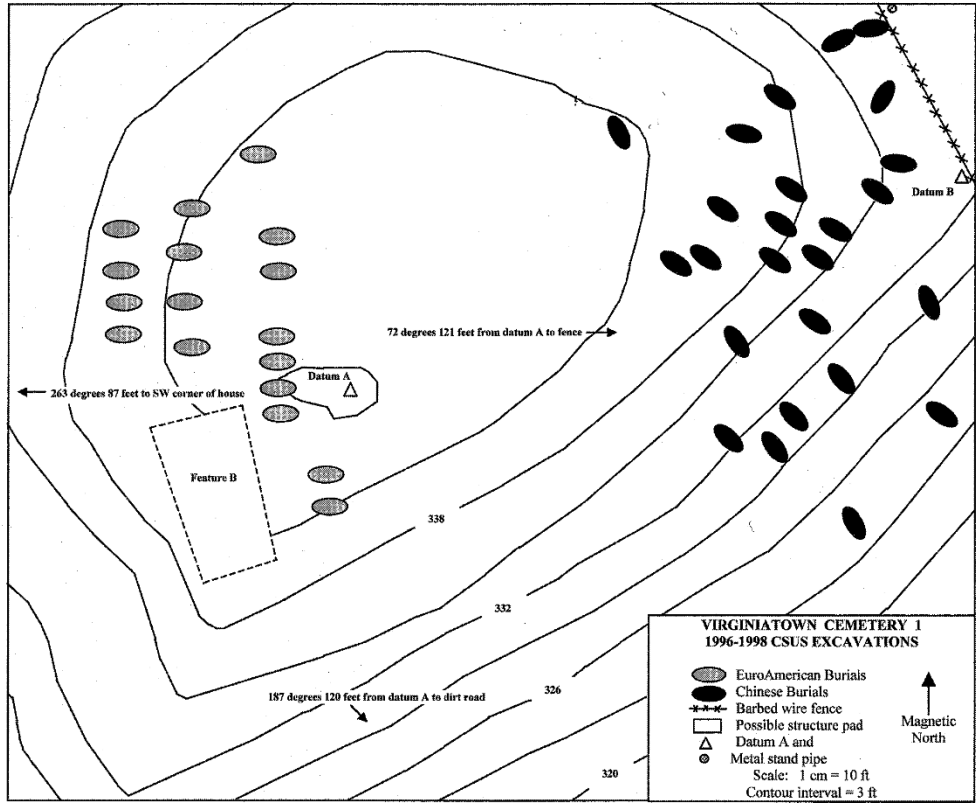


Figure 6.8 Map of Chinese exhumation pits and Euro-American burials discovered at Cemetery 1 (Chung and Wegars 2005:88)

In this figure, we can clearly see the Euro-American cemetery (on the left) is oriented by cardinal direction, with “the heads pointed toward the west in typical Christian fashion” (a transcendent, external form of order), while the Chinese-American cemetery (on the right) is not. What then orders the Chinese cemeteries? Rouse answers by noting the orientation of the heads of the graves towards the crest of the hill while their feet are oriented towards water, and concludes the cemeteries are “ideally situated according to the basic principles of *fengshui*” (2005:86). But what I am claiming is somewhat more radical. If *feng shui* is best understood as pervasive and embedded spatial practices rather than sets of rules (as I have argued) then there are no “principles of *fengshui*” to follow, though there are of course regularities (which could potentially be explored to answer questions about acculturation as in Mueller (1987)). But

no transcendent standard externally orders their arrangement. Rather, the *real* source of the order of the cemetery are the particularities of place which are revealed through culturally-conditioned aesthetic attunement.

Take for example another Chinese-American cemetery, this one from Carlin, Nevada. In this case “The graves formed a single line that was oriented roughly northwest-southeast on a low sloping ridge that overlooked Maggie Creek near the edge of the Humboldt River. Chinese *fengshui* favored a location facing a body of water with great natural beauty, in this case the creek, in front and distant mountains in the back” (Chung et al. 2005:120). Whereas the transcendent order of cardinal direction determines the orientation of Euro-American graves in a variety of contexts, the exact layout of Chinese graves varies dependent on the particularities of place. There are certainly *regularities* in their orientation. Heads tend to be oriented towards higher elevations while the feet tend to point towards a water source. But it is a mistake to think these regularities are hard and fast rules, and that the rules are the source of the order. Even *Zhū Xī* (朱熹), the arch-systematizer, who during the *Sòng* (宋) Dynasty (960-1279) compiled what would become the standard curriculum for Chinese education through the end of the imperial era, emphasized the importance of ‘fittingness’ (當然, *dāngrán*) over exact mimesis in mortuary practices (Ebrey 1991).

### Informal Landscapes – Work Camps

These examples should be sufficient to demonstrate *feng shui* can be a productive concept to use in understanding Chinese spatial practices in formal contexts while also showing its limits. But can we see traces of *feng shui* practices in less formal landscapes? Given that the content of *feng shui* practices varies from place to place, even in formal contexts, work camps unfortunately seem highly unlikely to provide unambiguous cases of *feng shui* acting as a

causal force in determining the constitution of the archaeological record. In any case, though they do provide a necessary starting point for the archaeologist, one will not find *feng shui* by looking at traditional archaeological maps -- maps produced using an outgrowth of Alberti's Window form centuries ago. Perhaps it is enough to know that it *is there*, even if we don't have the eyes to see it or feet to feel it.

Ritchie, speaking of Chinese mining sites in New Zealand, states, "the difficulty [...] is to evaluate whether the varying orientation of structures was influenced primarily by *feng shui* considerations or other factors" (1993:365), and concludes, "it is virtually impossible to ascertain just how much effect adherence to *feng shui* principles had" (1993:366). Sisson, who recorded several rural Chinese sites along the Salmon River in Idaho, states, "while the concepts of *feng shui* were probably carried with the immigrants to the United States, it is uncertain how discernable these ideals may be in the archaeological record" (1993:39). Greenwood, one of the first archaeologists to make a serious study of Chinese sites in the United States concurs, reporting, "it is difficult to search for regularities which can be attributed to national background or *feng shui* [...] we cannot know whether mirrors, trees, or other talismans were employed to offset the adverse effects of untraditional location and orientation, or whether the principles were not being observed" (1993:385-6). In sum, the archaeologists who have attempted to engage with *feng shui* in the past identified numerous problems, among them issues of causality, visibility, and how to distinguish between 'bad *feng shui*' and lack of adherence.

Some of these problems can be attributed to a misunderstanding of the source of *feng shui*'s intelligibility, in thinking of it as a set of rules rather than aesthetic attunement within a particular cultural vernacular, and I have tried to correct this in the preceding chapter. Other problems spring from the sorts of questions the researchers were asking – questions of acculturation and resistance, of cultural persistence and assimilation, and can be avoided by shifting our interpretive framework away from these sorts of questions (as discussed in greater detail in

Chapter 4). But some difficulties are likely insurmountable: causality, over- and under-determination, ambiguity, and the fragmentary nature of the archaeological record limit how confidently we can make claims about *feng shui* in the past. In addition, few if any of the archaeologists who have wrestled with this concept come from a Chinese cultural background or have been trained as a professional *feng shui* practitioner (the author included). Consequently, despite attempts to approximate an *emic* point of view on the topic, I must concede in the final analysis I am an outsider looking in. While for some topics this may be less important, the problem is exacerbated if *feng shui* is indeed a “dwelling” practice (Ingold 2000) through which people feel at home in the world, as I have claimed. Finally, given that *feng shui* is not static but rather a dynamic field of encounter that shifts in response to changes in other parts of the landscape, there is a degree of temporal distance that separates us from the shape of that field as it was 150 years ago, further limiting our ability to see and understand the traces of these practices.

So from a certain perspective things look bad for *feng shui* as a useful archaeological concept. Surely Fleming would consider these reasons enough to focus on aspects of the landscape that are easier to measure. However, this does not mean the preceding discussion does not inform how an archaeologist should approach Chinese work camps and other informal or expedient settings. I suggest four different ways *feng shui* can be productively used by archaeologists.

## Conclusion

First, *feng shui* should be a check on ethnocentric assumptions about efficiency and the rational use of the landscape. *Feng shui* is not rational or irrational but a practical and embodied engagement with the landscape that recognizes the importance of its affective capacity. Dominant western culture may tend to make a firm distinction between the functional and the ornamental, but *feng shui* reveals this distinction to be local rather than universal. This

understanding can potentially be of use in heritage and cultural resources contexts where spaces and places significant to a group of people are under threat from forces of economic rationalization.

Second, archaeologists should remember that *feng shui* is a pervasive aspect of the landscape present regardless of whether it is adhered to. Given the fact that *feng shui* is a living tradition, we should assume it was recognized and endowed with social significance by Chinese laborers in the mid-nineteenth century. As a consequence, Chinese laborers in the nineteenth century would most likely use knowledge of *feng shui* to improve their relationships to their surroundings whenever they could. The question of adherence then shifts from one of assimilation and resistance and (all the problems that entails) to a question of power and control over the landscape. If we do not see traces of *feng shui* in the archaeological record this is probably because either we do not have sufficient competence with which to perceive it, or conversely because external factors prevented Chinese laborers from reshaping the landscape as they would have preferred. This can potentially inform our understanding of power dynamics between differing classes and ethnicities.

Third, in spite of the ambiguity of archaeological traces of *feng shui* practices, and *because* of the various potential techniques that could be applied to any given situation, irregularity or heterogeneity in the layout of sites with similar 'purposes' or 'functions' can itself be interpreted as an indication of responsiveness to the particularity of place that is the font of *feng shui*'s efficacy. If *feng shui* exerted causal force in determining the structure of a group of otherwise similar sites then we would expect these sites to exhibit a wide variety of forms rather than a repeated standard layout. This is what we see in the graveyards described by Rouse (2005), but applying this to less formal sites like work camps would be unlikely to produce coherent results the more expedient the site.

Finally, if we accept the claim that *feng shui* was an understood and significant aspect of



Chinese interaction with the landscape, it can give clues to the subjective dispositions of Chinese workers in the American West. Chinese laborers on the transcontinental railroad during the mid-nineteenth century were surrounded by cultural others who neither understood the importance of *feng shui* nor practiced it. This could be a source for a sense of cultural superiority among Chinese laborers that may have helped them deal with the various indignities to which they were subjected as well as fostering a sense of community and shared experience between Chinese workers. Conversely, it could also be yet another source of frustration contributing to a sense of isolation and exclusion amongst the Chinese. In conclusion, *feng shui* might guide speculation as to what Chinese laborers along the transcontinental railroad thought of the work they were involved in. Blowing holes through mountains is certainly not the most auspicious way to interact with the landscape. Did the Chinese look with bemusement at the barbarians' surrounding them, as Euro-Americans unwittingly encumbered themselves with a baleful landscape? While I cannot provide definitive answers to these questions, I argue a felicitous archaeology of the Overseas Chinese in the United States must take them into account and consider them as reasonable possibilities.

