

**AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHINESE TRANSNATIONALISM**

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## Abstract

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, tens of thousands of Chinese immigrated to the United States to labor as miners, railroad builders, cooks, farmers, laundry workers, and merchants. My dissertation project uses archaeological methods to understand the transnational linkages that Chinese migrants maintained between their home villages in southern China and the Chinese communities they established in America. Specifically, I examine two diasporically connected areas: two Chinatowns in Southern California, and Wo Hing (*Heqing* 和慶), a remittance-built village in Gom Benn (*Ganbian* 甘邊), Taishan County. Established in 1902, Wo Hing was built in part by residents living in the Riverside Chinatown (1885-1940s) and San Bernardino Chinatown (1878-1940s). I use multiple lines of evidence—artifacts collected from archaeological survey, legacy archaeological collections, architecture, archival documents, genealogies, and oral history interviews—to examine how the transpacific movement of people, objects, and information impacted the diasporic communities and home village.

My project provides a case study for understanding the lives of transnational migrants who do not neatly fit within traditional categories of ‘sojourner’ or ‘settler’ because of sustained familial and social ties between the home and host countries. Few studies on transnational migration, however, have examined transnationalism in the historic era or the material consequences of transnational flows of people and goods. In my dissertation, I employ historical archaeology methods to examine how transnationalism shaped the material practices of migrants in both their homeland and the diasporic sites where they labored. The results of my research challenge the idea that the homeland of transnational migrants was static and reveals the role that transnational institutions, racial exclusion, and individual agency played in the transpacific flow of goods and ideas.

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Many individuals and institutions in both the U.S. and China provided assistance to me during the fieldwork stage of my project or when I reached the writing phase. The archaeological research I conducted in Taishan County, Guangdong Province, China was completed in cooperation with the Guangdong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center at Wuyi University; I am particularly indebted to my advisor as well as Dr. Zhang Guoxiong and Dr. Tan Jinhua from Wuyi University for helping me establish the collaboration. I would also like to thank the Wo Hing village chief Huang Buyun for granting permission to conduct an archaeological survey and allowing the field crew to use the village community hall as our base. Thanks also to Wo Hing's residents for welcoming my field crew and I as daily visitors to their village. Stacey Camp and Jiajing Wang assisted me with the archaeological surface survey in the village and I am grateful to have had their help during this important research phase; they, along with Koji, have helped me reach important milestones in graduate school and cherish our long and continuing friendship. Thanks also to Barre Fong for capturing excellent drone footage of Wo Hing village and to my driver, Teng Guo (a.k.a. Zhou Sir), for transporting me safely nearly all over Guangdong and for sharing countless meals with me. In Taishan and the larger Jiangmen area, I was able to visit many important historical sites related to the Chinese diaspora and meet like-minded scholars thanks to Peter Lau, Zoe Huang, and Jim Lin. Peter Lau also shared his vast knowledge of Taishan's history, geography, genealogical texts, and helped me with several translations. I also appreciated discussing research findings with fellow Taishan researcher Peter Hick. My Cantonese teachers, especially Jeung Louhsi (Sik Lee Dennig) at Stanford, helped me greatly improve my Chinese language skills.

My research in the U.S. would not have been possible without the assistance of staff from a number of museums and archives. I am especially grateful to staff at the Museum of Riverside and San Bernardino County Museum for allowing me access to their Chinatown archaeological collections. I also thank the Save Our Riverside Chinatown Committee, San Bernardino Public Library California Reading Room, Riverside Public Library, University of California Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library, University of California Riverside Library Special Collections, and National Archives at Riverside for their help locating historic records, photographs, and newspaper articles. Thanks also to Renae Campbell at the University of Idaho's Asian American Comparative Collection and researcher Gary Weisz for sharing their expertise on the material culture of Chinese diaspora archaeology.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Maps.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables.....	xiii
Note on Romanization.....	xiv
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2. Theoretical Foundations.....	13
Chapter 3. Home Villages and the Chinese Diaspora.....	37
Chapter 4. Historical Background: San Bernardino Chinatown and Riverside Chinatown.....	69
Chapter 5. Historical and Archaeological Background: Wo Hing Village.....	124
Chapter 6. A Comparative Analysis of Material Culture.....	164
Chapter 7. A Comparative Analysis of the Built Environment.....	196
Chapter 8. Transforming the Home Village.....	216
Chapter 9. Conclusion.....	262
References Cited.....	277



## **List of Maps**

- 3.1. Location of the Gom Benn village cluster within Taishan County, Pearl River Delta region.
- 4.1. San Bernardino and Riverside in San Bernardino County by Rand McNally, 1888; the inset shows the towns of San Bernardino and Riverside.
- 4.2. Painting of “Riverside’s Chinatown” by Lillian Waite, 1892.
- 4.3. Sanborn map of the Riverside Chinatown in 1908, fifteen years after the fire.
- 5.1. Location of Wo Hing village within the Gom Benn village cluster.
- 5.1. Survey areas of the 2018 Wo Hing Village Project.
- 8.1. Location of all structures recorded in Wo Hing village in 2019 with an outline of the boundary of the fifteen houses described in 1914.
- 8.2. Distribution of previously extant ancestral halls in Gom Benn, adapted from Huang and Huang (2014).

## List of Figures

- 4.1. Image of the 1850s Mormon settlement in San Bernardino, no date.
- 4.2. Lithograph of the town of Riverside, 1877.
- 4.3. Chinese workers harvesting raisin grapes in Riverside, circa 1888.
- 4.4. The Quong Tung Hang laundry was charged with being a “public nuisance” on September 26, 1878.
- 4.5. Photo of Third Street looking east from Arrowhead with the Quong Tung Hang laundry in the foreground, circa 1880.
- 4.6. Photo of Third Street in San Bernardino Chinatown with Wey Yuen store and Quong Yuen Hi laundry storefront signs visible, circa 1880s-1890s.
- 4.7. Immigration photos of the Gee Chung Company members: left to right, Wong Hand (1912), Wong Tong Din (1915), Wong Sam (1913), and Wong Hang John (1912).
- 4.8. Photo of the washed-out bridge between Riverside and West Riverside after the 1916 flood.
- 4.9. Mrs. Estes displaying four Chinese bracelets and a parasol gifted in the early 20th century by vegetable farmer and peddler Wong Shoon Jung.
- 4.10. Photo portrait of Wong Hong, circa 1893, who was ordered to be deported in September 1895.
- 4.11. Photo of Colton laundry worker Wong Sai Hing.
- 4.12. Left, a photo of Wong Sai Chee (Wong Sue), 1913; right, a letter from Hong Kong addressed to Wong Sai Chee, 1906.
- 4.13. Photos of San Bernardino merchant Wong Moi and his wife Jin Kwon Nu and minor son Wong Quoon Sin, 1927.
- 4.14. Photo of Virginia Wong in front of the Chee Kung Tong building in Riverside Chinatown, 1920.
- 4.15. Photos of San Bernardino merchant Wong Nim with his queue wrapped around his head, circa 1912 and a photo without his queue, circa 1913.
- 4.16. Left, example of a Chinese lottery ticket that was played in the 1930s. Right, lottery ticket puncher from the Gee Chung store in San Bernardino Chinatown.
- 5.1. Overview drone photo of Wo Hing village.
- 5.2. The Yinlong Ancestral Hall in Tung Hau village.
- 5.3. A “Gold Mountain” trunk belonging to Huang Qingzhong’s father.
- 5.4. Conditions in Zone A, facing northwest.
- 5.5. Conditions in Zone B, facing north.
- 5.6. Conditions in Zone C east-west alley EW 2D, facing east.
- 5.7. Conditions in Zone C north-south alley NS 2B, facing north.
- 5.8. Bamboo bowls.
- 5.9. Double happiness bowls.
- 5.10. Winter Green vessel forms.
- 5.11. Four Seasons Flower vessel forms.
- 5.12. Polychrome tableware ceramics.
- 5.13. Common blue-on-white Asian porcelains.
- 5.14. Asian porcelains with unglazed firing rings on interior.
- 5.15. Rarer blue-on-white Asian porcelains.
- 5.16. Asian porcelain bowls with peck marks on interior.

- 5.17. White earthenware vessels.
- 5.18. White earthenware sherds with decoration or marks.
- 5.19. Examples of Chinese brown glazed stoneware bowls.
- 5.20. Chinese brown glazed stoneware barrel jar fragments.
- 5.21. Chinese brown glazed stoneware globular jar fragments.
- 5.22. Chinese brown glazed stoneware straight-sided jar.
- 5.23. Unglazed Chinese stoneware.
- 5.24. American and Chinese medicine bottles.
- 5.25. Abietine medicine bottle.
- 5.26. Southeast Asian topical medicine bottles.
- 5.27. Butterfly Cream (蝶霜) jar.
- 5.28. Pig teeth.
- 5.29. Mollusc shells.
- 5.30. Four-hole shell button.
- 5.31. British-manufactured metal spoon.
- 5.32. Chinese coins.
- 5.33. Chert flake, possibly part of a British gunflint.
- 5.34. Two-hole light green stone button.
- 6.1. Left, George Wong at the dedication of the Riverside Chinatown historical marker, 1968. Right, partially demolished red brick structure in Riverside Chinatown, c.1976-1978.
- 6.2. Asian tablewares that overlap across sites.
- 6.3. Comparison of Double Happiness bowls (top) and Shou pattern cups (bottom) across sites.
- 6.4. Pecked marks on vessels from Wo Hing village.
- 6.5. Chinese sewing basket and glass bangles.
- 6.6. Distribution of opium-related artifacts across the San Bernardino Chinatown site.
- 7.1. Left, Riverside Chinatown layout, 1908 and right, Wo Hing layout, original houses from 1902-1914 are bounded in blue.
- 7.2. Left, western brick building in Riverside Chinatown divided into five bays, late 1890s. Right, a building in Wo Hing (Structure 94) divided into five storage units or small houses built in the early twentieth century.
- 7.3. Left, front of the western brick building with an additional sixth bay, 1959. Courtesy of the Save Our Chinatown Committee. Right, layout sketch of sixth bay added some time after 1908. From the Wong Sai Chee records held at the Museum of Riverside.
- 7.4. Left, inside of the Guanyin Temple in San Bernardino, Chinatown, 1944. Courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society. Right, inside the restored Guanyin Temple in Tung Hau village across from Wo Hing village.
- 7.5. Partial exterior view of the Guanyin Temple building (far left) surrounded with white fence in San Bernardino, Chinatown, 1899. Courtesy of the San Bernardino County Museum. Exterior of the Guanyin Temple in Tung Hau village, 2019.
- 7.6. Earth God Shrine in Riverside Chinatown, c.1920. Photo by George Wong, courtesy of the Museum of Riverside. Earth God Shrine in Wo Hing Village 1983. Photo by Julie Duncan.
- 8.1. Wong Tong's grave marker in the Mountain View Cemetery, San Bernardino, California.

- 8.2. Photos of Wong Shoon Jung and son Wong Quen Luck, c.1914
- 8.3. Photo of Wong Quen Luck before departing for China, 1920.
- 8.4. Photo of Wong Ben Jew and son Wong Ho Lung, 1914.
- 8.5. Certificate of identity for Wong Sam, 1915.
- 8.6. Photo of See Yung Lee in the U.S. and an example of her papercut artwork in her Riverside home, circa 1970s.
- 8.7. Above, three-bay two-corridor house floor plan (adapted from Tan 2013b:268). Below, the exterior of Wong Ben Jew's three-bay two-corridor house in Wo Hing.
- 8.8. The eastern side (left) and flat reinforced concrete roof (right) of Wong Shoon Jung's three-story house built in the late 1920s or 1930s.
- 8.9. Aerial view of three homes in Wo Hing village built in the 1930s.
- 8.10. North side (left) and east side (right) of Wong Chun San's home built in the 1930s.
- 8.11. North side (left) and east side (right) of Structure 51, a traditional three-bay two-corridor home.
- 8.12. Left, profile of Wong Sam's first house; right, close-up of one doorway showing granite relief of couplets.
- 8.13. Left, profile of Wong Sam's second house. Right, view of Structure 92, a house that Wong Shoon Jung's servants lived in.
- 8.14. Left, northeast view of Structure 10, a school, and right, a view of the school's southern gate.
- 8.15. Examples of Wo Hing's two fresco motifs: Left, Wong Ben Jew's "birdsong and flowers" fresco and right, Wong Shoon Jung's "mountains and water landscape" fresco.
- 8.16. Structure 18 with "birdsong and flowers" fresco and a close-up of the fresco's 1908 date.
- 8.17. Wong Sai Oon's (Structure 66) "birdsong and flowers" fresco and close-up of the fresco's 1910 date.
- 8.18. Wong Sam's "birdsong and flowers" fresco; the house was built in 1914 according to immigration records.
- 8.18. Frescoes depicting a "mountains and water landscape" motif.
- 9.1. Descendants visiting Wo Hing village.