In conclusion, I suggest the reason the cemeteries discussed are oriented differently, the reason Chinese and Western gardens work differently, and the reason spatiality is expressed differently in paintings and ceramic decorations are all because of a difference in the source of order which lends them intelligibility and sense. What we find in *feng shui* is a culturally articulated awareness of the affective capacity of the landscape that emerges as an aesthetic sense. This sense has real consequences for human life insofar as it can be used to manipulate relationships between humans and nature, humans and the built environment, and to the extent it can be leveraged in the service of manipulating relationships between humans.

In a sense the Chinese tradition has succeeded in elaborating on this aspect of the landscape and in endowing it with public significance to a greater degree than the Western tradition.

Western understanding of spatiality has taken a decisive turn since Brunelleschi and Alberti, and our way of approaching the landscape has been increasingly dominated by instrumental and economically 'rational' concerns. But things could be otherwise. It is my hope that rethinking *feng shui* can not only help us understand and respect Chinese spatial practices in a less ethnocentric way, but may also contribute to a rehabilitation of these other ways of being within Western culture as well.

In this chapter, I have made broad comparisons among different material expressions of 'landscape' including painting, ceramic decoration, formal gardens, graveyards and informal work camps. I have provided a heuristic explanation for differences in landscape depiction within the European and Chinese intellectual traditions, and have offered several different ways archaeologists might productively use these insights in fieldwork. In the next chapter, I will address the production of subjects, contrasting the *possessive individual* with the *relational person*, ultimately offering the *relational person* as a description of personhood that turns the corner from communal/individual contrasts.

## Chapter 7 - Moral Discourse and Personhood

### Introduction

Chapter 5 of this dissertation introduced several aspects of life prevalent in nineteenth century Guangdong that are of vital significance for interpreting historical events involving Chinese workers on the CPRR. We gained an understanding of the importance of out-migration as a means of diversification of resources for the prosperity of the *jia* (patri-corporation or corporate family). Given the demographic and environmental pressures effecting the Lingnan [China south of the Nanyang Mountains] generally and the Siyi [Four Counties] specifically in nineteenth century, remittances provided by family members living abroad became an increasingly important strategy to ensure the survival of the family unit. We also learned the decision to migrate abroad was not merely rational calculation or exploitation of family by family (though it could also be those things) but involved affective responses on the part of migrants who used labor as a way to signify both their emotional attachment to family and the quality of their personal character. Chapter 3 provided an understanding of the archaeological record left behind by these workers. The differing forms represented in ceramic ware types, and the apparent bulk purchasing strategy suggests concern for frugality while at the same time maintaining the foodways and diet of the homeland. In this chapter, I will make substantive claims regarding the personhood of Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth century, referencing previous discussions on the significance of labor and remittances.

### Resistance in Archaeological Interpretation

Work camps and other sites of labor have been regarded by many historical archaeologists as having pronounced potential to address issues of class and class conflict. According to

Hardesty (2002:94), “the often stark faces of labor and capital at work camps make such social formations ideal cases for the application of conflict theories.” McGuire and Reckner (2002:47) state, “[T]he archaeological record of the historic West is largely the result of day-to-day lived experiences, and these experiences *must* have included class struggle [emphasis added].” Over the past several decades, historical archaeologists have demonstrated the active role workers have played in resisting capitalist dominance. Such “collective resistance by workers in an industrial setting can take many forms, including malingering, sabotage of machinery, and destruction of products” (Saitta 2007:40). Examples range from the explicit violence of the Ludlow Massacre (Ludlow Collective 2001) to more subtle expressions of resistance, including drinking on the job and destruction of property (Nassaney and Abel 1993; Mrowzowski et al. 1996; Shackel 2000).

In these studies, the archaeological material suggests that laborers understood the conflicting interests of capitalists and laborers, and took an active role in defending their class interests. But such an understanding of resistance causes a problem: how can archaeologists interpret sites of labor where “resistance” seems relatively attenuated? The work camps occupied by Chinese laborers on the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s present just such a case. If documentary or archaeological evidence for resistance cannot be found, does this mean that Chinese laborers were “more docile” and had “less will of their own against their bosses” (US Congress 1877)? If researchers take the documentary evidence (written by European Americans) at face value, this is exactly the impression received. Take, for instance, the congressional testimony of Charles Crocker, the supervisor of the construction of the transcontinental railroad:

So far as the controlling of large bodies of laborers on works of the magnitude of the Central Pacific, we had one strike with the Chinese. [...] The Chinese circulated a document among themselves, all through the camp, and on the next Monday morning they refused to come out. [...] If there had been that number of white laborers on that work in a strike there would have been murder and drunkenness and disorder of all

kinds; it would have been impossible to have controlled them; but this strike of the Chinese was just like Sunday all along the work. These men staid [*sic*] in their camps; that is, they would come out and walk around, but not a word was said, nothing was done; no violence was perpetrated along the whole line. (quoted in US Congress 1877)

Crocker is commenting on the singular instance of labor agitation among Chinese laborers on the transcontinental railroad for which there is have documentary evidence, which occurred in late June 1867 (*Daily Alta California* 1867[sec. 1]:5). The strike was not limited to a specific camp but took place “along the whole line” (US Congress 1877) in the High Sierras. Thus, all the work camps described this dissertation can be considered associated with this event.

Crocker responded to this lone strike with “coercive measures,” such as stopping the supply of provisions. Within the week “they returned peaceably to work” (US Congress 1877). This implies that while Chinese laborers had some degree of class consciousness, or at least a sense of shared interests with other workers, relative to other workers they were far less likely to engage in overt resistance, and the one occasion they in fact did so was relatively benign. To explain this by saying Chinese laborers were somehow less agentive or more docile is merely to reproduce orientalist stereotypes (Said 1979), yet a narrative of class struggle does not readily fit with the archaeological data.

The artifacts recovered from work camps have indexical relationships with some of the daily activities of Chinese railroad laborers. Besides the artifacts associated with food storage (CBGS vessels), production (woks), and consumption (porcelain rice bowls and other tablewares), the presence of coins and gaming pieces suggests active recreation and socialization among Chinese workers. The presence of glass fragments of opioid tonics, along with opium pipe bowls and boxes, suggests that opium was used for medicinal as well as pleasurable purposes, and perhaps even that the distinction between enhancing pleasure and anesthetizing pain is not altogether clear. The consistent presence of Double Happiness porcelain rice bowls, one of the least expensive ceramic patterns available during this period (Sando and Felton 1993),

suggests that individualized choice of ceramic styles was not a concern, if it was even possible. Rather, such a distribution system seems motivated by frugality.

The activities indicated by these archaeological remains—food preparation, gaming, opium use, and so on—can be marshaled to support many different interpretations and moral stories, but I would argue they cannot be used as evidence of resistance traditionally conceived without extreme artificiality and theoretical mediation. While the supervisors of the building of the railroad repeatedly lament the effect of alcohol on white workers, Charles Crocker testified to Congress that he had “no recollection of ever having seen a drunken Chinaman” (US Congress 1877). While alcohol is almost invariably condemned when discussed, when Crocker mentioned opium use among the Chinese, it was without seeming opprobrium, merely stating, “It stupefies them. They lie in a state of stupor and dream pleasant dreams, as I understand it” (US Congress 1877). When asked whether he found Chinese laborers reliable and honest, Superintendent of Construction James Harvey Strobbridge testified, “Yes, as much so as other people; much more reliable; they would not get drunk and go away as white men” (US Congress 1877). There is thus no textual warrant to interpret opium use among the Chinese as a form of resistance parallel to the use of alcohol.

A narrative of class struggle does not readily fit with the archaeological data left behind by Chinese railroad workers. What interpretive alternatives are there for conceptualizing agency and the meaning of labor?

### Absent Evidence

I suggest that, in order to think more fruitfully about resistance, agency, and labor in Chinese contexts, archaeologists and other researchers need to make an interpretive shift in understanding personhood and its relation to variant moral discourses. But linking the archaeological data with such a theoretical discussion begins with examination of an

archaeologically invisible practice of profound importance for interpreting the material remains on Chinese work camps and indeed Overseas Chinese contexts generally. This is the pervasive practice of remittances (Lawton 1987; Hsu 2000; Costello et al. 2004; Cohen 2005; Voss and Allen 2008). A remittance is the sending of income from a transnational worker back home to his or her family. Remittances clearly leave an archaeological signature at the location they are received. However, their impact on the archaeological remains left behind by their senders is subtle, or absent.

At present, it is difficult to measure the percentage of income Chinese laborers sent home to their families, but there is no doubt it was significant. It is possible that current research in the Four Counties scholars at Wu Yi University will be able to give a more detailed answer to this question in the coming years. Regardless, Madeline Hsu (2000) discusses how transformative the reception of these remittances was for the Four Counties area of Guangdong Province, where most of the Chinese laborers on the railroad originated. Virtually every aspect of daily life was transformed due to the influx of remittances to the Four Counties.

European Americans also noted the amount of money returning, though they were less than sanguine in their assessment of the practice (*Nevada State Journal* 1876[sec. 3]:3). Any interpretation of the archaeological remains of Chinese work camps should give great weight to the fact that all the artifacts recovered were purchased with only a fraction of the workers' income. The artifacts used and their distribution mechanisms were likely chosen because they enabled Chinese workers to survive while performing their primary task: the sending of funds back to their families in Guangdong.

Remittances constitute an absent presence in the archaeological assemblages of Chinese work camps, and archaeological interpretations must take them into account when discussing the motivations and agency of Chinese laborers. Although archaeologically invisible, they constitute a real-world material flow linking visible archaeological remains with interpretation.



## Moral Discourse and Personhood

In his analysis of the historical sources of the modern Western understanding of the self, Charles Taylor (1989:28) suggests a “link between identity and a kind of orientation. To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary.” Taylor (1989:33) suggests that, within this moral space, “we cannot do without some orientation to the good.” By “the good,” Taylor (1989:19) means making “qualitative distinctions,” and acting with “the sense that some action, or mode of life, or mode of feeling is incomparably higher than the others.”

Anthropologists have long been aware of the particularistic variation that exists among human societies with regard to these qualitative distinctions. That is to say, notions of “the good” and thus of identities are intimately entangled with cultural frameworks that make distinctions about what is worth doing, and these frameworks vary wildly within time and space.

Given this understanding, the encounter of European American capitalists and Chinese American laborers in the mid-19th century is particularly interesting. Chinese emigration from Guangdong Province to the United States increased dramatically in the mid-19th century, and this cultural interpenetration involved not only the flows of people and material goods but also the meeting of genealogically distinct moral discourses.

Williams (2008) productively discusses the gendered aspect of these discourses in his contrast between Western and Chinese understandings of masculinity. On the one hand, there is a colonial and Orientalist understanding of Chinese masculinity dominant among Americans of European descent (Said 1979). *Chinoiserie*, the use of “dainty” drinking vessels, and the display of the queue, the braided hairstyle similar to a ponytail, were all used to code Chinese males as

effeminate and simultaneously reinforce the machismo of European American males. On the other, there is an indigenous Chinese understanding of the proper ways to be men as expressed through the correlative contrast of *wen* and *wu* (to gloss, intellectual masculinity and tough-guy masculinity).

There is much worth emulation in Williams' study, but what is most remarkable is the mode of argumentation applied. Numerous students of Chinese culture, both Chinese and non-Chinese, have noted the pervasiveness of correlative contrasts in the Chinese intellectual tradition. From this stance, "every phenomenon is viewed from a perspective that enables the perceiver to summarize and label it with a pair of terms" (Yang 2006:330). Correlative contrasts are "two possible states or statuses of events or situations that are developing along a time dimension. They do not mean anything when they are presented alone, but when they are put together they represent a relationship of 'one can be transformed to become the other'" (Yang 2006:331). Hall and Ames (1998:127) refer to this as a "polar" sensibility, in which "terms are clustered in such a way as to be essentially incomplete unless paired with opposing or complementary alter-terms" in contrast to a "dualistic" sensibility in which "strictly delimitable" terms have a "univocal sense." They suggest this may make the Chinese intellectual tradition "uncongenial to the development of univocal propositions" (Hall and Ames 1998:127). To briefly explain, the term *left* has no univocal sense, no internal and delimitable content that would make it intelligible as a singular term. It is essentially incomplete until it is paired with the alter-term *right* [or alternately with a different alter-term, such as *middle*. It should be noted that the sense of a given term is not derived from its association with one other necessary term, but from the totality of all the terms it can be linked with. Thus, *self* gets its sense not only from being paired with the alter-term *other*, but also *family*, *xin* [heart-mind], *nation*, *ego*, or any number of other possibilities]. In the Chinese intellectual tradition, all terms get their sense from being paired in this fashion. The distinctions drawn between first Orientalist and indigenous discourses and then between *wen*

and *wu* masculinities, along with a refusal to understand these terms in a dualistic or essentialist fashion, are thus especially felicitous modes to understand Chinese discourse from a more *emic* point of view.

I employ a similar strategy in order to contrast dominant Western and Chinese discourses on what it is to be a person (Fowler 2004). I will first contrast possessive individualism with relational personhood, then discuss two poles of moral possibility available to Chinese workers in their self-fashioning: the *junzi* (gentleman) and the *xiaoren* (small person). I will discuss how understanding these differences can influence archaeological interpretation and the meaning of labor, agency, and resistance. Finally, I will return to the strike of 1867 in order to give an alternative (hopefully more *emic*) interpretation.

It should be noted that both possessive individualism and relational personhood are forms of “conceptual selves” (Neisser 1988). Whether they are best understood as accurate representations or ideology is less important here than their role in empowering and moving people to act as though they *were* certain sorts of selves. Nor do I want to present these poles in a normative fashion, as if to claim in an unproblematic way that Westerners are possessive individuals, whereas Chinese are relational persons. Rather, I regard relational personhood as “the model that modern Chinese people deal with and depart from” (Yang 2006:328) in the same sense that the possessive individual is the model modern Western people deal with and depart from, both in the nineteenth century and the twenty-first.

### Charles Crocker and Becoming a Possessive Individual

The term *possessive individualism* was coined by C. B. Macpherson (1962:3), who explained that individualism’s “possessive quality is found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual

was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself.” This is the human as always already in the marketplace, where relations are seen as voluntary and based on self-interest, the characteristic form being the contract (Macpherson 1962:263–277). Leone (2005:34) claims individualism is “the single most motivating concept in the American quest for freedom.” Matthews (2010:10) states that “when persons begin to regard their self-interest as distinct from the interests of their family and community, they are behaving as individuals” and describes the possessive individual as existing “within and against the interests of their communities.”

The possessive individual is the idealized subject of capitalism in the sense that as a person becomes more and more a possessive individual, he or she embodies the prerogatives of capitalist accumulation itself. Weber (1930) perhaps did more than anyone else in advancing understanding of the moral underpinnings of this form of personhood. Taking Benjamin Franklin as his exemplar, Weber states,

The peculiarity of this philosophy of avarice appears to be the ideal of the honest man of recognized credit, and above all the idea of a duty of the individual toward the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself. Truly what is here preached is not simply a means of making one’s way in the world, but a peculiar ethic. (1930:17)

Weber goes on to describe “the ideal type of capitalistic entrepreneur,” who,

avoids ostentation and unnecessary expenditure, as well as conscious enjoyment of his power, and is embarrassed by the outward signs of the social recognition which he receives. His manner of life is . . . distinguished by a certain ascetic tendency. . . . [H]e gets nothing out of his wealth for himself, except the irrational sense of having done his job well. (1930:33)

The sort of figure Weber describes may seem alien to those of us who live in the current age of grotesque and decadent (even sadistic!) capital where those who *own* no longer bother to put on a show of asceticism and instead revel in their exemption. Foucault (History of Sexuality) claims the bourgeoisie of Europe first experimented on themselves before doing unto others as

they had done to themselves. It is beyond my competence to say whether this was so or not, whether Franklin was a true ascetic, whether the Scrooges of the world ate gruel, denied themselves coal and candles because "Darkness is cheap" (Dickens). It is enough to point out this was the ideal they *claimed* for themselves.

The crucial point is that, in this state of affairs, the circuit of capital is endless and has no human purpose. Money becomes an end unto itself, and woe to any human activity, sentiment, institution, or idea that stands in the way of its increase.

The papers of Charles Crocker provide illuminating examples of how possessive individualism and the asceticism of the spirit of capitalism are expressed in the behavior of their exemplars:

I used to quarrel with Strowbridge [*sic*] when I first went in. Said I, "Don't talk so to the men; they are human creatures—don't talk so roughly to them." Said he, "You have got to do it, and you will come to it; you cannot talk to them as though you were talking to gentlemen, because they are not gentlemen; they are about as near brutes as they can get." I found that it was true, there was no need of sympathy for those men, for they would build upon your sympathy and would pay no attention to your rights or your orders, and you [threw] away your kindness on them. The only way to do was to rule them with an iron hand. (Crocker [1866]:51–52)

Crocker's initial stance toward the railroad workers was one of sympathy; they were "human creatures" and deserved to be treated with dignity. However, he quickly came to realize this fellow feeling was in contradiction with his structural role as capitalist and master of men and abandoned it. Crocker illustrates this transformation with an anecdote in which he preemptively intimidated workers into abandoning demands for higher wages:

One day I was paying off and noticed a little knot of men talking together. Said I, "Strowbridge, [*sic*] there is something breeding there." He replied, "They are getting up a strike or something of the kind." "Let me handle them," said I [...]. As soon as they got close up, I turned around and said, "Strowbridge, [*sic*] I think you had better reduce wages on this cut, we are paying a little more than we ought to; there is no reason why we should pay more on this cut and on that tunnel than on the other work; you better reduce them about 25 [cents] a day." The men heard this, and they stopped, and chatted together awhile. Finally one of them stepped forward, and said, "We thought, Sir, that we ought to have our wages raised a little on this tunnel [...] I think you better not reduce it; we thought we ought to get an advance, but you ought not to reduce it certainly." "Well,

Strowbridge [*sic*],” said I, “what do you think? Can we afford to pay them that wage?” “Oh,” said he, “I wouldn’t make a fuss over it; we had better let them go on at the same figure.” “All-right,” said I and they went on satisfied with what we had been paying them. (Crocker [1866]:52)

This is a dramatic transformation from Crocker’s initial attitude of sympathy. He had begun his path toward embodying capital, toward becoming a possessive individual. To see the setting aside of human sympathy in favor of treating humans in an instrumental fashion as *ethical* is dependent on a certain understanding of the nature of humans (as uniformly rational, self-interested, etc.). It is also dependent on what Taylor (1989:20) calls a “‘strong evaluation’: the fact that these ends or goods stand independent of our own desires, inclinations, or choices, that they represent standards by which these desires and choices are judged.” In effect, Crocker was empowered to dismiss his feelings of sympathy because of a commitment to external standards considered equally binding on all involved. Capitalists and laborers are construed as being motivated by the same factors, flattening any qualitative distinctions between them and essentially recoding their structural distinction quantitatively: both are self-interested, but the capitalist is more successful. Personal feeling must be set aside in order to fulfill one’s duties to an externalized standard of behavior. Thus, maximizing one’s advantage at the expense of others is what anyone would do were they he. Take, for instance, these 1876 exchanges between Crocker and William Piper, then the Democratic congressional representative from San Francisco:

Piper: Did you make any money out of that contract?

Crocker: Yes, sir; I made all I could; just as you would, and just as other men would do.

[later]

Piper: How much did you get?