## **List of Tables**

- 5.1. Historic artifact counts from each zone, sorted by material.
- 5.2. Historic artifact weights from each zone, sorted by material.
- 5.3. Frequency of Asian porcelain patterns by sherd count and weight.
- 6.1. Comparing Asian porcelains by decoration between Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village.
- 6.2. Overlapping Asian porcelain patterns in contemporaneous deposits/sites at Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village.
- 6.4. Distribution of glass bangles and beads in Riverside Chinatown.
- 6.5. Distribution of opium-related artifacts across the Riverside Chinatown site.
- 6.6. Opium pipe bowl sherds from the San Bernardino Chinatown.
- 7.1. Location of historic Chinese grave markers in Riverside and San Bernardino cemeteries.
- 8.1. Demographic information on four transnational migrants living in Wo Hing.
- 8.2. Names and location of villagers in Wo Hing, 1914.

### **Note on Romanization**

This dissertation mainly uses Mandarin pinyin romanization in alignment with most scholarly work on the Chinese diaspora in Asian and Asian American Studies. The Cantonese or Taishanese transliterations for the names of Chinese migrants have been kept, however, to maintain consistency with the way that their names were spelled in immigration records. If a Cantonese or Taishanese transliteration is used for a place name, I add the Mandarin pinyin in parentheses, with italics and traditional Chinese characters in its first usage.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Tucked in a pedestrian walkway off the main area of Central Plaza in Los Angeles Chinatown is a small office that belongs to the Gom Benn Village Society (GBVS), a mutual aid association for Chinese with shared native-place ties in southeastern China. Between the 1970s and 1990s, the office was the site of many regular gatherings for families from the Gom Benn (*Ganbian* 甘邊) village cluster in Taishan County, Guangdong Province; members also met here to produce a bilingual newsletter called the *Voice of Gom Benn*. As an organization, the GBVS was vital for Chinese migrants from Gom Benn, many of whom worked in or owned Chinese restaurants scattered across Southern California (A. Wong 2020a). The location of this mutual aid organization in the heart of Los Angeles Chinatown, however, belies the long history of the Gom Benn village cluster and two Chinese communities located sixty miles east in the Inland Empire: the San Bernardino Chinatown and the Riverside Chinatown. These Chinatowns were once home to several thousand Chinese, many of whom were migrants from Gom Benn. Some of the founding members of GBVS had lived in these Chinatowns when they first emigrated as teenage boys from China to join their fathers who operated Chinese merchandise stores or worked as farmers growing vegetables. Migration has a long history in Gom Benn and surrounding village clusters, which were located near the Tan River in the Pearl River Delta. Male residents in these villages all shared the surname Wong (Cantonese for 黃), which is pronounced Huang in Mandarin and Vong in Taishanese. Wong is used in this dissertation because most migrants adopted that transliteration when they immigrated to the U.S.

According to family histories, the earliest known overseas migrant from Gom Benn was a man named Wong Han Chal who left his home village in the nineteenth century to work in California, but returned home only after a year (A. Wong 1980). Successive generations would cross the Pacific Ocean to work as well, but unlike Wong Han Chal, they stayed longer and chose to travel back and forth between their home villages in Gom Benn and the U.S.

Between 2017 and 2019, I conducted fieldwork in South China and at archival and museum collections research in Southern California to trace the lives of transnational Chinese migrants who moved between Gom Benn in China and the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns in Southern California. My positionality as a second-generation Chinese American with ancestral ties to Taishan and the ability to speak Hoisan va (*Taishanhua* or Taishanese 台山話) enabled me to interview descendants who only spoke Chinese. As a result, I conducted oral histories with eight people in the U.S. and China who had ties to the Gom Benn village cluster and half of those interviews were conducted in Hoisan va. Through my contact with Chinese American descendants at the beginning stages of my dissertation research, I quickly learned that many of those with ancestors who had lived in the Inland Empire Chinatowns were from Wo Hing village (*Heqingli* 和慶里), a new village in Gom Benn. After expressing interest in conducting preliminary research on the architecture of Wo Hing to better understand the impact of transnational migration, William Wong, then president of the GBVS, supported the idea and provided a contact in Taishan who introduced me to the administrators of Gom Benn village. After meeting with village administrators in China and talking to village residents in Wo Hing, I was able to conduct month-long research on the village's structures during the summer



of 2017. My ability to speak Hoisan va enabled me to gain the trust of villagers in Wo Hing; as a result, the village chief gave me permission to return in December 2018 to conduct a two-week archaeological survey in the village. Formal permission to conduct this research was granted by the Guangdong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of the People's Republic of China in collaboration with the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center Wuyi University. After the completion of my fieldwork, I kept in regular touch with descendants through WeChat, email, and made occasional online video presentations to families interested in learning more about my research.

### **Research Themes and Questions**

Migration is a perennial topic in anthropology and other fields, but research on transnational migrants can be advanced in several ways. Immigrant groups in the United States have historically maintained ties to the homeland via communication technologies and return trips, but multi-sited research on this topic remains scarce as scholars continue to examine migration from either the diasporic community or the homeland.

Anthropological studies also tend to frame the emergence of transnational migrants to late-twentieth century global restructuring even though transnational practices such as remitting money have been carried out by migrants as early as the nineteenth century. Additionally, anthropologists employ the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism to theorize the experiences of migrants, but the paradigms they use are usually only applicable to human phenomena and leave out the materiality of migration. My project seeks to reframe the study of transnational migrants by archaeologically examining the

late nineteenth and early twentieth century flow of people, goods, money, and information between Guangdong, China and southern California. Through five months of archival and museum collections research in the U.S. and seven months of field research in China, my dissertation has problematized the temporal placement of transnational migrants as contemporary figures and used archaeological and anthropological methods to attend to the material aspects of migration such as remittance-built architecture and the transpacific flow of everyday objects. These interventions create a more complex portrait of transnationalism and the relationships that migrants had with both the home- and host-country.

My study focuses on the time period between 1850 and 1949, when tens of thousands of Chinese immigrated to North America. The majority of these migrants came from the Four Counties region, a small agricultural area in Guangdong Province that includes the counties of Taishan (台山), Kaiping (開平), Enping (恩平), and Xinhui (新會). Rural villagers immigrated to the U.S. and Canada during a period of upheaval in China that included Western imperialism, violent interethnic conflict, a series of natural disasters, and high unemployment. Because of exclusion laws targeting Chinese women and the prescribed gender roles of women in the home village, very few migrants were female. The gender imbalance in migration to the U.S. created generations of split-households in which family members left behind in the village were supported by overseas remittances (Hsu 2000a). Madeline Hsu's transnational study of Taishanese immigration to the U.S. showed how the transpacific movement of people, goods, ideas, and money was supported by the establishment of Hong Kong-based Gold Mountain firms (*jinshanzhuang* 金山莊), which handled remittances and the distribution of goods

and foods from China to Chinese-run stores in North America, and overseas Chinese magazines (*qiaokan* 僑刊), which were created in the early 1900s by Taishan educators to solicit donations from migrants for the construction of village schools (Hsu 2000b; 2004). Architectural historian Jinhua Tan studied the built environment of remittances in Kaiping County and showed that between the 1900s and 1930s, remittances paid for the construction of a multitude of building projects, including new villages, mansions, and defensive watchtowers (*diaolou* 碉樓)—structures that are an important part of the area's tangible cultural heritage (Tan 2007; 2013b).

While Hsu's study on Taishan County and the U.S. sheds light on the development of transnational networks and institutions in Hong Kong and China, transnationalism as a daily, lived experience would best be understood by conducting site-specific research on both sides of the Pacific. This dissertation research examines how Chinese transnationalism operated in both the home villages in China and the Chinese communities that migrants settled in—the physical sites that people and things moved between. Through an archaeological lens, my project investigates how overseas migration materially impacted the home village and how the home village materially impacted Chinese communities in the United States. Monies remitted from migrants living abroad were used to build new houses and watchtowers, as well as to establish new villages for the families of Chinese migrants to live in; however, the topic of overseas immigration and its effects on internal migration within China is an understudied topic. My first research question asks: How did overseas migration affect internal migration in home village areas? I hypothesize that new villages were founded by returning Chinese migrants, who had become wealthy overseas, and that these settlers originated from a

number of different villages, which also makes it likely that settlers are only distantly related to one another. My second research question is: Did people in the home village use architecture to emphasize social distinctions between households? I hypothesize that those who inhabited distinctively decorated or tall buildings were owned by Chinese migrants who wanted to flaunt their status over time as they became wealthier than their peers. A third research question is: How were material practices in both the U.S. and the home village shaped by Chinese transnationalism? My hypothesis is that Asian tableware patterns found in the home village and host community will look similar to those found in diasporic communities; shared ceramic patterns will indicate the homogenization of certain material practices as a result of transnationalism.

The main sources of data I use to answer my three research questions are derived from analyses of material culture and the built environment. These data were collected during archaeological and architectural surveys that I conducted in the newest home village in Gom Benn called Wo Hing, which is still inhabited and retains the original houses built with remittances sent by Chinese migrants. My analyses also include examinations of the archaeological assemblages of the Riverside Chinatown and San Bernardino Chinatown, which are diasporically connected to Wo Hing Village. These two Chinatowns are no longer extant, but the material traces of these communities have been preserved because of previous archaeological excavations at each site. Riverside's Chinatown, occupied between 1885 and the 1940s, was excavated in the mid-1980s and the results were published in a two-volume monograph titled *Wong Ho Leun: An American Chinatown* (GBF 1987a; 1987b). The San Bernardino Chinatown existed between 1878 to the 1940s and was excavated by contract archaeologists working for the

California Department of Transportation in 2000, who produced a 575-page report styled after the Riverside report, using many of the same specialists (Costello, Hallaran, and Warren 2004).

## **Chapter Organization**

In Chapter 2, I discuss the theoretical foundations of this dissertation. I begin with an overview of anthropological and archaeological scholarship on transnationalism and diaspora. My study provides builds on previous studies of transnationalism by examining the material lives of transnational migrants through the movement of people and the circulation of goods. Cultural anthropologists have relied on ethnographic methods to examine the social, business, political, and familial ties that transnational migrants in diasporic communities maintain with the homeland, but my project examines community formation in both the homeland and the hostland. In addition, archaeological and anthropological research on diaspora tend to focus on the formation of diasporic identities; my project seeks to understand this through examinations of the material culture of diasporic people who physically move between two or more places throughout their lives. For example, what objects from the U.S. did Chinese migrants bring to the home village during return visits? This question concerning Chinese in the diaspora cannot be answered without the lens of transnationalism.

Chapter 3 provides a critical review of the body of literature on Chinese diaspora research, which encompasses both scholarship on home villages (*qiaoxiang* 僑鄉) and diasporic Chinatown communities in the U.S. This dissertation draws on literature from three bodies of scholarship: Chinese American studies, Pearl River Delta studies, and

Chinese diaspora archaeology. My research project integrates these three fields to provide a richer microhistorical examination of specific geographically bounded communities, which illuminates individual and community agency in the face of macro-level forces such as Western imperialism, capitalism, and racism. I continue to provide a historical context for my research in Chapter 4, where I discuss the history of the San Bernardino Chinatown and Riverside Chinatown. These two Inland Empire Chinese communities were formed in the late nineteenth century as a result of exclusionary local ordinances that drove them out of their respective city centers. The historical background that I provide is based on secondary sources, historic newspaper accounts, oral histories I conducted, and Chinese Exclusion Files I obtained from the National Archives.