Crocker: That is my business. I got all I could, I assure you. (US Congress 1877)

When someone in a position of power argues that others would do as they do if only they were

in their position, it can have the effect of justifying their dominance and whatever means they use to maintain it. It is a claim to the right of mastery because one is quantitatively closer to the “ideal capitalist entrepreneur,” as described by Weber (1930). Indeed, Crocker’s memoirs contain claims of self-denial and ascetic devotion to work typical of the self-mythologizing possessive individual, such as when he describes his habits:

My habits were: Total abstention from liquor of all kinds; total abstention from tobacco; and my habit was to work night and day. I used to get up at four o’clock in the morning and go to work and work till I went to bed. In the evening, after dark, I made hickory brooms and ax-handles and such articles; spent my evenings working by firelight ... (Crocker [1868]:16–17)

Charles Crocker was obviously a more complicated person than I have presented him as here. In his memoirs, he recalls the shame he felt when he realized the transformation he was undergoing, as in this exchange with his wife:

I became so that my wife used to be afraid of me [...] “Well,” said she, “your manner is overbearing and gruff, that is the way you talk with me and with everybody.” I got so that I was really ashamed on myself; that sort of bearing was entirely foreign to me. (Crocker [1868]:51)

My purpose in highlighting how possessive individualism transformed Charles Crocker over the building of the railroad is not to reduce the whole of his life to a few paragraphs (he was also, for example, an abolitionist), but to show just how powerful its pull and demands were, even in the face of doubts and internal contradictions, even among those who were not cynical hypocrites but possibly acted with good conscience. Possessive individualism was not a homogeneous and accepted standard, even among those who took on the role of capitalist. Rather, it was something that had to be cultivated—through personal discipline, through flattening structural and motivational differences between capitalists and laborers, through the setting aside of human sympathy, and through the externalization of the standards of behavior involved.



## Relational Personhood and Becoming Human

Archaeologists have become increasingly aware that the possessive individual is but one of a variety of different ways of construing the self (Fowler 2004; Thomas 2004). The self-interpretation of the possessive individual is sharply at odds with the dominant Chinese understanding of personhood.

In the dominant Chinese tradition, “the self is not construed as a solid thing, or even a concept, but a term paired with other collective terms to represent many whole/part relations” (Yang 2006:342). Returning to correlative contrasts, a person or self cannot be understood in isolation but must be paired with another term in order to have significance. Construed in this way, an atomistic individual (possessive or not) is absurd. Rather, “it is in the way one tries to become an all-around moral person that one sees the significance of the self” (Yang 2006:343). This is distinguished qualitatively in terms of another correlative contrast, this one between the “properly human” and “merely human” (Davies 2011), between the *junzi* (gentleman) and *xiaoren* (small person).

While the framework of possessive individualism flattens qualitative differences between people and their motivations, “the person is conceived of in Confucian ideology as capable of cultivating himself or herself, as long as he or she chooses to do so, of becoming a moral being, and of having the virtue of *ren* (benevolence/humanity). Personality, in the Confucian perception, is an achieved state of moral excellence rather than a given human condition – it is *achieved* rather than *ascribed* (Tu 1985:171, Linton 1936).

The *junzi* and *xiaoren* form a spectrum of moral possibilities from which a person can choose” (Yang 2006:339). One of the most important distinctions between the *junzi* and *xiaoren* is what “orientation toward the good” (Taylor 1989:33) empowers and moves them. While the *junzi* is moved by *yi* (righteousness/justice/meaning), the *xiaoren* is moved by *li* (gain/advantage/profit).

To be moved by *yi* is to make oneself a person. One's status as fully human is dependent on one's capacity for *ren* (benevolence/humanity). This is in large part demonstrated by being *xiao* (filial). Filiality is the lifelong duty to honor, remember, and care for one's parents and ancestors, springing from the unpayable debt of one's being brought into existence, ideally motivated by a sense of gratitude.

To the degree this framework is operative, one cannot be a possessive individual in Macpherson's (1962) sense. Insofar as one embodies the possessive individual, one has severed non-contract-based social ties. Sentiment and human feeling (*renqing*) are seen as absolutely vital for the relational person, and are in fact the basis for proper human relationships (Oxford 2010). In contrast, they have no place in the rationalized instrumental relationships of the possessive individual, as is seen in Crocker's memoirs.

### Consequences

One interesting consequence of this is how deficient each moral framework appears if it is construed in terms of the other. For the possessive individual, relational persons appear chained to a set of moral debts, obligations, and duties not of their own choosing and are thus bereft of freedom and autonomy. For a relational person, the possessive individual appears as a degenerate, bereft of basic human capacities. Rather than understood as variant forms of personhood with distinct "strong evaluations" and orientations toward "the good," however construed, they tend toward being defined in terms of what they lack relative to the other. This dynamic, at least in part, animated the encounters and misunderstandings between Americans of European and Chinese descent in the mid-19th century.

This dynamic also affects archaeological interpretations regarding agency, resistance, and the meaning of labor in Chinese contexts. Archaeology, as a discipline with Western origins, has

historically tended toward interpretations implicitly understanding human persons as individuals, and has seen agency in terms of the capacity to manipulate and control the human and natural environment around them. For the relational person, by contrast, agency is not exhausted by struggles for or against domination. Rather, “the self is also seen as a process of action-taking by which the person improves relationships with [his or her] surroundings” (Yang 2006:343). In other words, archaeologists should not necessarily see the absence of archaeological evidence for overt or covert resistance as evidence of the absence of agency. Furthermore, researchers should not construe the sacrifices made and labor performed by Chinese railroad workers as evidence of selfless behavior, but rather as evidence of their active self-fashioning as fully human moral beings.

The previous chapters have broached several different topics important for a rich contextualization of Overseas Chinese life in the nineteenth century. In the introduction, I outlined several themes that animated the focus and approach of this dissertation, specifically: capitalism, cosmology, production of subjects, spatiality, rationalization, racialization, and discipline. The importance of understanding capitalism and the way it drew the laborers on the railroad through material and social networks from one side of the Pacific to the other was highlighted in Chapter 5. The commodification of knowledge was briefly discussed in reference to *feng shui* in Chapter 6, which also contained an extended discussion regarding spatiality and its relationship to economic rationalization, and the production of subjects in relation to capitalism and cosmology is a major theme of this chapter. Potential means of in-group discipline through panopticism, display of hierarchy, and coercion was discussed in Chapter 5. The concern with racialization has manifested though juxtaposing the orientalist descriptions of Chinese from as “docile” with a more anthropologically rich description of differences in personhood in this chapter. This concern also foregrounds the disturbing similarities between present day anti-immigrant politics and the anti-Chinese sentiment that eventually lead to over

half a century of racist exclusion laws

To address these themes, I have drawn upon a diverse array of sources, including archaeology collections from Summit Camp (Chapter 3), the collective insights of decades of previous archaeologists (Chapter 4), a careful reading of historical, anthropological, and ethnographic texts focused on the point of origin of the Chinese laborers (Chapter 5), qualitative comparisons in several distinct areas of spatial practice (Chapter 6), and a comparative analysis of differing forms of personhood (Chapter 7). Taken as a whole, these themes and sources provide a complex and layered picture of the ways archaeologists can potentially approach this distinctive group of people in nineteenth century America, as well as other contexts involving Overseas Chinese.

In the next chapter of this dissertation, I will discuss initial testing performed on the 'China Kitchen' site, first recorded by Gralia and Gralia (2004), and will make suggestions for future investigations. The site and methods employed will be described with reference to the excavations of Lindstrom at Juniper Flat (1993) and those on the Virginia and Truckee (V&T) Railroad as described by Furnis and Maniery (2015). Finally, in Chapter 9 we will return to the importance of connecting archaeology with the present and will advocate for the continued importance of archaeological engagement with Chinese-America.

## Chapter 8 - China Kitchen

### Introduction

'China Kitchen' (TNF 05-17-55-525) is located south of a bend in the transcontinental railroad between Kingvale and Troy in Placer County. It was first recorded by Gralia and Gralia (2004) who noted several historic features including hearths, rock alignments, work tools such as picks and mauls, woke fragments, and Double Happiness style bowl fragments. Gralia and Gralia recognized the presence of Double Happiness bowls and the camp's proximity (around 200m south of the railroad) as strong indicators that the site was associated with the presence of Chinese workers on the railroad. The validity of Double Happiness as a temporally diagnostic marker was reinforced by the results from ceramic comparison of the Summit Camp collections in Chapter 3, bolstering this. Furthermore, the railroad to the north of the site includes a culvert and extensive rock construction that would have taken workers an extended time to construct, making the presence of archaeologically significant sites more likely (as argued in Chapter 3). The site is multi-component, due to the presence of prehistoric lithics as well as a likely association with one of the historic Emigrant Trails (*ibid*).

Gralia and Gralia's report includes a general map of the site indicating the location of several of the artifacts, as well as two hearth clusters (F-1, 2 and F-4) (Figures 8.1-8.3). Subsequent monitoring of the site in 2012 (Smith 2012) indicated that its condition had not substantially changed, and noted the presence of further artifacts including tin cans.

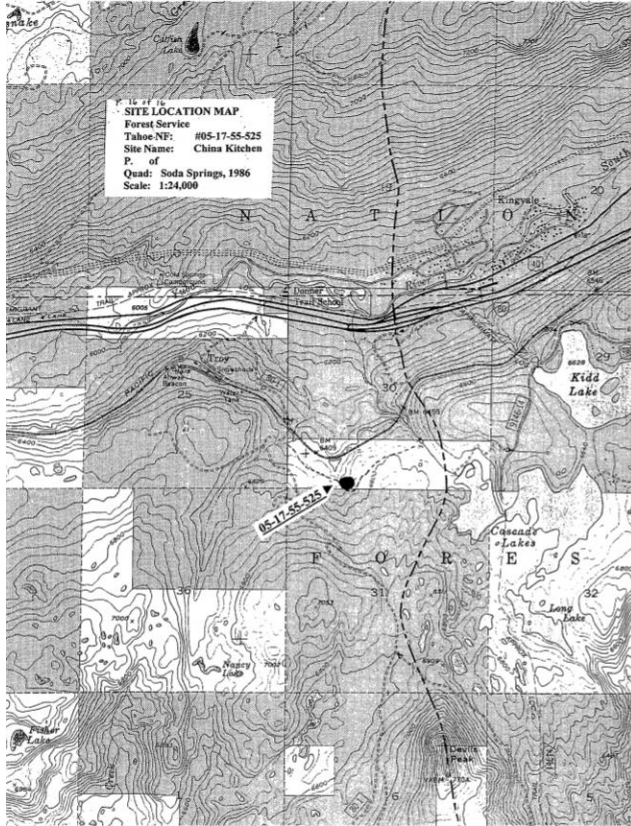


Figure 8.1 China Kitchen Location Map (Gralia and Gralia 2004)