In Chapter 5, I move the transnational narrative across the Pacific Ocean to the home villages in China. In this chapter, I provide a history of the Gom Benn village cluster, which was founded towards the end of the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) by a member of Yinlong lineage (隱龍 Yanlung in Cantonese)—a lineage that is part of the larger Wong clan in Taishan County. I also discuss Wo Hing village's connection to the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns in Southern California; Wo Hing was clearly established by residents who worked abroad, including those who lived in the two Inland Empire Chinese communities. The historic context that I construct for Wo Hing village is based on oral history interviews I conducted and close readings of genealogy books. I also outline the methods of my archaeological surface survey at Wo Hing village and discuss the results. My findings from the archaeological survey indicate that American-made products related to medicine and food were some of the most important objects for returning migrants to bring with them during visits to the home village.

Chapter 6 is a comparative archaeological analysis of the artifacts I collected from Wo Hing village and artifacts excavated from the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns. I begin by summarizing previous archaeological research on the two Inland Empire Chinatowns. Then, I discuss my comparative analysis of the artifacts from archaeological assemblages from Wo Hing and the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. This comparative analysis provides an understanding of how Chinese transnationalism impacted the home village and diasporic settlements. The results reveal overlaps in certain categories, particularly in Asian tablewares. This is an indication that artifacts from diasporic communities held important meaning to migrants who chose to purchase some of the same tableware patterns when they moved to new homes in Wo Hing village. One significant difference between the assemblages, however, is the lack of pecked marks in any tablewares from the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. This difference demonstrates that some village practices were not carried over in the U.S., probably because they were specific to the context of living in households with immediate family members.

In Chapter 7, I compare the built environment of Wo Hing village and the two Inland Empire Chinatowns to understand the transpacific circulation of ideas. Specifically, I examine dwellings, shrines, and temples. I found similarities in shrines and temples between the home village and diasporic communities that demonstrate the importance of religion in the maintenance of diasporic connections to the homeland. The dwellings in Wo Hing village and the two Chinatowns, however, appear very different and one explanation is that the built environment in the diasporic communities were circumscribed by racist ordinances and laws aimed at the Chinese.

Chapter 8 examines the impact of transnationalism on the home village by focusing on my architectural examination of homes in Wo Hing village. Using a variety of data sources collected in China and the U.S., I investigate how the built environment of Wo Hing changed over time. My research indicates that founding residents built increasingly elaborate houses in the decades after the village was established, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. My analysis of dwelling size and ornamentation show that houses in the village began as one-story three-bay two-corridor houses, but over time, migrants built second homes that had more expensive architectural elements. The success of migrants laboring abroad clearly contributed to the growth and expansion of Wo Hing village.

In the concluding chapter, I tie the various analyses together by discussing Wo Hing village and the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns as communities that had a transnational orientation for decades. Asian porcelain patterns and religious structures that match ones found in the home village reveal the types of material practices that were important to Chinese migrants living between the home village and Chinese communities in the U.S. Chinese migrants, however, did not continue other material practices such as applying pecked marks to ceramic vessels or building three-bay two-corridor houses in the diasporic communities; these changes indicate stark differences between family life in the village and the realities of living under racism in Southern California. Chinese migrants clearly did not create replica communities in the U.S. and China, but their adaptations and accommodations to living transnationally are what contributed to the fact that the two Chinatowns survived for six decades and that Wo Hing is still inhabited by people descended from the original founders. These three communities remain important



cultural heritage sites for Chinese and Chinese Americans because they testify to the material contributions of their ancestors in both the U.S. and China. Despite long separations from family members in China and exclusionary anti-Chinese laws, Chinese migrants established and maintained enduring transpacific communities.

### **Significance**

This study makes an important contribution to the field of historical archaeology in China. The archaeological study of sites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which falls within the periods of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and Republican Era (1911-1949), is rarely carried out and this study contributes to the historical archaeology of China (Voss 2016). An archaeological survey at Cangdong Village conducted by the Stanford-Wuyi University research team, was the first archaeological investigation of a home village, and the team developed a survey method for surface collection specific to villages, which are typically comprised of tightly compacted buildings (Voss and Kennedy 2017; Voss et al. 2018). My project helps to further refine archaeological survey methods at Qing and Republican period village sites. Further, my study provides valuable data on ceramic chronology in the Four Counties region because my archaeological assemblage is tightly dated to no earlier than 1902 as this is the year that villagers state that Wo Hing village was established (Pierson 2007).

My research project also adds a material dimension to studies of migration and mobility in sociocultural anthropology, which tend to center on the movement of people and not things. Archaeology is a field that is well-suited to providing a new lens on transnationalism, because it can highlight the social meanings of artifacts used and

structures created by people on the move. By studying everyday objects and vernacular buildings in the Chinese diaspora, I also hope to complicate the idea that the home village was unchanging and bounded by tradition. In this dissertation, I show that migrants established new villages in the homeland and that change occurred over time even within these new communities. I also reveal how diasporic communities were not merely temporary homes for Chinese migrants. Time and again, Chinese residents in San Bernardino and Riverside rebuilt their communities after anti-Chinese ordinances drove them out of the city center and when fires burned down their stores and residences. Instead, I argue that the home village and diasporic community should be seen as co-constitutive communities that endured because of transnationalism.

Overall, the interventions that I make in this research project are also applicable in other disciplines that study transnationalism or the Chinese diaspora, such as Asian studies, Asian American studies, cultural geography, sociology, and history.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Foundations of Transnationalism

#### Introduction

Immigrants are traditionally framed as people who leave their home countries to settle permanently in new locales or as sojourners who go abroad temporarily to earn money and return home. Transnational migrants, however, complicate these narratives because they maintain ties to the homeland through cross-border actions such as sending remittances, frequently communicating with friends and relatives, and making return trips to reunite with family or for social, political, business, and religious reasons. These transnational activities are not accounted for in the narratives that portray migrants as either settlers or sojourners. Recognizing the complex lived experiences of transnational migrants, anthropologists have developed and refined the concept of transnationalism to describe a way of life that is not contained or bounded within a single nation. In the first section of this chapter, I discuss how anthropologists have theorized transnationalism and outline the main debates surrounding the application of this concept. Next, I provide a review of how scholars have approached the materiality of transnationalism through examinations of the material culture of transnational migrants such as archaeological assemblages and remittance-built structures. In the third section, I discuss the transnational turn in scholarship on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Asian migration and how researchers favor transnational approaches that also take into account the importance of the nation-state. I conclude this chapter by summarizing the key issues in theorizing transnationalism and outlining future directions for research on the archaeology of transnationalism, which is still in the early stages of development.

## **Theorizing Transnational Lives**

Transnationalism was first defined by anthropologists in the 1990s through ethnographic research on transnational migrants who had moved abroad for work due to global restructuring and maintained ties with their homeland. Diaspora and transnationalism are often used to describe human phenomena related to migration, which is why it is important to parse out the differences between the two concepts. Anthropological debates on transnationalism have often focused on whether or not nation-state should be deterritorialized and the applicability of the concept to transnational migrants in the past.

### *Transnationalism*

The word “transnational” is an adjective that is used to describe a range of cross-border activities and groups. Transnationalism, however, is specific to transnational migrants and describes the ties that migrants make or maintain to their homeland. Anthropologists Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc define transnationalism as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (1994:7). In this definition, transnationalism not only encompasses physical movement between the home and host country but also the social relationships that keep transnational migrants tied to two places. Basch et al.’s conceptualization of transnationalism also provides an entry to discussing the fluid identities of transnational migrants. A transnational migrant’s social identity does not have to match their current geographic location; therefore,

transnationalism “allow[s] researchers to take into account the fact that immigrants live their lives across national borders and respond to the constraints and demands of two or more states” (Glick Schiller et al. 1995:55). As a result, transnational migrants often find themselves a part of two nation-states’ nation-building processes. For example, Haitian immigrants in America face demands from the home nation as the president of Haiti once referred to the U.S. as his country’s tenth province (Basch et al. 1994). While migrants are often subject to the policies of two nation-states, Michael Kearney (1995) notes that the concept of transnationalism is deterritorializing and that transnational frameworks are critiques of nation-centered core-periphery theories. There is, however, a danger in overstating native ties to a place to explain the actions of transnational migrants. For example, Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (1997) argue that previous scholars have overemphasized the norms and values of Chinese migrants to Southeast Asia as being primarily concerned with commercial enterprises and loyalty to their native place in China. Ong and Nonini found in their research that the cultural strategies of these migrants were fluid and flexible rather than extensions of inherent Chinese values and practices.

Anthropological research on transnationalism has also focused on how the lack of mobility in the home country prompts migration and transnational practices. Sylvia Yanagisako (2002; 2013) examines family-owned Italian clothing companies with production plants in China, and explains that Italian family firms are controlled by the family patriarch who is prone to hire his children to manage the firm in Italy, while non-family members manage the clothing manufacturing plants located in China. The lack of social mobility in the home country forces middle-class Italians to move abroad. Julie

Chu (2010) also studies the relationship between transnationalism and immobility by examining migration from Fujian Province, China, a region notorious for smuggling immigrants to New York City, where they ended up working as undocumented Chinese restaurant workers. Chu asserts in her ethnography on Fuzhounese village life that villagers immigrate because they feel trapped in an immobile state in China, having been reclassified as peasants during the Mao-era, a social identity that marked them as inferior. Despite being in debt from exorbitant smuggling fees, these migrants often send remittances home to build large houses as a sign that they have escaped their immobility. Chu's research shows that economic rationality does not always factor into transnational flows of money.

Anthropologists have also studied transnational migration in the homeland, instead of the destination, in order to understand those left behind. Julia Pauli and Franziska Bedorf (2018) provide a case study that focuses on Mexican transnationalism between Mexico and Chicago, Illinois. The researchers seek "to describe and analyze some of the ambivalences ageing in transnational families implies" by examining how old age is lived in Mexico and the U.S. (2018:48). Pauli and Bedorf find that older individuals in both Mexico and Chicago actually have shared outcomes because each group experiences loneliness caused the absence of close family members. Iván Sandoval-Cervantes (2017) also studies absence, but through the unfinished houses of undocumented transnational migrants in Oaxaca, Mexico. He found that dwellings still under construction eased the anxieties of family members who wait for migrants to return safely. Both of these studies draw attention to analyses of absence, an understudied topic

in the anthropology of transnationalism, which has often focused on how migrants maintain connections to family members.

Transnationalism can take shape in various forms, such as when the mobile migrant is the one who primarily resides in the homeland. One example is anthropologist Aihwa Ong's (1999) political-economic examination of transnational flows of people and capital in the Asia Pacific region. Focusing on elite transnational Chinese who reside in wealthy Asian cities, she argues that they practice 'flexible citizenship' as a response to policies in the homeland that negatively affect them. Flexible citizenship "refers to the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (Ong 1999:6). For example, after the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, a number of wealthy Hong Kong businessmen protected their families from political instability in the homeland through a split-household strategy: the businessman would stay in the home country to earn money while sending his family to live abroad in the U.S. or Canada to shelter them from any political fallout. The elite professionals who stayed behind were the transnational migrants who moved between Hong Kong and North America; they used a split-household strategy that was the reverse of historic Chinese migration, but was logical for that particular group of people with the capital they had and in the global moment they lived in.

### *Diaspora and Transnationalism*

Diaspora refers to the dispersal of a group of people from their homeland and diasporic people living a different parts of the world can feel connected to one another

because they share a common place of origin. Transnational migrants are often part of a larger diasporic community, particularly when migrants from large regional areas immigrate to several countries. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist state that diaspora and transnationalism are two “prominent research lenses through which to view the aftermath of international migration and the shifting of state borders across populations” (2010:9). Examining the differences and similarities between diaspora and transnationalism helps to clarify the definition of transnationalism; both share many features such as a critical view of nation-centered analyses of migration and an emphasis on the fluid identities of migrants.

While diaspora and transnationalism both apply to human phenomena, transnationalism is often associated with non-human transnational flows of goods, capital, money, and information. These transnational flows are usually discussed in the context of globalization, but transnationalism and globalization are also different processes. Kearney explains the difference as, “Whereas global processes are largely decentered from specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states” (1995:548). Indeed, many of the scholars who use transnational frameworks also highlight the role of nation-states in mediating transnational migrant experiences. Ulf Hannerz argues that transnationalism differs from diaspora because a “transnational arena” allows individuals, groups, movements, and businesses to each be actors (1996:6). This argument is based on the premise that diaspora is mainly used to describe groups of people. Bauböck and Faist elaborate on this point; they note that diaspora is commonly used to denote “groups living outside an (imagined) homeland,” while transnationalism is



applied more narrowly “to refer to migrants’ durable ties across countries—and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups, and organizations” (2010:9). There can also be diasporic networks, groups, and organizations but these social formations are only found outside of the homeland while their transnational counterparts connect the home and host country.

### *Anthropological Debates*

Some anthropologists argue that transnational approaches are more concerned with mobility and deterritorialized activities rather than bounded social units such as ethnic group and nation. Sidney Mintz argues that discarding social categories such as “community,” “region,” or “culture” is dangerous because many transnational migrants have communities that they go back to and that transnational identities have to originate from some region or culture (1998:131). Therefore, Mintz urges anthropologists of transnational migration to continue to rely on traditional fieldwork methodologies that are based on the study of bounded social units. Despite Mintz’s concern, ethnographic research on transnational communities has been carried out successfully. For example, Peggy Levitt (2001) conducted fieldwork on transnational Dominican migrants for her ethnography *The Transnational Villagers* and found that transnational social fields did not just extend between two nations, but between communities such a migrant’s home village and the diasporic site they end up living in when they immigrate. Levitt studied transnationalism between Miraflores in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts and showed how transnational social field

impacts also impact those who do not immigrate. Jason Pribilsky (2007) also identified discrete transnational communities while examining undocumented Ecuadorian migration; he conducted fieldwork in Andean villages in the Azuayo-Canari region with high rates of immigration and in the Elmhurst-Corona area of New York City, which has a large Ecuadorian population from Azuayo-Canari. Being embedded in both communities allowed him to understand how being undocumented limited the ability to rely upon transnational ties to find work. Levitt and Pribilsky both found that while transnational communities can be bounded, they are not necessarily cohesive, especially at the diasporic site where different generations of migrants live in proximity to one another but do not necessarily socialize together.

Many scholars argue that the transnational migrant is a new type of immigrant that emerged from a specific global context. Basch et al. (1994) explain that instability in both capital dependent countries and core capitalist countries created displaced groups, and U.S. deindustrialization in the 1980s gave rise to underground economies such as sweatshops, which exploit displaced migrants. As a result, many transnational migrants living in North America come from the Global South and labor in low-wage positions. Because of this global restructuring, Basch et al. state that the transnational lives of contemporary migrants differ from migrants who lived in the past because the “current moment of capitalism as a global mode of production...has necessitated the maintenance of family ties and political allegiances among persons spread across the globe” (1994:24). Mintz (1998) argues that it is ahistorical to ascribe transnationalism only to contemporary migrant groups; he points out that transnationalism is not new because hundreds of thousands of people, mostly laborers, moved across vast spaces in the nineteenth century

and had what he calls “bilocal” identities rooted in the homeland and host community. His personal assessment is that transnational movements have been overlooked because “half of the people in the nineteenth century weren’t going to European places, and nobody paid much serious attention to who they were, whether they ever went back, or how they were affected” (Mintz 1998:124). As I discuss in the next two sections, historians and archaeologists have shown that transnationalism was part of the nineteenth century Irish and Chinese immigrant experience in the U.S. (see Brighton 2009 and Hsu 2000b) and there is a growing body of scholarship on the materiality of these historic migrations.

### **Transnationalism and Material Culture**

This section discusses theories and research on the material culture of transnational migration, which include artifact assemblages and the built environment. Archaeologists have focused on theorizing artifacts used by transnational migrants and what they reveal about diasporic identities. These studies, particularly research on the Irish and Chinese diaspora, include fieldwork in the homelands of migrants. Architectural historians and heritage scholars have studied the built environment of transnational migrants, particularly how the money earned abroad has transformed the landscape of their hometowns. Many of these archaeological sites and remittance-built structures have become heritage sites and scholars have analyzed the consequences of the “heritagization” of the built environment of transnational migration for contemporary diasporic communities.

### *Archaeological Studies*

Archaeologists have adopted transnational frameworks in their research, particularly for understanding identity. Stephen Brighton conducted archaeological research on the nineteenth-century Irish diaspora and argues that Irish immigrants in the U.S. “did not arrive as cultural blank slates quickly adopting new social values and material culture” but “immigrated with entrenched social dispositions and ideologies reflected in objects and material signs” (2009:xx). Brighton investigated the changing social identity of Irish immigrants by examining material culture from archaeological sites in both Ireland and America. His framework for analyzing the assemblage is based on the concept that “incorporation, alienation, and transnationalism are interdependent discourses that ebb and flow in relation to external pressures from the dominant society”; in his model, incorporation represents the idea that a group has loyalty to its adopted country and alienation is the idea that a group retains a notion of its former cultural self (Brighton 2009:160). In the past, archaeologists focused on ethnicity and class as the only main determinants of immigrant identity, but Brighton’s research on ceramic assemblages from sites in Ireland and America indicates a pattern of continuity among diasporic Irish; he notes that “material commonalities between Ireland and America declined as the nineteenth century progressed,” which he sees as archaeological evidence of incorporation (2009:159).

Douglas Ross uses a deterritorialized framework for studying the diasporic identities of Chinese and Japanese transnational migrants at an early twentieth century cannery operation in British Columbia, Canada. Regarding the correlation between consumption patterns and identity, he states that “material patterns do not reflect gradual

change from one monolithic identity or body of cultural traditions to another but, rather, multiple simultaneous traditions and identities that are themselves in dynamic flux” (2013:7). He finds that for both Chinese and Japanese migrants, beverage consumption included both Asian and western-manufactured beverages, offering clues to their transnational ties with the home country and influences from the host country; the archaeological record indicates that migrants were likely negotiating their identities in Canada. While Ross’ approach emphasizes the shifting nature of transnational migrant identities, he also cautions that transnationalism “cannot entirely replace models of parochialism and solidarity but serve as a complement to them” (2013:195). Citing Brighton’s research on the Irish diaspora (2009), Ross points out that immigrant groups in Canada were marginalized by society, which likely caused them to maintain closer ties to the homeland.

Archaeologists working on the material culture of Chinese migrants have long called for research to be conducted in relationship to diasporic connections with their home villages. Voss and Allen pushed for a framework that involves “tracing the complex economic, demographic, and cultural webs that have bound Chinese and U.S. communities together since the 1850s” (2008:19). Likewise, González-Tennant (2011) outlined an archaeological approach to examine both the homeland and host society. Using a diasporic framework, his goal is to highlight the heterogeneity of Chinese migrants and he states that his approach “emphasizes the situational and complex connections between intra-group difference [among Chinese immigrants] and the numerous overseas locations” (2011:511). For González-Tennant, it is important to have baseline information for various emigrant areas in Guangdong to allow researchers to ask

questions about how differences are maintained abroad. Since then, archaeologists have examined the material ties that Chinese diaspora communities have to China, including conducting research in China. For example, historian Philip Choy (2014) examines the origins of Chinese ceramics commonly found in North America. On his research trips to southeastern China, he found that the common types of ceramics found at Chinese sites come from different kilns: Bamboo and Double Happiness patterned ceramics likely came from the Gao Bi region, Winter Green and Four Season Flower patterned ceramics were probably produced in the Jingdezhen kilns in Jiangxi Province, and Chinese brown glazed stoneware vessels were likely made at the Nanfeng Kiln in Guangdong Province. The geographic range of these kilns illuminates the complex networks that brought goods from China to the U.S. and Canada.

Voss (2016) outlines the ways that Chinese diaspora archaeologists can conduct transnational research to gain baseline data that archaeologists need in order to better understand cultural change and continuity at diasporic sites. She states that a transnational perspective can also expand the range of research questions that archaeologists have tackled. In terms of geography and chronology, archaeological research in U.S. tends to frame questions that are site-specific, thereby limiting archaeological analyses to a short period of time. Including the home village as a part of Chinese migration expands the geographic and chronological boundaries of Chinese diaspora archaeology because migration from the home villages to North America spanned nearly 100 years. Examining the home village can also provide insight into landscape and architecture, because it can lead to studies that explore “the emergence of cultural hybridism” (Voss 2016:161). Excavations at the emigrant home village of

Cangdong provides evidence for cultural hybridism; a bilingual Chinese medicine bottle created by the American brand Abeitine, possibly with the help of a Chinese migrant, was recovered during archaeological survey (Voss et al. 2018). This product is not documented in any written records, which also shows that archaeology can contribute to the study of transnational migration.

An important contribution from Asian diaspora archaeology is the theorization of transnational artifacts. Ross (2012) explains that he is able to identify objects with a “complicated transnational history” by analyzing an artifact’s cultural origins rather than the object’s country of origin. He argues that typical archaeological categorizations of artifacts by country of manufacture obscure their transnational and fluid origins. For example, Japanese and Western beer bottles were both found at the Japanese housing area and Ross’ research indicates that beer was introduced to Japan during the Meiji Restoration, which means that beer was indigenized before Japanese immigration to North America (2010). The transnational history of beer in Japan complicates the consumption of alcohol; drinking beer from a Western-style beer bottle might not be as new and novel as it seems, and Western beer consumption might have played a role in helping Japanese workers maintain diasporic identities. Ross’ research provides an important intervention in how archaeologists have uncritically categorized objects by their country of origin, rather than researching their cultural origins in the homeland.

### *Built Environment*

Research on the built environment of transnational migrants has focused on vernacular architecture that is built with remittances sent back by migrants, or houses that

are constructed by returning migrants themselves. As noted in an earlier section, anthropologists have discussed the symbolism of structures in migrants' hometowns (Chu 2010; Sandoval-Cervantes 2017). Below, I focus on how architectural historians and heritage scholars have theorized the vernacular architecture of transnational migrants.

Architectural historians have studied how remittances and overseas migration impacted the landscape of migrants' hometowns. For example, Sarah Lopez (2015) studied remittance houses in Jalisco, Mexico to understand how houses change after migration. Her research reveals the influence of American home architecture on remittance-built homes because common features include mailboxes and doorbells. Lopez views these homes as symbolic of the dreams and aspiration of migrants rather than home improvements, because mailboxes are not useful in an area without postal service and doorbells create a new formality that some neighbors object to. Jinhua Tan's research focuses on watchtowers and houses built in the early twentieth century by transnational Chinese migrants (Tan 2007; 2013a; 2013b). She examines the architectural ornamentation and finds a fusion of Western-style elements such as the use of doric columns and traditional Chinese decorations such as frescoes of traditional landscapes and stucco carvings of birds. This hybrid style of houses was replicated throughout the region no matter what country migrants had immigrated to; this is why Tan argues that this fusion-style was part of a unique subculture formed by transnational Chinese migrants. Denis Byrne, a heritage scholar, also studies the tangible heritage of Chinese migration from Guangdong Province. He introduces the concept of a "heritage corridor," which is the idea that "the physical record of migration is not merely distributed or situated transnationally but is oriented that way" (Byrne 2016b:6). Byrne argues that the



structures reside in a “transnational space” even though buildings are fixed in space; the affective ties that Chinese migrants living abroad have to family in the home village play a role in the transnational orientations of remittance-built houses or ancestral halls in Guangdong. For example, traditional red-brick houses could be considered passé and cause embarrassment for a Chinese migrant, so new buildings had to be constructed. In effect, these buildings have agency because of the affective ties maintained by transnational migrants.

The material culture of transnational migrants also plays a role in contemporary diasporic communities. Charles Orser Jr. studies the archaeology of the Irish diaspora and finds that, “The historical reality of diasporas, with their mass movement of hundreds and even thousands of men, women, and children, force us to confront transnational heritage issues today” (2007b:103). One issue that Orser addresses is whether or not Irish Americans can rightfully stake a claim on heritage sites in Ireland that they can trace descent to, even though they do not possess Irish citizenship; in the end, he argues that diasporic connections are more important than citizenship in the context of migration-related heritage. Anthropologist Ien Ang (2011) reflects on how heritage sites related to transnational migrants and diasporic groups can create an unrealistic portrayal of migration because they tend to ignore displacements and the various host societies migrants might enter into in their lifetimes. This problem is compounded by the fact that most diaspora-related heritage sites are supported by a national government and are used to highlight the positive dimensions of migration, while glossing over topics such as racism and poverty.