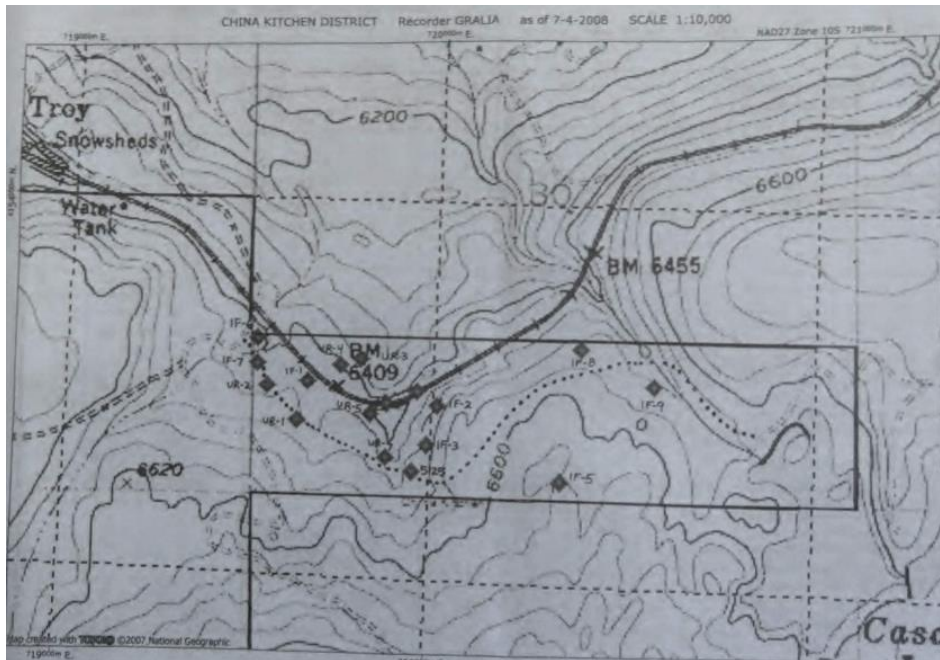


Figure 8.2 China Kitchen General Location with peripheral sites (Gralia and Gralia 2004)



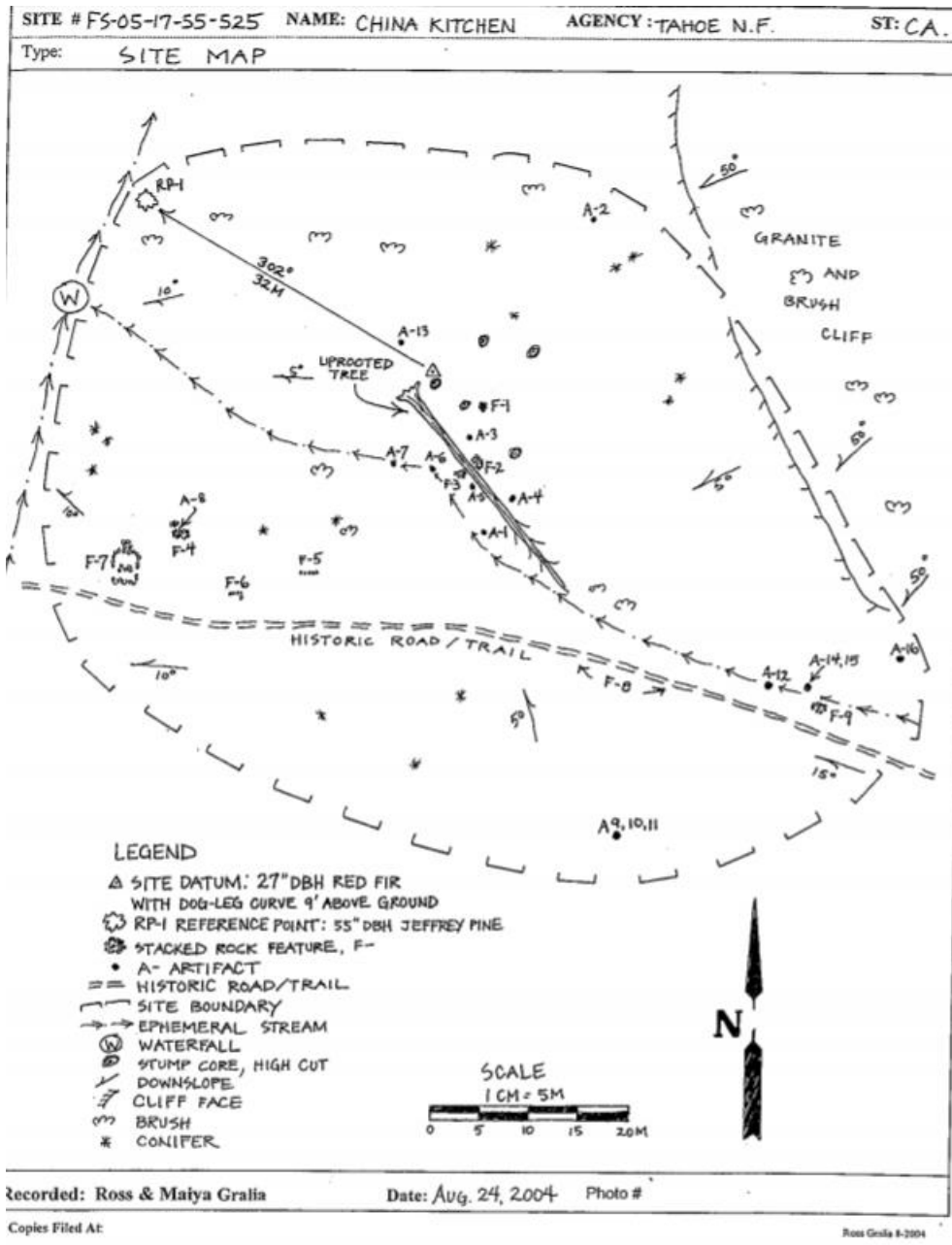


Figure 8.3 China Kitchen Site Map (Gralia and Gralia 2004)

I was alerted to the presence of China Kitchen by Carrie Smith, the Heritage Program Manager for this section of the Tahoe National Forest. Based on ground cover, the presence of intact surface features, and its distance from intensive human activities when compared to Summit



Camp, China Kitchen represents the potential to gather data on Chinese railroad workers from intact archaeological contexts. The artifacts associated with Summit Camp were collected with relatively general proveniences, making the assignation of activity areas more difficult. This makes the careful excavation of China Kitchen all the more important, as it can potentially allow an understanding of artifact distribution at a much finer grain.

The site is located between rock outcroppings to the south and east, and a gulch on its western half, with the railroad accessible by a small pathway leading north from the site. The terrain is rough and uneven, with frequent rock outcrops. Vegetation on the site is dominated by pines and ferns, with ferns and smaller trees dominating the northeastern quadrant of the site. The central, southern, and western sections of the site are dominated by pines and fallen trees, which make both travel and measurements more difficult. Some of these fallen pines have been strategically placed by the Forest Service to block paths created by bikers who were potentially threatening the integrity of the site (Carrie Smith: personal communication).

Given China Kitchen's location on Federal land, and its research potential, ground disturbing investigations of China Kitchen require preliminary investigations that minimize disturbance to potential intact deposits on the site. In consultation with Carrie Smith, I prioritized archaeological tests that would direct the focus of future archaeology on the site without damaging its integrity or necessitating the curation of collected artifacts.

### Fieldwork Strategies in the High Sierras

Archaeological investigations of sites in the High Sierras is subject to environmental conditions that are often less than ideal, including a frequently erosional environment, resulting in thin deposits, the presence of duff ground cover, which makes surface collection impractical without

substantial clearing, vertical changes which make gridded transects difficult to regularly lay out, and a freeze-thaw cycle that results in rapid weathering of features. The excavations at Juniper Flat led by Lindstrom (1993) and the methods described by Furnis and Maniery (2015) regarding the Virginia and Truckee (V&T) Railroads provide methodological guidelines for how to best approach sites where “traditional excavation methods focusing on visible cultural features and vertical stratigraphy does not result in collecting data with interpretive value” (2015:72).

The Juniper Flat site included an extant Chinese cabin and artifact scatter in the surrounding area. Lindstrom’s methodological approach to such a site was two-fold: a “complete excavation” of 16 units surrounding the cabin area, 25 units scattered in the surrounding area, with metal detection and systematic transects covering the remainder of the site (Lindstrom 1993: 18). This methodology is ideal for archaeological sites in the High Sierras that include definitive focal points (i.e. an extant cabin) around which progressively less intensive methods can be employed. However, in the absence of either convincing site centers or sufficient resources for dozens of excavation units, this becomes less practical.

The methods advocated by Maniery and Furnis (2015) are based on methods developed by Tordoff (1987), originally to better evaluate mining camps. Hearths and other surface features are taken as focal points (2015:72). A grid is then laid out in the surrounding areas, and the vegetation cover is stripped back. This allows surface anomalies to be identified and allows surface artifact scatters to be systematically mapped. This horizontal clearance is also supplemented by limited excavation and cross-sectioning of surface features. Artifacts are generally left in situ. This approach, emphasizing surface artifact scatters and aboveground remains has proven informative for working with sites lacking in vertical stratigraphy as is common in work camps in the High Sierras. Lynn Furnis (nee Rogers) applied this technique to

her excavations of the Lakeview Camp site (1997) associated with the V&T Railroad, dating to the early 1870s, just after the construction of the transcontinental, while David Wroblewski (1996) employed similar techniques to explore Site 665-6, another V&T railroad camp, though his investigation did not include any surface scraping (Maniery and Furnis 2015:75).

These excavation strategies are appropriate for areas that lack vertical stratigraphy, and can also provide valuable information when the time and monetary resources for an intensive excavation such as Lindstrom's at Juniper Flat is not possible. One significant drawback of this method that should perhaps be re-assessed is the artifact collection strategy. While lack of funds and space for curation is an increasingly difficult problem for archaeological projects, in-field artifact analysis has significant drawbacks. It makes it impossible for future archaeologists to return to the collection, perform new analytic procedures or re-evaluate identifications of artifacts, such as the procedures I implemented with the Summit Camp collections as described in Chapter 3. New research priorities as well as new technologies and techniques will inevitably rise in the future, and it is impossible to know precisely what these will be. Without a permanent collection, the necessary data sources may not be available for archaeologists to re-evaluate these sites, limiting their overall potential and contribution to the field. Furthermore, leaving artifacts in place after potentially attracting the attention of members of the public through archaeological excavation and surface clearing puts these sites at greater risk for looting and disturbance. A final concern with the artifact collection strategy involves the collection of "only unique or representative artifacts from the surface" (Maniery and Furnis 2015:75). Such a collection strategy makes quantitative tests impossible, as the resulting collection will inevitably not be representative of the assemblage as a whole, and furthermore the archaeological site itself will lose some of its integrity, which will potentially lead to problems with future archaeological investigations of those sites. While artifact collection and curation is clearly a more sound strategy, it is not always possible, and collection of artifacts from sites on the Tahoe

National Forest is discouraged due to a crisis in curation resources (Carrie Smith: personal communication).

Both Lindstrom's excavation strategy as employed at Juniper Flats, and the techniques developed and implemented by Tordoff, Furnis, and Wroblewski have distinct advantages and disadvantages. For sites with definitive centers or focal points (such as the investigation of a cabin), as well as intact subsurface deposits, and which have sufficient monetary, personnel, and time resources, Lindstrom's strategy will provide a more fine-grained resolution than the techniques described by Maniery and Furnis (2015). In sites that lack extensive subsurface deposits yet are spread over a wide horizontal area, and for projects with limited monetary, personnel, and time resources, the surface-clearing strategy originally developed by Tordoff is the more appropriate direction to take.

Ideally, a combination of these techniques should be implemented on a site like China Kitchen in order to maximize the data collected. This would involve the excavation of units in areas immediately surrounding the surface features, and less intensive surface clearing and scraping for as much of the remainder of the site as possible. Metal detection is essential for determining the horizontal distribution of metal artifacts, which will indicate which parts of the site are the highest priority for both unit excavation and surface clearing. Soil sampling and testing for Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potassium (NPK testing) has proven useful in previous archaeological studies, with high concentrations of these substances indicating human presence and activity (Cook and Heizer 1965, Rapp and Hill 2006, Leonardi et al. 1999, Vranova et al. 2015). Combining soil sampling with metal detection is thus an essential part of determining the areas of an archaeological site that have the potential to contain large numbers of artifacts and features.

My approach to 'China Kitchen' follows the strategies outlined above, with a step-by-step process beginning with minimally ground disturbing activities that can guide future excavations and surface clearing like those employed on Juniper Flat and the V&T Railroad. The data presented here is thus not at the stage where it can be usefully employed to interpret the actual archaeology on China Kitchen, but does definitively identify several areas of interest within the site that should guide any future investigations.

### Testing at China Kitchen

Following initial site visits to China Kitchen and consultations with Carrie Smith and Susan Lindstrom, initial testing of the China Kitchen site began in the summer of 2015. First, a 5 x 5m grid was laid out over the entire site, as bounded by topographic changes (gulches and rock cliffs) surrounding the site. The datum was placed 1m directly to the south of the hearth designated F-4 by Gralia and Gralia (2004). GPS points were taken at 15 locations around the camp, but due to the difficulty of establishing GPS points of sufficient resolution due to the altitude and tree cover (Carrie Smith: personal communication) these data points should be regarded as generally having an error range of over 2m (Table 8.1) This grid was laid out by hand using measuring tape, and hand compass, and diagonal distances were checked using the Pythagorean theorem. Some distortion to the grid was inevitable due to the uneven terrain (introducing Z-coordinate differences to measurements) and the thick presence of trees, both fallen and upright. In spite of these difficulties, distortion of the 5 x 5 m units was generally kept at less than 10cm, with the exception of units N15 E20 and N15 E15.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Coordinates</u>
Entrance to path leading to site from the railroad	0736772, 4353798
Datum (1m south of Gralia and Gralia F-4 (2004))	0719842, 4353467
Hearth F-1	0719872, 4353479
Hearth F-2	0719874, 4353471

*Table 8.1 Selected GPS points for China Kitchen*

A total of 72 units were laid out in this fashion, which were then photographed from their southwest corner from the four cardinal directions as well as toward the northeast. Following the laying out of the grid, each 5x5m unit was mapped in the field. Topographic changes, the presence of vegetation, location of both large and small trees, rock outcrops, surface features and visible artifacts were recorded. Distance from the boundaries of the site were measured using tape from the boundaries of the unit to the location of the feature being recorded in order to ensure accurate mapping. These field maps were then assembled to produce an overall site map of greater resolution than that provided by Gralia and Gralia's (2004) site map (Map 8.3). After the photographic record of the site was completed, soil samples from 50 grid points were collected and subjected to NPK testing (Tables 8.2-8.4).

NITROGEN	Easting	-10	-5	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	
Northing														Samples N=50
	45								L	L				
	40								M	L				
	35								L	L				
	30								M	L				
	25								L	L				
	20								L	L				
	15								L	L				
	10									L				
	5	L		L		L				L				
	0		L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L				
	-5		L	M	M		M	L	L	L	L	M	L	
	-10		L	L		L	L	L	L		L			
	-15		L	L	L	L								
	-20			L	M									

Table 8.2 Nitrogen Soil Testing results from China Kitchen. L=Low, M=Medium



PHOSPHOROUS	Easting	-10	-5	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	N=49
Northing														
45									L+	L				
40									M	L				
35									L+	L				
30									M	L				
25									L	L				
20									L+	L				
15									L	L				
10										L				
5		L		L		M				L				
0			M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L				
-5			L	L	L		L	L	L	L	L	L	M	
-10			L	L		M	L	L	L		L			
-15			L+	L	L	L								
-20				L	L									

Table 8.3 Phosphorous Soil Testing results from China Kitchen. L=Low, M=Medium, L+= color was in between Low and Medium.

POTASSIUM	Easting	-10	-5	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	N=50
Northing														
	45								M	M				
	40								H	M				
	35								H	H				
	30								M	H				
	25								M	M				
	20								M	M				
	15								M	L				
	10									H				
	5	M		M		M				L				
	0		L	M	M	M	H	H	M	M				
	-5		M	H	H		H	H	M	M	L	H	M	
	-10		M	M		M	M	M	L		H			
	-15		M	L	M	L								
	-20			H	M									

Table 8.4 Potassium Soil Testing results from China Kitchen. L=Low, M=Medium, H=High

In general, Potassium levels, potentially indicative of the presence of wood, were generally higher than levels of Nitrogen or Phosphorous. This could indicate the former presence of wooden structures, but may also be an artifact of the woodland vegetation dominating China Kitchen. No High concentrations of either Nitrogen or Phosphorous were found, but 7 units indicate medium levels of Nitrogen and 6 indicate a medium level of phosphorous. These results are likely the result of human activity and possibly refuse disposal in those areas, and they should be prioritized for future explorations at the site. Further soil samples, including samples

taken from the intact hearths have been collected, but further such as soil floatation and micro-botanical analysis await the procurement of additional funds to investigate the site.

Following the collection of these samples, each 5 x 5 m unit was metal detected, and the location of any positives were recorded on the field maps. These positives were then compiled into an overall map of the site indicating the location of metal objects (Figure 8.4, Table 8.5). Metal detecting was not performed in the creek bed area due to both intense vegetation and topographic changes. As a result of metal detection, a general picture of the layout of the site begins to take shape. The most important new information discovered via metal detection is the presence of an intense scatter of ferrous metallic objects in the eastern and north eastern portion of the site, which was not indicated by Gralia and Gralia's field map. In particular, the entirety of units N5 E35 and N10E30 tested positive for ferrous metal, and the area surrounding these units also contained high numbers of positives, extending to N30. The southwestern quadrant of the site also contained a large number of positives extending to the east of hearth complex. The F-4 hearth and metal scatter in the southwestern portion of the site and the scatter in proximity to hearths F-1 and F-2 are located on either side of the creek bed, and may represent either separate components and occupations of the site, or may have been contemporaneous with one another. If future investigations can establish the temporal association of these two concentrations, they may indicate separate work gangs or other social distinctions among the Chinese workers on the railroad. Whether the artifact profiles of these two loci are similar or different may allow archaeologists to evaluate the degree of material differentiation between work gangs on the transcontinental.

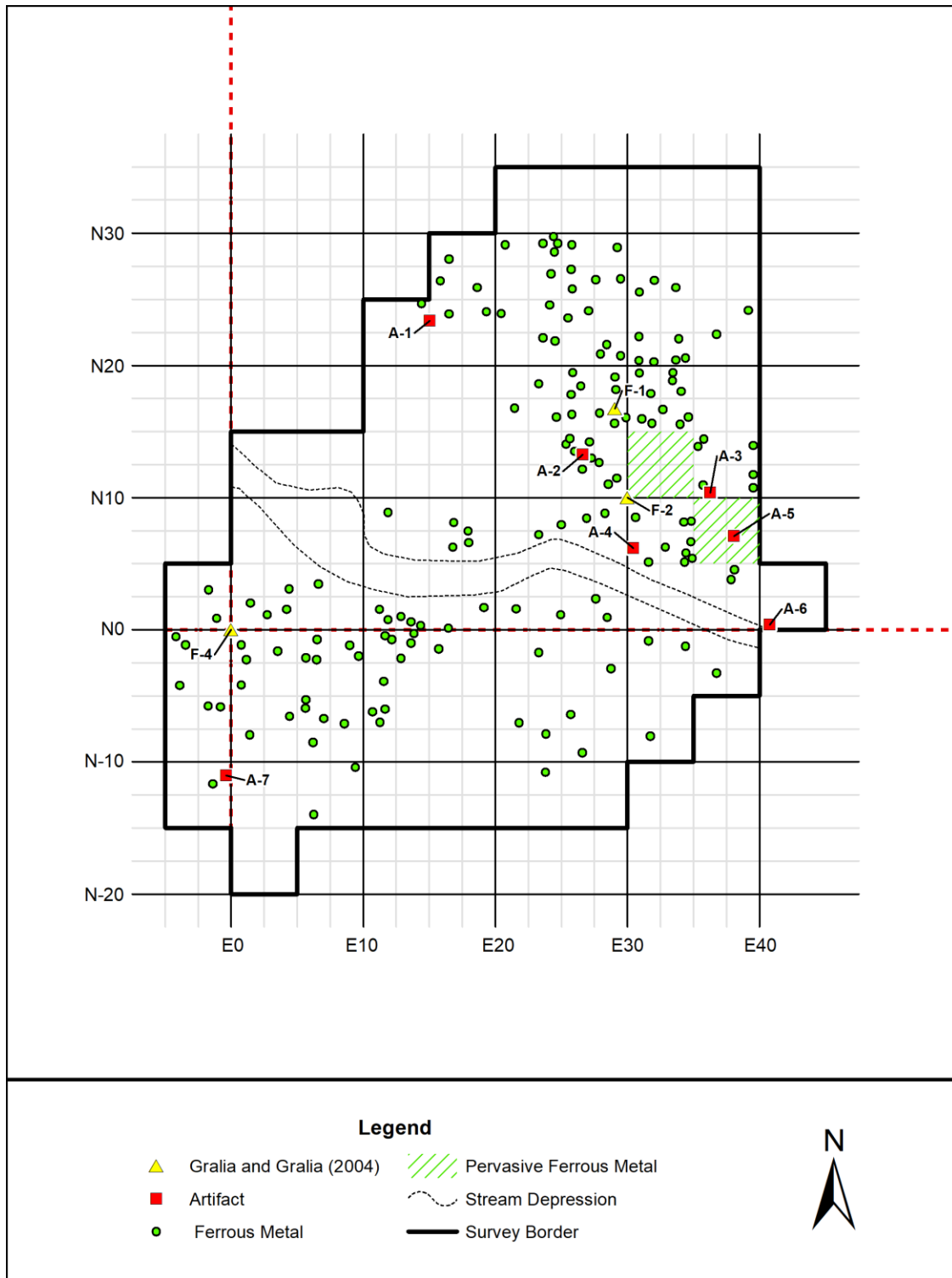


Figure 8.4 China Kitchen Metal Detection Map

<u>Provenience</u>	<u>Artifact Type</u>
A-1	Shovel Blade
A-2	Barrel Straps
A-3	Braided Wire
A-4	Brown Bottle Glass
A-5	Brown Bottle Glass
A-6	Whiteware Plate Sherds (4+)
A-7	Brown Bottle Glass, Square Bottom