## **Transnational Asian American and Asian Diasporic Histories**

Over the last three decades, historians of Asian migration have increasingly adopted transnational and diasporic frameworks that originated in anthropology. The transnational turn in Asian American studies marked an important development in the field as scholars moved from documenting anti-Asian racism and the contributions of Asian immigrant to examining the diasporic and transnational links that Asians in the U.S. had with their homelands. Asian Americanists, however, continue to debate to what extent transnational frameworks are able to capture the impact of nation-state policies on the lives of Asian immigrants. Within Chinese diaspora studies, the debate on transnational approaches is centered on how to spatially and temporally frame the transpacific links between the home villages in China, the British colony of Hong Kong, and receiving countries such as North America, Australasia, and Latin America.

### *Transnationalism and Asian American studies*

In 2005, Erika Lee and Naoko Shibusawa edited a thematic issue on transnational Asian American history in the *Journal of Asian American Studies* to recognize the transnational turn in Asian American historiography and noted the influence of anthropological concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. Lee and Shibusawa (2005) view this turn as an advancement for the field of Asian American studies because Asian migration has been shown to have a transnational orientation. Two examples of early research on transnational Asian American communities include Jonathan Okamura's book *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities* (1998) and Madeline Hsu's monograph *Dreaming of Gold*,

*Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Hsu 2000a). When Asian American studies formally emerged as a field in the late 1960s, however, scholars only focused on immigrant experiences in the U.S. and avoided transnational approaches; this was done in part to distinguish the field from Asian studies (Lee and Shibusawa 2005). In addition, the exclusion of non-white people from American history propelled early Asian American studies scholars to focus their research on Asian American communities and their experiences with racism (Okamura 2003). Other early Asian Americanists took a ‘contributionist’ approach to their scholarship, which involved documenting the contributions of Asian immigrants to the building of the nation, which were often left out of dominant historical narratives (Hsu 2018). For Hsu, centering Asian American history in the U.S. provides an incomplete portrayal of the lives of Asian migrants; she articulates the importance of transnational approaches to Asian American studies by stating that they “permit us to relinquish [the] nation-based framework and to place migration and migrants—with their complicated sets of negotiations, multilayered realities, and multidirectional orientations—at the center of our discussion” (2008:185). Evelyn Hu-Dehart recognizes the power of transnational Asian American history to de-center the nation, but cautions historians who employ the concept of transnationalism to also maintain a focus on “the national and its significance” because state policies and citizenship status have major impacts on the lives of transnational migrants (2005:312). This critique provides the basis for an important debate in Asian American studies—that transnational approaches elide race and racism.

Hsu points out that Asian American studies' focus on investigating racism and resistance to racism explains why some of the field's scholars remain resistant to fully embracing transnational frameworks. For example, Erika Lee, a U.S. historian of anti-Chinese immigration laws, argues that transnationalism depicts mobile Chinese migrants as possessing free agency, which obscures the anti-Chinese legislation created by the nation-state, which "structured and circumscribed transnational migration, networks and identities" (2008:191). Hsu's response is that the mobility of most migrants, except for very wealthy individuals, are generally circumscribed and that transnationalism does not exclude nations and the nation state as "explanatory forces" (2008:191). Historian Eiichiro Azuma's research on the history of race, nation, and Japanese Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is an example of how transnational frameworks can account for racial hegemony. While Azuma argues that Japanese American experiences "extended beyond the boundaries of a single polity," he is also critical of the concept of transnationalism, which "may connote something "deterritorialized" or someone "denationalized"; therefore, he prefers to call his nation-based analysis of race in Japanese American history an 'inter-National' approach, which requires a "close analysis of the discursive strategies and everyday practices that immigrants adopted and deployed relative to the different hegemonic powers" (2005:5). His study of early Japanese migration shows that immigrants to the U.S. were comprised of both laborers as well as individuals sent by the Meiji government to colonize areas of the West Coast as part of Japanese colonial expansion (Azuma 2011:424). Azuma finds that migrant lives were structured by U.S. legislation that excluded Japanese laborers and Japanese governmental policies that sought to exert control over Japanese living abroad.

One example of the latter is that Japanese diplomats kept immigrant leaders in check by controlling which local Japanese American organizations were allowed to provide profit-generating immigration services to Japanese residents (Azuma 2005:44). Migrants, however, also had agency in their transnational orientations; for example, some working-class migrants made active attempts on their own to align themselves with Japan's expansionist program and notions of racial superiority by portraying themselves as "honorable patriots who not only promoted Japan's national interests abroad but also served as grassroots transmitters of civilization to...frontiers" (Azuma 2011:426). Azuma's inter-National approach shows how Japanese immigrant experiences were shaped by hegemonic pressures from two nations.

One important methodological contribution to transnational Asian American histories are studies that take a microhistorical approach to examining transnationalism. Haiming Liu (2005) examines the transnational lives of one Chinese American family who maintained ties with their ancestral village in Kaiping County over several generations and left a large archive of family letters. He shows how lineage obligations kept the first migrant in the family linked to the home village while later generations maintained strong ties to China because racism in the U.S. precluded them from entering many professions; this intimate family narrative shows how Chinese transnationalism changed over time. Yuko Konno (2012; 2016) also uses a microhistorical framework to study early twentieth century transnational Japanese migrants who immigrated from home villages in the Taiji area of Wakayama prefecture to Terminal Island, which is located near the Port of Los Angeles. The Taiji community on Terminal Island retained ties to their home villages, but Konno finds that this did not necessarily mean they identified

as Japanese nationals or even as Taiji. The Taiji migrants came to identify strongly as Terminal Islanders, which Konno largely attributes to the geographic isolation of the Japanese community on Terminal Island. This microhistory illuminates migrant identities and loyalties that fall outside of traditional frameworks that tend to frame migrant agency in relation to one of three arenas: affection for hometowns, patriotism to home countries, or the degree of assimilation into dominant society. These are the same issues that Chinese migration scholars have grappled with, which I discuss below.

### *Transpacific Approaches and Chinese Migration Studies*

This section discusses the history and development of transnational approaches to studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese transpacific migration. As anthropological ideas about transnationalism gained traction in various disciplines in the 1990s, scholars studying the late nineteenth and early twentieth Chinese diaspora began to either adopt the concept or reject its applicability to the past. Philip Yang (2000) argued that transnationalism does not apply to early Chinese migrants to the U.S. even though they kept transnational ties to China because their cross-border activities in the past did not occur with any regularity or intensity and were slow rather than instantaneous. In Yang's assessment, Chinese migrants should be viewed as people who vacillated between being sojourners and settlers. This perspective, however, did not gain popularity and major monographs by historians Madeline Hsu and Adam McKeown in the early 2000s led to wider acceptance of transnationalism and transnational frameworks to studies of historic Chinese transpacific migration. Hsu's research illuminated the Chinese transnational Gold Mountain firms, print media, and a split-household

arrangement facilitated one hundred years of transpacific circulations of people, money and ideas (Hsu 2000a; 2000b). McKeown (2001) showed how villages in south China were linked to overseas Chinese communities around the globe through businesses, families, and networks that stretched across oceans.

One topic that continues to be debated in scholarship on Chinese transpacific migration is what role the Chinese concept of ‘native-place attachment’ or *guxiang* (故鄉) should play in transnational frameworks. Traditionally, scholars who have conducted research on Chinese migration to southeast Asia explained return migration and remittances for community projects as the result of migrants’ love for their homeland. McKeown’s critique of this narrative is that we cannot assume that Chinese had an “enduring love” for their home country and that this nation-centered analysis only serves “to obscure and confuse the transnational activities of those migrants” (2001:3). Some researchers have attempted to de-nationalize the term *guxiang* by specifically focusing on the home villages of Chinese migrants, which are referred to in the literature as *qiaoxiang*. The concept of *guxiang* underlies the word *qiaoxiang*, which translates to “emigrant community” in English but in Chinese captures a migrant’s affection for and loyalty to their hometown (Hsu 2000b:9). Hsu’s research on Chinese transnationalism in the *qiaoxiang* of Taishan County led her to discover that Taishan created the first *qiaokan* (僑刊) in 1909, which were magazines distributed across the Chinese diaspora to solicit donations from migrants abroad for the construction of local schools (2000a, 2000b). These magazines kept Chinese migrants transnationally oriented because they contained news and stories about their hometown. Michael Williams (2018) also finds *qiaoxiang* a useful scale of analysis for his study of Chinese migrants and migration from Long Du

District in Zhongshan County. While Williams acknowledges that Chinese migrants were transnationals who moved between villages in Long Du (隆都) and places such as Sydney, San Francisco, and Honolulu, he departs from most scholars by stating that the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora too territorializing. For Williams, the *qiaoxiang* provides the best lens for understanding the agency of transnational Chinese migrants because their aspirations were most intensely tied to the hope of returning home with wealth and success.

An important development in Chinese migration studies has been how to discuss the spatiality and temporality of Chinese transnationalism. Historian Elizabeth Sinn makes a spatial intervention in the study of the Chinese diaspora through her analysis of Hong Kong, the main embarkation point for Chinese migrants traveling to countries all over the world. Sinn (2011) argues that Hong Kong was an important ‘in-between space’ that played critical role in transnational circulations between China and Chinese diaspora communities, but discussions of Chinese transnationalism tend to focus on origins and destinations. British-ruled Hong Kong became an emigrant port after gold was discovered in California in 1848 when ships were available for carrying passengers because of the flourishing opium trade; in addition, the colony housed remittance firms and the Tung Wah Hospital, which facilitated the return of the bones of migrants who had died abroad and sought reburial in their home villages. Building on Sinn and McKeown’s research, Henry Yu (2011) finds the concept of a ‘Cantonese Pacific’ useful for naming the Chinese migration networks between China, Hong Kong, and Chinese settlements in the Americas and Australasia. Yu argues that the Cantonese Pacific is a useful concept for discussing a singular historical process that involved Guangdong, Hong Kong, and various nodes in



the Americas. The main nodes in the Cantonese Pacific include San Francisco, Victoria, Vancouver, Sydney, Honolulu, and Seattle where most Chinese migrants were processed and secondary nodes, which were smaller ports of entry located in the British Caribbean and Latin America; Hong Kong was a node as well because it was the main through-port for Cantonese migrants going abroad and returning to China. Together, all of these nodes connect settler nations and British and American colonies in the Pacific to a “circulatory migration network that was rooted in eight counties of Guangdong province” (Yu and Chan 2017:26). Using a map that shows Chinese settlements across Canada, Yu also makes the point that the Cantonese Pacific was not just concentrated in the Chinatowns of major cities, it was also spread into small rural towns where one or two Chinese migrants ran a restaurant or a general store (Yu 2011:401). The Cantonese Pacific is a novel and important idea because it provides more specificity than the term “Chinese diaspora” and includes Chinese residents living in small towns – people who are usually left out of Chinese migration narratives because they do not live in a large ethnic enclave.

## **Discussion**

As I have shown in this chapter, scholars continue to find transnationalism a powerful analytic tool and have helped to refine the definition of transnationalism. Anthropologists initially focused on working-class transnational migrants to emphasize the relationship between transnationalism and global restructuring, but scholars have identified transnationalism among the professionals and the elite. Early research on transnational activities focused on remittances and how migrants kept in touch with family members in the homeland, but innovative studies have shown how some cross-

border activities defy economic rationality such as building remittance houses when one is already in deep debt. Discussions of transnationalism tend to focus on mobility and migrant agency, but recent studies have shed important light on absence and what the consequences are for the people left behind when migrants are on-the-move. Lastly, transnationalism was initially defined as a late twentieth century phenomenon, but historical and archaeological researchers have demonstrated that transnationalism is a phenomenon that dates to at least the nineteenth century.

Transnational approaches continue to be debated by scholars in anthropology, archaeology, history, and Asian American studies. The archaeology of transnationalism is still a nascent and developing field and would benefit from the current body of scholarship in a number of ways. The best studies on transnationalism highlight the complexity of migrant lives in by examining their aspirations and agency while acknowledging the structural constraints of the homeland, diasporic site, and in-between spaces. These structural constraints might include institutionalized racism in the host nation and political expectations of loyalty from the homeland. Methodologically, future research should follow trends in ethnographic and archaeological fieldwork on transnational migration that has examined transnational communities in the homeland and the diasporic site. This place-based research is important because scholars have shown that transnational communities in the homeland are impacted by migration even if they never immigrate and the diasporic site is important because it is often a heterogeneous community that has its own cultural logics. Archaeological studies of transnationalism, particularly Chinese transnationalism, would also benefit from research on diasporic sites outside of North America and Australasia.

## Chapter 3

### Home Villages and the Chinese Diaspora

#### Introduction

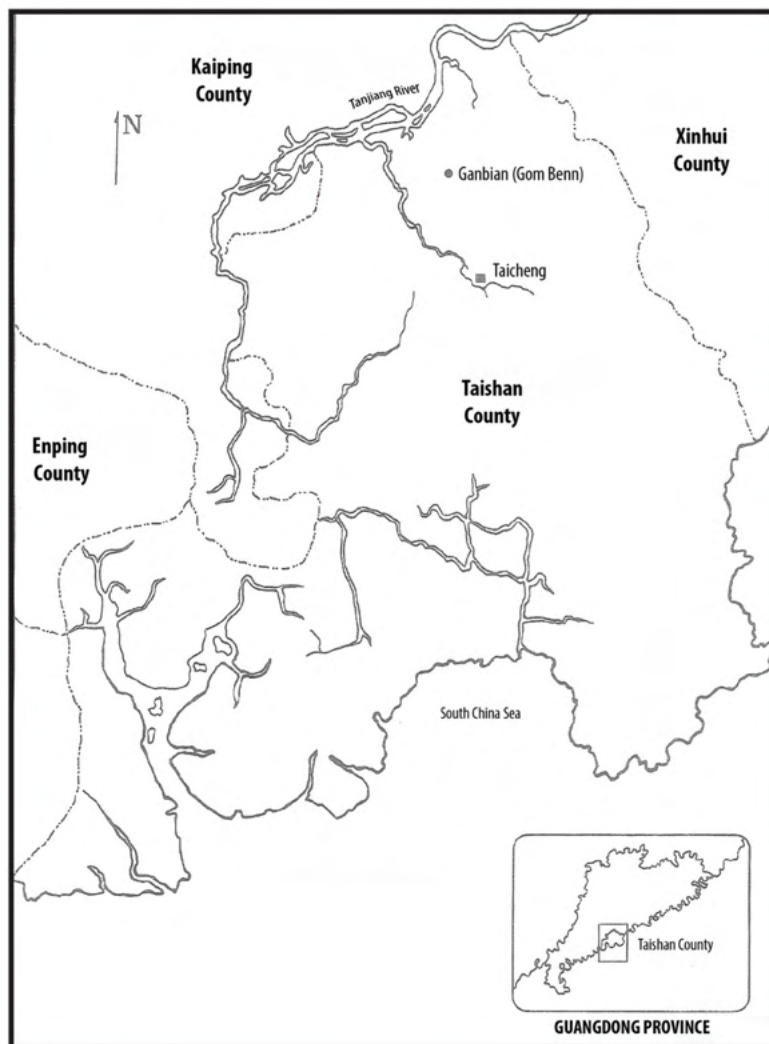
The Chinese diaspora in the second half of the nineteenth century was a large-scale global dispersion of people and southeastern China was the center of overseas migration. This chapter focuses on Chinese transpacific migration to the U.S. and begins with a geographic orientation of the Pearl River Delta, the region where most migrants to North America and Australasia came from. I follow with a discussion of the historical events that led to overseas migration between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which included social upheaval in southeastern China and the desire of Western capitalists to recruit a large and cheap labor force. While studies of Chinese transpacific migration often focus on the Chinese communities formed at destinations points, many of these migrants lived transnational lives and moved back and forth between the diasporic communities they had formed and their home villages. As a result, my dissertation research on the archaeology of the Chinese transpacific circulations of people, goods, and information draws on three bodies of scholarship: 1) Chinese American studies, 2) Pearl River Delta studies, and 3) Chinese diaspora archaeology. I provide an overview of how scholarship has developed in each respective field and outline the major research themes relevant to this dissertation. I conclude this chapter by arguing that these three areas of research should be in conversation with one another in order to study the Chinese diaspora and more specifically, to examine the materiality of Chinese transnationalism.

## Geographical Background

The overwhelming majority of Chinese who immigrated to the U.S. during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century came from Guangdong Province in southeastern China. Guangdong was part of a macroregion that was historically known in the Ming and Qing dynasties as Lingnan, which comprises the present-day provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi (Naquin and Rawski 1987). This was a linguistically diverse region with Cantonese-, Chaozhou-, and Hakka-speaking Han Chinese, as well as Tai and Yao ethnic minorities. The cultural center of Lingnan was the city of Guangzhou (formerly known as Canton) in Guangdong Province. An important geographic feature is the Pearl River, a catchall term for a complex river system that passes through Guangzhou and drains into the South China Sea; the Pearl River Delta is formed from this river system.

In the mid-nineteenth century, people from a number of counties in Guangdong began immigrating to the U.S. to work, but over time, migration was centered in three areas in the Pearl River Delta. June Mei (1979) found that Chinese migrants in America primarily came from Siyi (Four Counties 四邑), Sanyi (Three Counties 三邑), and Zhongshan (中山) County. Each of these areas had its own distinctive Cantonese dialect and people tended to immigrate to communities in the U.S. where family members were already living (Chinn, Lai, and Choy 1969). The Siyi area was located in the southern part of Guangdong Province and included Taishan (called Xinning 新寧 before 1914), Kaiping, Xinhui, and Enping. Historian Madeline Hsu (2000a) notes that most Chinese migrants to the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were from Taishan County. The Gom Benn village cluster is located in Taishan County, between the

Tanjiang (Tan) River and Taicheng—the historic urban center of the county. The Three Counties area was geographically closest to Guangzhou and included Nanhai (南海), Shunde (順德), and Panyu (番禺). Chinn et al. (1969) note that Sanyi was the wealthiest of the three areas, and many Chinese migrants in the U.S. who were from the Three Counties area were merchants. Zhongshan was the closest to Hong Kong and was originally called Xiangshan (香山); the county was renamed Zhonghsan in 1925 after revolutionary leader and native son Dr. Sun Yat-sen.



Map. 3.1. Location of the Gom Benn village cluster within Taishan County, Pearl River Delta region. Based on Tom Young's map in Lawton (1987d:157).

## **Historical Background**

To contextualize this chapter's literature review on the Chinese migration between the Pearl River Delta region and the U.S., I outline the major historical events that set the stage for the global dispersal of Chinese in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Overseas migration from southeastern China in the late Qing Dynasty occurred during a period of intense social upheaval. There was a huge population growth in the middle of the nineteenth century, a series of floods, and instability caused by anti-Qing rebellions (Pan 1990). During the late Qing Dynasty, most people in Taishan relied on agriculture to earn a living. Rice was the primary food grown and a good crop would yield two harvests per year. Most of Taishan, however, was hilly or the soil was unsuitable for farming. Villages were compact with narrow alleyways in part to maximize the amount of space for fields to grow rice and vegetables (Hammond 1995). Many turned to working in Guangzhou, 80 miles north, in order to make ends meet. In 1847, however, approximately 100,000 porters and boatmen lost their jobs (Hsu 2000a:25). Many of the unemployed joined secret societies, which were involved in banditry and anti-Qing rebellions, but these groups also provided mutual aid to members.

At the time, China's contact with the world was centered in Guangzhou—the only free port in China during this period. Westerners believed there had been an uneven trade relationship as ships from the U.S. and Britain went to China to purchase Chinese goods such as tea, but had nothing to sell in return; they sought to sell opium to the Chinese, but Qing officials objected (Kuhn 2008). This disagreement resulted in the first Opium War (1840-1842); China was militarily defeated and signed the 1843 Treaty of Nanking wherein they ceded Hong Kong to Britain. Five treaty ports were forced to open up to

foreign trade: Guangzhou in Guangdong; Xiamen (Amoy) and Fuzhou (Foochow) in Fujian; Ningbo (Ningpo), and Shanghai. Britain and Spain used these ports to China to recruit contract laborers to work on plantations in their respective colonies (Pan 1990). For example, in 1847, thousands of Chinese contract laborers left from these ports to Peru and Cuba, but worked under horrendous conditions and were often physically abused (Delgado 2012).

Migration under a credit-ticket system also occurred in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The credit-ticket system involved repayment of a loan for passage to go abroad, but the debt was transferred from transportation brokers to employers who had shared native place ties or were members of the same secret society (McKeown 1999:317). If the loan was not repaid by the migrant, family members in China would be responsible for the debt (Zhang 2019). Chinese immigration brokers took advantage of the newly opened treaty ports to recruit villagers from Fujian and Guangdong to work abroad. Lynn Pan (1990) notes that Hokkien-speaking migrants from Fujian primarily immigrated to Southeast Asia, and left from Xiamen and Fuzhou; they took well-worn routes as Hokkien traders were in Manila, Philippines as early as the 1500s. A number of Cantonese-speaking migrants from Guangdong also went to Southeast Asia, but they primarily crossed the Pacific Ocean to labor in North America and Australasia. Guangdong's geographic proximity to Hong Kong, a major entrepôt for Western powers, helped to facilitate passage to the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand during various gold rushes in nineteenth century. The Gold Rush in California, which began in 1848, brought migrants from Guangdong to the U.S. via Hong Kong. Additionally, within the Pearl River Delta region, there was a years-long interethnic conflict during

1850s and 1860s between Cantonese residents who called themselves Punti or ‘natives’ (*bendi* 本地), and Hakka people who the Punti called guests (*kejia* 隆都) (Lee 2017). The bloody Hakka-Punti conflict motivated many Chinese to go abroad to escape the fighting.

The rise of capitalism and westward expansion in the U.S. continued to create a demand for a large and cheap labor force and American capitalists turned to China. Between 1865 and 1869, an estimated 10,000 Chinese laborers were recruited from the Pearl River Delta region to construct the first Transcontinental Railroad in the U.S. (Chang and Fishkin 2019; Chang 2019). The Chinese also continued to immigrate to work in extractive industries; by 1870, Chinese laborers comprised twenty-five percent of all miners in the American West and “in some states, they accounted for one-half to almost two-thirds of the mining population” (Rohe 2002:31). The completion of the railroad opened up many parts of the Western U.S. for settlement, but at the cost of displacing Indigenous people.

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigration was impacted by U.S. federal immigration laws were passed to curtail Chinese immigration. The Page Act of 1875 banned Chinese women attempting to labor as prostitutes from entering the country (Cheng Hirata 1979). Immigration officials, however, treated all Chinese women as if they were prostitutes and the harsh scrutiny that they received partially accounts for why so few ended up emigrating to America. Additionally, this bias against Chinese female immigrants resulted in gendered migration patterns and a nearly all-male Chinese population in diaspora communities. Anti-Chinese rhetoric during a nation-wide economic recession in the 1870s also led Congress to pass the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The leaders of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) resisted



the Exclusion Act by challenging the law in the courts, and individual Chinese wrote editorials speaking out against the discriminatory act (Yung, Chang, and Lai 2006). Despite resistance from the Chinese, the U.S. government renewed the Chinese Exclusion Act. Historian Erika Lee notes that the U.S. was successful in limiting Chinese immigration in the first two decades after the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (Lee 2003a). Over time, however, Chinese migrants found ways to circumvent the racist immigration laws. Lee explains that the 1906 San Francisco earthquake started a fire that burned Chinese immigration documents and created a pathway for Chinese to obtain false identities as U.S.-born Chinese or sons of those with U.S. citizenship. Many used their false identities to sponsor other immigrants, which is how Chinese migration remained strong during much of the Chinese Exclusion Period (1882-1943).

### **Chinese American Studies**

The formation of the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) in San Francisco and the establishment of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University (SFSU) in the 1960s helped formalize Chinese American history as an academic field of study. Him Mark Lai and Phillip Choy were CHSA members who were invited to teach the first Chinese American history course in the U.S. at SFSU (Him Mark Lai and Poon 1985). With Thomas W. Chinn, Lai and Choy also co-edited the landmark study, *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (1969), which provided detailed information on where Chinese migrants came from, the various forms of anti-Chinese legislation, and the industries that the Chinese worked in. Chinese American history expanded between the mid-1980s to late 1990s. Historian Sucheng

Chan notes that in this era, social history dominated Chinese American historical studies and research focused on the industries that Chinese migrants worked in such as fishing and agriculture (Lydon 1985; Chan 1986), how Chinese in the U.S. dealt with racism (Tsai 1986), and Chinese American women's history (Yu 1989; Yung 1995; 1999). In the following sections, I discuss recent approaches to researching Chinese migration to America. The majority of migrants came to the U.S. to work, which is why scholarship that focus on race and labor have made important contributions to Chinese American historiography. Resistance to anti-Chinese exclusion laws is another important theme that has shown how Chinese migrants were not merely victims of oppression. Lastly, research on the Mexican and Canadian borders that Chinese migrants used to enter the U.S. during the Chinese Exclusion Period highlight how cross-border movements became part of the well-established transpacific routes that migrants took.