*Table 8.5 China Kitchen Surface Artifacts Recorded during Metal Detection*

One notable result of these investigations is the raw number of surface artifacts noted (7 proveniences) was lower than the artifacts noted by Gralia and Gralia (2004), who noted over a dozen different artifacts in their report. Given the increased resolution of the mapping in my fieldwork, this was unexpected. This may be due to looting occurring on the site by people using the bike trails for recreation, the result of weathering and washing out of artifacts into the gorge to the west, or may be the result of the duff ground cover. Metal detection indicates there are likely significant artifact scatters located underneath the duff ground cover, and implementation of the surface scraping technique as described by Maniery and Furnis (2015) would be the most effective way to establish the true preponderance of artifacts on the site. Surface clearing of the site is complicated by the presence of innumerable fallen trees, some of which are full grown and which litter the site, especially its southern and western portions. Any fieldwork should include a plan to dispose of these fallen trees before any systematic surface clearance will be possible, and given the size and number of trees on site, this will be a formidable task to accomplish.

While these investigations do not yet allow for archaeological interpretation of the site to the degree that the various features and artifact assemblages associated with Summit Camp do, they do represent the first steps of a systematic approach to recovering as much data as possible from what may be the most intact work camp associated with Chinese laborers on the transcontinental in the High Sierras. As a result of these tests, areas of high potential for archaeological data at China Kitchen have been identified. In addition to the areas surrounding the intact hearths, areas with high NPK or ferrous metal concentrations should be prioritized in any surface clearance on the site. Potential challenges to further fieldwork, particularly the necessity of clearing a large number of fallen full grown trees was noted. The potential of China Kitchen to establish activity areas and thus address significant research questions is high, and the tests I have performed will enable future investigations to proceed with a greater likelihood of producing significant results.

## Chapter 9 – Conclusion

The investigations conducted for this dissertation have been diverse, and include collections analysis of the Evans/Chace and Costello collections from Summit Camp (Chapter 3), evaluation of previous archaeological projects and perspectives from within Overseas Chinese archaeology (Chapter 4), an in depth description of the point-of-origin of the majority of the Chinese laborers on the railroad, based on historical and anthropological texts (Chapter 5), comparisons of distinct areas of dominant spatial practices (Chapter 6), a description and analysis of personhood and moral economies among Chinese laborers (Chapter 7), and preliminary investigations of the China Kitchen site (Chapter 8). In so doing, I have made original contributions to the body of data available on Overseas Chinese, the theoretical discussion involving the proper frameworks for investigating Overseas Chinese experiences in America and beyond, and have broadened the textual resources that have been brought to bear by archaeologists in the subfield. All of these contributions are partial, and build upon the work of previous archaeologists.

Both Summit Camp and China Kitchen merit additional study, and I make no claim that the data and interpretations I have presented here are any kind of final word. Our understanding of the Evans/Chace and Costello Collections can be further enhanced by focusing on establishing Brown-Glazed Stoneware vessel types and systematically establishing Minimum Numbers of Items. These procedures would also enable more substantive claims about the relationship between the Summit Camp artifact component with extant features as noted by Lindstrom et al. (1999), Baxter and Allen (2008), Arrigoni et al. (2013), others. This would potentially allow for greater confidence in claims made about specific activity areas. Of particular importance is distinguishing Brown-Glazed Stoneware that was used as tableware (the spouted jars, etc) from that used for Storage (such as the Barrel Jars). Site #2 of the Evans/Chace collection is unique



among the proveniences in the preponderance of Double Happiness and Bamboo tablewares over Brown-Glazed Stoneware. In Chapter 3, I briefly discussed the possibility that this distribution may indicate an area where dining activities took place. Future research should consider the evaluation of this possibility as a potential question to investigate.

Developing the understanding of *feng shui* I developed in Chapter 6 must be further expanded on in order to become a more helpful concept in Overseas Chinese archaeology. While I have provided a sophisticated theoretical understanding of *feng shui* as a spatial practice, applying this understanding to archaeological sites, especially expedient and non-formal sites remains a challenge. Formal landscapes such as graveyards and housing remain more amenable to an analysis of *feng shui*. While I criticized the theoretical understanding of *feng shui* in the archaeological literature, the features and tests employed by Mueller (1987) remain a good starting point for considering what features lend themselves to being discussed in terms of *feng shui*. As of now, collaboration with cultural interlocutors and *feng shui* experts retains the highest potential for insight. Site visitations with *feng shui* practitioners, as well as a series of conversations with them can potentially be used as the basis for an in depth archaeological field guide and list of standard questions to systematically address when interpreting spatial practices on Overseas Chinese sites, but that is beyond the scope of this dissertation and merits a publication in its own right.

Just as all other histories written about the Chinese laborers on the railroad are hampered by the dearth of textual documents written by the Chinese, so too is this study. My discussion of differences in moral discourse and personhood between European-American supervisors like Crocker and Chinese workers is unbalanced because only primary texts from Crocker are available. In order to fill this imbalance in, I have had to rely on a rather abstract construction of a particular form of relational personhood. Rather than based on personal testimonials, this

relies on discussions of Chinese cosmology and on the rich description of Chinese family structure and its relationship with morality and self-fashioning as first introduced in Chapter 5. This discussion can be improved with a more substantial engagement with the ethnographic and anthropological literature regarding family, economics, and religion in Southern China during the nineteenth century. While I have deepened the discussion of Overseas Chinese subjectivity and introduced personhood as an important topic to think about regarding the Chinese, an even more detailed understanding of the trends as well as the variation within them is needed to develop these insights into methodologically sound approaches in the field.

In spite of these limitations, the contributions of this dissertation work towards a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of Chinese-American archaeological sites, and raise new theoretical concerns to the field. It should be useful for future archaeologists in thinking through the theoretical perspectives and methodological procedures that have been used to approach this unique and fascinating group of people. The work on China Kitchen points to a fertile future for further investigations of the Chinese railroad workers. The documents reviewed and explained provide a primer for both Overseas Chinese archaeology and nineteenth century Chinese culture. Finally, preservation and curatorial work done with the Evans/Chace collection, and the publication of the first comprehensive accounting of the Summit Camp collections emphasize the importance of public outreach and a contemporary orientation. The curatorial improvements made to the Evans/Chace collection will allow it to be productively used for both research and museum displays without further degrading its provenience, which will keep it a vital resource for both future archaeologists and the public as a whole. By highlighting the lives of a non-European group who undeniably had a significant impact on American history, this project demonstrates that issues of race and racism have always plagued the nation, and that White Supremacist claims of ownership of our past and present are fatuous. The fact that in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act became law is a poignant reminder that history does not

inevitably have a progressive direction, and that reprehensible forms of racism and discrimination could be enforced by the State well after the end of slavery.

It is regrettable that this dissertation is written in a time where the political currents seem to be returning to a xenophobic attitude toward immigration, resulting in the detention, separation, and expulsion of uncouneted people residing in America. Learning about the history of Chinese-America is thus directly informative on current struggles of immigration and American identity. The possibility of enforced separation between child and grandparents, the marginalization of citizens of mixed heritage – these things are possible because these things have happened. The workers on the transcontinental railroad reshaped the material reality of the United States, North America, and the world. And the whole time they did so, they were exploited. The surplus value of their labor, the incredible profits that would result, the transformation of the entire west that it made possible – the Chinese workers were to share not in these things. Capitalists like Crocker and the other heads of the Central Pacific hired the Chinese not because they were racially enlightened and saw Chinese as equals to European Americans, but because they saw all laborers as raw materials to exploit. Progressive history can be comforting because it implies that in the end good will triumph, but this is a hope rather than an inevitability. This dissertation has been an attempt to write a history of Chinese-American transcontinental railroad workers that is as 'true' to them as it is relevant to our current dilemma. I have thus highlighted the themes of capitalism, cosmology, spatiality, the production of subjects, and discipline. I have tried to discuss these terms from an anthropological perspective which takes seriously ontological differences but which also accounts for the force of capitalist structures in pulling various actors into relations defined by capitalist logic and rationalization.

Pursuant to these goals, I have attempted to create a historical archaeology focused on Chinese-Americans that 'fits' with the available archaeological and historical evidence and also

takes the Chinese intellectual tradition seriously as a guide for understanding. These tools are supplemented with the analytical frameworks I outlined in the Chapter 2: 'history of the present', the 'critique of capitalism', 'monumental, antiquarian, and critical history', and 'archaeology as anthropology'.

I have attempted to provide a 'history of the present' by highlighting how a particular group of American immigrants were drawn into capitalist relations, and the degree to which dominant ways of being among the Chinese (subjectivity, family structure, economic and collective strategies, etc.) were at variance with and perhaps persevered or provided means of resistance to these relations. In doing so, I have tried to contextualize the Chinese-American immigrants of the nineteenth century as already fluent in commercial relations, but with a variant understanding of the significance of these relations when compared with their Euro-American supervisors. The economic prowess of Chinese and Overseas Chinese is a commonplace, so what exactly do I mean when I say they were at variance with capitalist culture? Chinese immigrants to nineteenth century America used distinct purchasing strategies, and had particular consumption patterns where frugality and the importance of returning remittances was a primary concern. None of these is incompatible with capitalist culture.

The distinction I am making is about the ultimate purpose of capitalist accumulation, which is one of the most important factors that distinguishes it from other modes of production. In idealized capitalist accumulation, there is no purpose of the increase except the logic of capitalism which demands absolute quantitative increase of exchange value. This is one of the central insights of both Marx's *Capital* (1867) (v.1 Chapter 4) and Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([1905]1930), and I discuss it in depth with regard to Macpherson's *possessive individual* and Charles Crocker's memoirs in Chapter 7. In the most formal sense, one is only a capitalist to the degree one embodies this logic of capital. This may occur on a

personal level or a corporate level, but once this logic becomes operative, it becomes that by which all other decisions must be determined in reference to. Furthermore, when this logic permeates the decision-making of a large enough number of actors to create economic conditions that all participants in a market must abide by, regardless of their personal ideologies beliefs, or desires, a capitalist system has emerged which then (historically) proceeds to progressively reshape a culture by the dictates of absolute economic rationality.

Whether this occurred first in Europe before spreading to the rest of the world because of Weber's 'spirit', or as I would call it, a particular understanding of personhood and moral economy, dialectical history as Marx would have it, prevention of sufficient capitalist accumulation in China due to both the vertical extraction of a Tributary Mode of Production and patri-corporate redistribution as Gates describes, or the contingent nature of events such as the Industrial Revolution is not the question asked here.

Even within capitalist culture, the majority of people are not capitalists. Even among businesses, we can safely assume capitalist logic is not uniformly embraced and followed. Many small or family-owned businesses might see the ultimate end of their endeavors as based on community concerns or the good of their loved ones. Especially on the micro-scale, these businesses may flourish even without being capitalistic in an absolute sense. But they are still subject to the dictates of the market that result from the combined decision-making of competitors who hew closer to the ideal, and this puts them at a competitive disadvantage that over time will marginalize such un-rationalized practices. Capitalism insofar as pure capital accumulation is the ultimate endless end, is a particular ideology that appeared at a particular place and time in history and is adopted by some, who by practicing it progressively accumulate power and thus force everyone in the population to live by the dictates of economic rationality or be sanctioned. This is very far from explaining everything about a culture, but it tells us something that has

bearing and consequences *for* everything in a culture, and thus provides significant insight. That the ultimate ends of the patri-corporation were other than this thus tells us something significant about Chinese culture in the nineteenth century that should be taken into account when interpreting the workers on the transcontinental.

I make no broad claims about whether cultural practices such as patri-corporations, remittances, particular forms of personhood or cosmology can effectively stymie the progressive dominance of capitalist culture. I have presented these aspects of Chinese culture in detail in order to raise this as a question, and I believe it is a question that has bearing for all of our lives today. What I do claim is that based on the material culture of Overseas Chinese laborers on the transcontinental, my understanding of Chinese culture and cosmology as informed by the historic record and anthropological archive, as well as personal experience, and the historical and cultural specificity of the ideology of *possessive individualism*, Chinese economic activities cannot be described capitalist in the strong sense described above. This in turn opens the door to interpreting Chinese laborers on the railroad in a way that undermines our own cultural preconceptions about human nature. Further study along these lines would involve closer attention to the various 'meticulous rituals' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983:119) involved in both internal differentiation and capitalist discipline, understood archaeologically through associated material artifacts, historically through a focus on both associations and demographic/economic trends at multiple scales, and anthropologically through an ever denser ethnographic investigation of the moral, familial, and personal stakes involved in the amazing process we call the Chinese Diaspora.

The critique of capitalism, while not always explicit, has thus shaped my responses to the archaeological and textual material I engaged with throughout the dissertation. Commerce and patri-corporate life in China, while by no means egalitarian or utopian, was at least human, with

recognizable human ends (even if that end was sometimes to get rich for its own sake). The transformation in capitalism from C-M-C (commodity to money to commodity) to M-C-M (money to commodity to money), and the endless circularity of this M-C-M mode (as in Marx's *Capital*, Ch.4) has led to our current economic system, which has no discernable human ends. Human ends may be disheartening or unadmirable: the desire to dominate, take advantage, glorify oneself, be selfish, etc., and these were doubtless all present in among Overseas Chinese populations in the nineteenth century, just as they are in every society we would recognize as human. They are at least *human* ends we might understand if not approve of. The end of the capitalist, as Weber states, is "irrational" (1930:33).

The scheme of *monumental*, *antiquarian*, and *critical* history, as partial but necessary forms of 'history for life' which also have 'degenerate' forms also shaped my presentation of the historical archaeologies discussed in this dissertation (Nietzsche [1874]1984). The *monumental* history I have proposed involves understanding the labors of Chinese-American railroad workers on a heroic level, rather than emphasizing the 'big man' history of the capitalist and administrative class that organized and ordered its construction. This move is essentially the knocking down of one idol and its replacement with another, with all the limitations that implies. The ability to wield power, wealth, and to wrangle and manipulate labor in order to achieve ends that are both personally and globally consequential is impressive, but not necessarily admirable. As discussed in Chapter 7, it involves sacrificing human sentiment in order to instrumentalize those who actual bear the human cost and burden of the construction. We are under no obligation, except that given to us by inertia, to valorize the lives of these exploiters. The monumental history suggested here emphasizes the heroism of *labor* not the cunning of *capital*.

The *antiquarian* history proposed here involves describing practices, often marginalized, that provide the building blocks of meaningful lives beyond capitalist logic. It is not about fetishizing



either Chinese artifacts nor the publicly banalized practices described (such as *feng shui*, and *mianzi* (face)). The worth of these practices is they preserve some aspect of human life that has not yet been forced to become 'economically rational' (Dreyfus 1991). Antiquarian history is thus a constructive project that points out these practices as ways of being we should value and defend precisely because they have not yet been rationalized, and thus provide us with some basis for life in a generative sense. The value in describing 'petty capitalism' and the patri-corporation from an *antiquarian* perspective is not to romanticize or pass over the exploitation these forms permitted, but to show there are workable (though imperfect) alternatives to our current economic understandings, that we can look to the histories of how various groups 'managed' their entrée into capitalist relations to find traces of these practices, and potentially identify the imperfect ways by which different groups "ameliorated capitalist practices" so that we "can do so too" (Leone 2005:28). They suggest that any imaginable alternate to global capitalism today would involve the overturning of capitalist logic as the ultimate arbiter by some form of human-centric value system. To suggest any more than this is beyond my remit and perception, but I hope to have provided some foundations for how it may be explored in both Overseas Chinese and other historical archaeologies in the future.

Finally, this exploration of Chinese-American history has been a *critical* history. Nietzsche specifies Critical History's 'life generating' property as its search for and need of justice ([1874]1984). That is to say, as people in the present who are suffering from injustice, and from the legacy of past injustices, those who live in the 'wreckage' of, history (Benjamin 1940) must stand in judgment of that history in order to make life possible in the present. As Nietzsche states, such a history is no less partial than *monumental* or *antiquarian* history, though I have gone out of my way to try to present a fair portrait of capitalists such as Crocker (Chapter 7), though I lack personal sympathy for his perspective. Critical history provides, personally, the emotional fuel that has sustained an extended project such as this dissertation.

Archaeology and history cannot redeem the past. But they can do two other important tasks. First, 'judicious study of the past' can work against the misuse of history, or what Nietzsche would call the 'degenerate' forms of monumental (glorifying the oppressor), antiquarian (fetishizing the old), and critical (taking revenge from pure resentment) history, and the way these forms are put into service by dominant forces today. Second, we can work against further indignities inflicted by both current actions and in historical denial. This means opposing and replacing histories that marginalize the role of non-European descended Americans, ignore class conflicts, and minimize colonial and white supremacist history, from native genocide, to African-American enslavement, Chinese-American expulsion, and today's largely Latin-American displacement.

Finally, this dissertation has been an exploration of ontological differences between Chinese immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century and their Euro-American counterparts. I have specified how these differences could result in both misunderstandings of spatial and moral understandings between these groups, as well as how these differences might be explored archaeologically. I have attempted to think through an archaeological project by employing concepts congenial to both the Chinese intellectual tradition and the archaeological and anthropological traditions. This sort of move is forever incomplete, and a history based on total 'correspondence of truth' is an illusion. Rather, recognizing these understood limitations, I have tried to approximate a kind of truth better understood as 'fittingness', that is 'fittingness' both to the self-understanding of Chinese railroad workers in the nineteenth century, and 'fittingness' to the concerns of our time.

The Chinese workers on the railroad did the best they could given their circumstances. They 'made their own history', though not exactly as they would have liked. They came equipped with

their own cultural competencies which allowed them to participate productively in commercial exchanges, to maintain formal and informal associations and networks, to maintain their bodily health in extreme conditions, and to self-fashion within and without their own work gangs and larger communities. Neither these competencies, nor the ontologically and genealogically distinct understandings of self, spatiality, and morality (as described in Chapters 5-7) allowed the Chinese laborers on the railroad to fully overcome the exploitative nature of capitalist economic relations, nor did it prevent the violent coercion inflicted on Chinese communities by Euro-American citizens, nor the eventual codification of racial prejudice into the immigration law in the 1882 Exclusion Act. These were thus imperfect and partial solutions. Nonetheless, the persistence of marginalized practices beyond capitalist logic such as friendship, funerary customs, *feng shui*, remittances, gifts, and moral economies highlight the complexity and persistence of cultural practices not wholly defined by economic rationality. Tablewares, storage containers, gaming pieces, and opioid products can be interpreted as part of a moral economy in which artifacts, sites, and material culture are connected by cultural practices such as remittances and group purchasing strategies to forms of self-fashioning and personhood. Anthropology is itself a marginal practice, and therein lays its potential for helping to establish a new way of understanding oneself and one's culture beyond the *possessive individual* and beyond the logic of capitalism, in which difference is appreciated as a *source* in our impoverished times. We cannot rely on any sort of *telos* in history to manifest this for us, we must do it for ourselves. In this spirit, I humbly submit this text.

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## Appendix

Digital copies of the following supplemental documents are available via the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSA) and the Columbia Center for Archaeology (CCA).

A.1 Photographic Index for Costello Collection

A.2 Photographic Index for Evans/Chace Collection

A.3 Photographic Index for Summit Camp Site

A.4 Photographic Index for China Kitchen Site

A.5 Costello Collection Artifact Catalog

A.6 Evans/Chace Collection Artifact Catalog