### *Race and Labor*

Many scholars have shown how Chinese and other Asian immigrants were economically wanted for their labor, but remained excluded from political or social citizenship. Scholar Lisa Lowe (1996) reveals how barring Chinese laborers from entering the U.S. in late nineteenth century formalized the idea that 'Asian immigrant' was opposite to 'American citizen', which resulted in political disenfranchisement and the lack of cultural citizenship for Asian migrants. Lowe argues that legal exclusion was resisted, but exclusion from dominant society continued to be an oppressive force that Asians in the U.S. have fought against. Building on the politics of race, Moon-Ho Jung (2006) highlighted the role of white supremacy in anti-Chinese sentiment in his book

*Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*. Jung found that during the post-Civil War era, the Chinese were racialized as “coolies” rather than immigrant laborers because it was feared that Chinese plantation laborers would help build up the old aristocracy in the South that had led to the Civil War. Depicting Chinese migrants as coolies who were willing to work like slaves enabled lawmakers to justify the lack of extension of equal rights such as the ability to naturalize as citizens. Another important text on race and racism in Chinese American history is Nayan Shah’s *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (2001). Shah’s research on race and public health discourse showed how early portrayals of laundries in San Francisco Chinatown as unsanitary nuisances led to the racialization of Chinese residents as carriers of disease; as a result, Chinese Americans were denied admittance to the city hospital and Chinatowns were blamed as originators of epidemics. Shah’s work reveals the role that everyday anti-Chinese discourse contributed to structural racism.

#### *Anti-Chinese Exclusion Laws*

The study of the Chinese exclusion period has illuminated the intersection of racism, U.S.-China relations, and the law’s impact on Chinese American communities. In the edited volume *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (1991), Sucheng Chan lamented the lack of research on the sixty-year period of Chinese exclusion in Chinese American historiography. Charles J. McClain and Laurene Wu (1991) made an important contribution to closing this research gap by summarizing several of the court cases involving Chinese American challenges to Chinese exclusion such as Fong Yue Ting’s case against the 1892 Geary Act, which

stated that Chinese residents would be deported if they did not register for a certificate indicating that they had a right to be in the United States. Legal historian Erika Lee (2003) showed how anti-Chinese immigration legislation formed America's first anti-immigrant laws, which laid the foundation of America's gatekeeping immigration policies. Immigration gatekeeping racialized Chinese as inferior 'aliens' and this white supremacist ideology was later extended to other Asian immigrant groups.

Other scholars have provided a more global examination of Chinese exclusion, particularly with regards to U.S.-China relations. Gordon H. Chang showed that the curtailment of Chinese immigration in the U.S. was not immediate because many prominent Americans thought that China was important in America's future and noted that the 1882 law was first called the Chinese Restriction Act. William Seward, one of America's most senior and respected politicians, supported free immigration and was the "secret author of the 1868 Burlingame Treaty, the most equitable and favorable treaty China concluded with any Western nation in the nineteenth century"; Seward believed that positive relations with China would bring wealth to America (Chang 2012:162). Beth Lew-Williams (2018) showed how America's relationship with China changed after the passage of the 1888 Chinese Exclusion Act, a harsher law that excluded both new Chinese labors and former laborers returning from China. Lew-Williams argues that the U.S. had formerly relied on diplomacy in its relations with China and now the passage of the 1888 law broke Chinese treaties; the change was also rooted in white supremacy because U.S. statesmen no longer feared that "commercial and territorial expansion at home and abroad would lead to racial contamination of the citizenry" (2018:193).

### *Border Zones and Chinese Migration*

Innovative research on Chinese American history has examined Chinese migration to the U.S. through the Mexican and Canadian borders. After the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese migrants turned to America's northern and southern borders to enter into the country. Grace Peña Delgado (2012) argues that the U.S.-Mexico borderland, or *fronterizo*, was a space that has largely been ignored in Chinese American immigration history. She explains that Mexico did not enforce America's Chinese Exclusion Act, which meant that the borders were porous for Chinese immigrants, especially those hoping to circumvent the exclusion law by entering the U.S. through Mexico. The *fronterizo* became an important part of transpacific migrant networks until anti-Chinese sentiments began to foment after the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Sinophobia culminated in the expulsion of Chinese in 1917 and border security in Arizona tightened as Chinese Mexicans fled.

The U.S.-Canadian borderland was another important space in the Chinese diaspora migration network. After the Chinese Exclusion Act passed, the Canadian border was as porous as the Mexican border; the Canadian government did not help the U.S. enforce its exclusion law. As a result, many Chinese were able to cross into Seattle via Canada by simply paying the Chinese poll tax. Kornel Chang studied the U.S.-Canada border in order to “[trace] the local and global circulation of people, ideas, and material goods that transformed Seattle and Vancouver into Pacific Rim cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (2012:21). Chang positioned British-controlled Canada and the U.S. as two empires that had set up Seattle and Vancouver as ‘imperial hubs,’ which linked the hinterlands—where extractive industries were—to global trade

and commerce. These links were made by Asian merchants and labor contractors that Chang refers to as ‘Asian go-betweens’ who dealt with Western capitalists in the British dominion of Canada and the United States. Chang shows how these middlemen used border-crossings to resist, but also at times, collaborate with Western powers.

#### *Future directions*

Researchers of Chinese American history have demonstrated how the racialization of Chinese migrants resulted in structural racism that negatively impacted their health, restricted their transnational movements, and made it impossible to become legal or cultural citizens of the U.S. Scholars have also highlighted how Chinese migrants resisted racism; for example, many Chinese adapted their transnational networks to bypass exclusionary laws. Future research should continue to focus on resistance to racist laws and discourse, but as Kornel Chang shows, studies of race and racism also need to examine how migrants might have colluded with those who sought to oppress or exploit Chinese. Chinese migrants were not always unified in how they dealt with racism and examining these heterogenous responses provides important insight into community divisions and conflict.

#### **Pearl River Delta studies**

Scholars, mostly from the disciplines of history and anthropology, have also studied Cantonese communities in the Pearl River Delta that Chinese migrants came from. China was inaccessible to researchers between 1949 and 1978 as it was under Communist rule, but anthropologist Maurice Freedman was able to write about lineage in

Guangdong Province and Fujian Province using secondary sources available to him at the time (Freedman 1958; 1966); his interest in this subject stemmed from his previous work on Chinese diaspora communities in Singapore as those emigres had come from Guangdong and Fujian. Freedman was the first to create a model for what an archetypal lineage should look like, which included shared agnatic descent from an apical ancestor, elaborate ancestral halls, corporate ownership of land, and written genealogies to mark lineage membership. Other researchers built on Freedman's work by examining Chinese villages in the Pearl River Delta that were accessible to researchers at the time—the New Territories in Hong Kong. James Watson conducted anthropological research in a New Territories village belonging to the Man lineage; many male villagers began immigrating to London in the mid-1950s to operate Chinese restaurants (J. L. Watson 1975). One of Watson's goals was to study the impact of immigration on lineage in the home village; he expected to see major changes to the lineage, but found that remittances sent by migrants were used to strengthen lineage traditions such as the remodeling of ancestral halls. Watson also briefly conducted fieldwork in London to study social change in the diasporic community and found that members of the Man lineage, unlike other Chinese migrants in London, were not involved in native-place associations or fraternal organizations because they already had a strong lineage in the home village that they could periodically return to.

When China opened to the world in 1978, researchers immediately began conducting fieldwork in rural villages. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, one of these projects was a joint collaboration between Zhongshan University in Guangdong and the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) that focused on the home villages of

Chinese migrants (Matthews 1979). Spearheaded by UCLA sociology professor and Asian American studies scholar Lucie Cheng, the project resulted in several publications that discussed the economic impact of remittances on families in the home village. June Mei (1980) provided preliminary findings of an oral history project in the villages of Xiudun and Qile in Doushan Town that had a history of immigration to the U.S. prior to 1949. The research team found that migrants primarily invested the money they had earned abroad on the construction of houses instead of agricultural land; in addition, migrants introduced English words and American products such as canned salmon and hand soap to the home village. Lucie Cheng and Yuzun Liu (1982) examined the construction of the Sunning Railway in Taishan, which was built between 1906 and 1920 with money donated by Chinese migrants. Most of the funds were raised through San Francisco's Ning Yung Association, a Taishanese native-place organization, which indicates the financial strength of Chinese in America and their economic impact on their hometowns. Renqiu Yu (1983) produced a paper that showed how educators in Taishan made primary education more accessible through a school construction boom in the 1920s and 1930s that was primarily funded by overseas donations. Working in Kaiping County, Yuen-fong Woon (1984) from the University of Victoria used ethnography and historic sources to study early twentieth century social change in the Guan lineage. Woon found that returning migrants established new villages in the 1920s, but they continued to perform rituals at the ancestral halls in their old villages; like Watson's study of the Man lineage, she concluded that migrants actually helped to maintain the conservative social structure of the lineage rather than alter it.



In addition to researchers from Zhongshan University, scholars from other universities in China also took an interest in the study of Chinese emigration. In the early 1980s, Jinan University in Guangdong Province established the Overseas Chinese Research Institute; one of their studies focused on schools built with contributions from Chinese abroad and they found that the earliest was Jinxian School in Zhuhai County, which was built in 1872 by Yung Wing—the first Chinese student to graduate from an American university (Him Mark Lai 1984). More recently, Wuyi University in Jiangmen, Guangdong, which houses the Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center, has produced important research on emigration and the home village. For example, Jinhua (Selia) Tan conducted extensive research on multi-story watchtowers (*diaolou*) in Kaiping County that were built with overseas money and the scholarship formed the basis for the inscription of five watchtowers and their associated villages into the UNESCO World Heritage List (Tan 2007).

In the next section, I discuss two key topics that Chinese diaspora scholars who conduct fieldwork or archival research in China have focused on: the impact of overseas emigration on village life and transnational institutions that facilitated the transpacific circulation of goods and information.

### *Hometowns and Home Villages*

Research on the hometowns of diasporic Chinese have provided important information on the impact of mass emigration on villages in the Pearl River Delta. Lucie Cheng and Yuzun Liu studied the impact of the Xinning Railroad on Taishan County's economy and found that the first phase of its construction between 1906 and 1909 led to

the creation of entirely new towns such as Gongyi (Cheng and Liu 1982). Tan's research on the architecture history of remittance-built houses Kaiping County revealed that houses became decorated with increasingly elaborate ornamentation over time and noted that some changes, such as Western-style arches above windows, were diagnostic (Tan 2013b; 2013a). Researchers have also examined the transpacific connections between Zhongshan County and Australia. Anthropologist Denis Byrne studied the Pearl River Delta's cultural heritage and argues that the houses built by migrants in the area should be considered Chinese Australian heritage because they are connected by transnational flows of money and ideas (Byrne 2016a). Christopher Cheng researched schools in Zhongshan funded with remittances from Australia and found that they are material representations of a period of time when education was linked to modernity—the result of the transnational flow of ideas (Cheng 2020) Historian Michael Williams, on the other hand, argues that *qiaoxiang* is more useful lens than transnationalism for studying Chinese Australian history because most migrants intended to return to their home villages permanently, which is why they made huge investments in their hometowns (see Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion). Henry Yu and Stephanie Chan (2017) examined Chinese migration from the Pearl River Delta to rural Canada through demographic data generated from the bureaucratic enforcement of anti-Chinese laws and found that family chain migration was a feature early twentieth century migration to rural Canada. Individual aspirations, however, led migrants to disburse into small towns where they were operated Chinese restaurants and were often the only Chinese in town.

### *Transnational Institutions*

Historical research on private transnational institutions has generated important information on how goods, people, information, and money moved across the Pacific. The Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong, for example, played a critical role in *jianyun* (撿運), the repatriation of bones to the home village; most Chinese migrants wanted to be buried next their ancestors in the home village. According to Sinn, “*Jianyun* was an activity that reflected the pervasive, multileveled, and intricate economic and social networks that straddled California, Hong Kong, and South China.” Bone repatriation, however, was not the Tung Wah Hospital’s primary function; it was established in 1869 and first operated as a charity hospital then as a homeless shelter. Sinn argues that the hospital facilitated bone repatriation partly because Tung Wah’s board members were Chinese merchants involved in import-export firms that served overseas Chinese communities or shipping companies that sent migrants abroad, and they likely profited commercially from the vast amount of bones being shipped back to China (Sinn 1989). The board members’ overseas connections helped maintain this complicated network as the Tung Wah Hospital received bones from all over the Chinese diaspora and went to great lengths to ensure the smooth repatriation of bones to various locations in southern China.

Another important transnational institution in the Chinese diaspora were *jinshanzhuang*, or Gold Mountain firms, which were private institutions that were established in the 1850s as businesses that served Chinese migrants in two important ways: 1) by moving goods across the Pacific and 2) transferring money and letters from abroad to villages in China. These firms were located in Hong Kong, but had branches near migrants’ home villages and in diasporic communities. They served Chinese

migrants from the same county or specific villages, which is also why Hong Kong-based *jinshanzhuang* provided additional services that included accommodations for migrants on their way to U.S., and locating ‘paper son’ slots for those seeking to enter the U.S. during the exclusion period (Sinn 2011). *Jinshanzhuang* were based on import-export firms called *nanbeihang* (南北行), which began by specializing in the transport of goods between northern and southern China; they later expanded operations to Southeast Asia because of Chinese immigration to that region. *Jinshanzhuang* and *nanbeihang* served overseas Chinese communities, and many became specialized in certain goods; some firms only supplied herbs, some dealt in bulk goods like rice and sugar, and others were importers and exporters of popular commodities such as beans, teas, wines, preserved food, and fertilizer (Hsu 2006).

Gold mountain firms also provided important services to overseas Chinese who needed to send remittances and letters back to their families in China. This remittance-letter combination was referred to as *qiaopi* (侨批), although the Chinese living in the counties of Taishan, Kaiping, Xinhui, and Enping called them *yinxin* (银信), which translates to “silver plus letters”. Chinese migrants relied on these services because there were no banks or post offices in the home villages. In the 1920s and 1930s, “both government officials and private merchants attempted to develop Western-style banks and postal systems to wrest the remittance business from *jinshanzhuang*” (Hsu 2006:28). Chinese living abroad, however, continued to send *yinxin* via import-export firms in the early 20th century because using state-controlled postal services and banking institutions would mean that the money and the letter, which often contained instructions on how to use the money, would arrive at different times. Liu and Benton argue that remittance

firms should not be characterized as a modern type of transnational capitalism because they were private enterprises based on shared dialect, native place, or village; they note that *qioapi* and *yinxin* are prime examples Chinese modernities that existed outside of Western models of capitalism.

### *Future Directions*

Research such as Madeline Hsu's work on the transnational lives of Taishan migrants in the U.S. and China have had a major impact in the discipline Asian American Studies and contributed to the transnational turn within that field (see Chapter 2). More recent scholarship has refined the methodologies for carrying out research on Chinese transnationalism by examining remittance-built architecture in the home village and the documentary record on transnational institutions and networks. Few researchers, however, have returned to Watson's ethnographic approach of studying one specific home village and the diasporic community that villagers immigrated; in addition, scholars of transnational migration have moved away from lineage as an analytic for studying continuity and change in the lives of Chinese migrants. Anthropological methods and concepts such as kinship can contribute to studies of transnationalism; for example, in this dissertation, I examine the ways that lineage ties were maintained by tracing the relationships between migrants who associated with one another in two Southern California Chinatowns and examining how new villages such as Wo Hing were established.

## Chinese Diaspora Archaeology

Chinese diaspora archaeology is a subfield of historical archaeology that examines the material culture of the global dispersal of Chinese from Guangdong, China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most research has centered in the Western U.S., where Chinatowns or Chinese work camps were once located, but archaeological sites in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have also been investigated. One of the first archaeological investigations of the Chinese diaspora in the U.S. was Paul Chace and William Evans' surface collection of artifacts from Donner Summit in the Sierra Nevada in 1966 and 1967. Donner Summit was the site of a Chinese labor camp associated with the construction of the first Transcontinental Railroad. More archaeological investigations of Chinese diaspora sites were conducted following the passage of federal historic preservation laws in the late 1960s. The results of some of these investigations were published in the edited volume *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Culture History* (Schuyler 1980), which featured four small book chapters on artifacts commonly found at Chinatown sites, such as gaming artifacts and opium paraphernalia. The first publication to bring together archaeological research on Chinese diaspora sites from outside of U.S. was Priscilla Wegars' (1993) edited volume, *Overseas Chinese Archaeology* because it included one chapter on a Chinese mining site in New Zealand.

Research on Chinese diaspora archaeology in Australasia began to take off in the 1990s. The first overview of Australian archaeological research on Chinese sites was written by Peter Bell. Bell (1996) noted that the first comprehensive archaeological investigation of a Chinese site in Australia dated to 1982, but he finds little research on

this topic and attributes it to three reasons: 1) the study of Chinese Australians falls outside of the objectives of a British-centered history, 2) there has been no academic-oriented research on the archaeology of Chinese in Australia, and 3) no theoretical models have been developed to study Chinese sites. In addition, Bell pointed out that much of the research that had already been conducted was too narrowly focused on temples, that there was lack of information on sites in New South Wales or Victoria, and what little had been published was difficult to access. More research on sites in Australia did follow and one important work was Jane Lydon's book (1999), *Many inventions': the Chinese in The Rocks, 1890-1930*, which focused on an urban Chinese community in The Rocks, Australia. In 2003, the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology published a thematic journal focused on Chinese sites in Australia and New Zealand, where researchers focused on a range of material culture, from ceramics to standing architecture.

The thematic journal titled "The Archaeology of Chinese Immigrant and Chinese American Communities" edited by Barbara Voss and Bryn Williams was another major publication on Chinese diaspora archaeology (Williams and Voss 2008). This publication brought together research with geographic variation—from research on a Chinese cemetery in Hawaii to a Chinatown in Deadwood, South Dakota. Archaeological research on Chinese diaspora sites in Western Canada was also taking place in the 2000s, most notably the excavation of a Chinese cannery site by Douglas Ross (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013). Artifacts from Ross' site matched those found at other Chinese diaspora sites, indicating that provisions given to Chinese laborers used similar transpacific networks to import goods from Hong Kong and China. Research on Chinese labor continued in the

2010s. In 2015, Barbara Voss edited a thematic journal dedicated to the study of Chinese railroad workers in North America. Voss (2015) notes that she brought together scholars and cultural resource management professionals who had conducted archaeological research on railroad work camps to examine all aspects of the lives of Chinese railroad workers, from what they ate to looking at health through skeletal analyses of Chinese individuals buried in a cemetery.

More recently, archaeologists have turned their attention to transnational research. For example, Voss called for archaeologists to develop transpacific archaeology using Chinese diaspora archaeology as an example (2016). The results of the Cangdong Village Project demonstrated the methods that could be employed for conducting archaeological research in the home villages of Chinese migrants (Voss and Kennedy 2017; Voss et al. 2018; Voss, Kennedy, and Tan 2019). Contrary to long-held ideas in Chinese diaspora archaeology that home villages were bounded by tradition, artifacts from the surface collection and excavation at Cangdong Village indicate that villagers were active participants in the global economy and consumed mass-produced goods such as British whitewares, in addition to the Chinese tablewares that were expected to be found.

The book *Chinese Diaspora Archaeology in North America* (2020), edited by Chelsea Rose and Ryan Kennedy, is the newest contribution to the field. Several book chapters provide important contributions to the archaeology of interracial relations by examining Chinese-Indigenous alliances, the interactions of Chinatown residents with white missionary women, and the lived experiences of Chinese in the Southern U.S. during the Jim Crow-era (Sunseri 2020; Voss 2020; Gray 2020). Building on Douglas Ross' work on Chinese and Japanese transnationalism, the co-editors argue that the



discipline should be called “Chinese diaspora archaeology” rather than “overseas Chinese archaeology” to highlight the diasporic ties that Chinese in North America maintained to China (Kennedy and Rose 2020). For example, my book chapter outlines the research potential of studying both the diasporic communities that Chinese migrants lived and the home villages they came from to understand the materiality of Chinese transnationalism (Ng 2020). Most of the other contributors in the edited volume, however, maintain a focus on Chinese diaspora communities in North America.

In the next sections, I provide a critical analysis of the approaches that archaeologists have used in their analyses of material culture from across the Chinese diaspora.

#### *Critiques of Acculturation Models*

Early researchers in Chinese diaspora archaeology often framed their research questions around acculturation, and analyzed material culture to measure the degree to which Chinese migrants were retaining Chinese material practices or adopting Euroamerican material goods into daily life. Voss provided the most thorough critique of the acculturation model, arguing that the acculturation paradigm rests on the assumption that Chinese migrants constantly faced pressures to assimilate to Euroamerican society and that this pressure was resisted through the maintenance of cultural ‘traditions’ from China, which is evident in the archaeological record because of the presence of goods manufactured in China. These archaeologists attempted to quantify the degree of acculturation through artifact ratios; for example, a ceramic assemblage from a Chinese site with higher proportions of Euroamerican manufactured wares to Chinese wares

would indicate that the Chinese were succumbing to acculturative pressures. Others interpreted faunal assemblages with a higher ratio of pork to beef as indicative of resistance to assimilation because a cultural preference for pork was stronger than the fact that beef was more readily available. Voss finds this model of culture change to be unproductive because it posits that Chinese migrants were constantly maintaining cultural boundaries when in reality, Chinese diaspora communities were adaptable and often had interactions with non-Chinese neighbors (2005:432).

Various scholars have presented other models for studying the culture change. Archaeologist Kelly Fong advocates for a “decentering model,” which would incorporate the voices of descendants into Chinese diaspora archaeology; this emic perspective would also help check against stereotypes and biases in the literature (2007:117). Jane Lydon (1999)

also rejects the acculturation paradigm as essentializing and unidirectional. In her archaeological study on the Chinese in The Rocks, Australia, she finds that “Chinese sojourners fashioned a range of multiple identities against the authority of a sinocentric core, one the one hand, and the hostility of the foreign ‘host’ society, on the other”; in short, Chinese identities were fluid and contingent (1999:12). She uses the idea of pidgin English to conceptualize the interaction between whites and Chinese in the Rocks and to show that “the cultural encounter is inventive” (Lydon 1999:13). ‘Pidgin objects’ are objects that are labeled as ‘European’ and ‘Chinese,’ but are manipulated by both Chinese and Europeans; this means that there is the “potential for it to form a shared, commonly—if differently—understood meaning” (1999:20). For example, a statue of Guanyin represents the Buddhist goddess of mercy for Chinese, but for Europeans, a

Guanyin statue reminds them of the Virgin Mary. In a Catholic chapel in Fujian, China, a Guanyin statue was actually used to represent the virgin and child, so this object represents a shared understanding of meanings (Lydon 1999:59).

Similarly, analyses of objects from a merchant building in Sacramento Chinatown show how elite Chinese might have manipulated objects in their daily lives. Praetzellis and Praetzellis found fragments of Chinese export wares near a merchant building; the Chinese merchant who owned these wares was not necessarily aspiring to Victorian values of gentility; instead, he was likely “manipulating genteel material culture for the purpose of impression management” when entertaining prominent members of white society (2001:649). The latter two case studies provide examples of interpretations of culture change and cultural interaction in Chinese diaspora communities that avoid relying on a simplistic assimilation paradigm.

### *Racism and Racialization*

Archaeological studies have highlighted the racist environment that Chinese migrants lived in, particularly through ordinances targeted at the Chinese. R. Scott Baxter (2008) showed that there was material evidence that the Chinese residents of the Woolen Mill Chinatown in San Jose made attempts to resist discrimination. San Jose city officials sought to prevent Chinese from rebuilding their Chinatown, and an ordinance was passed to requiring new residences to be tied to the new city sewer system, which would be prohibitively expensive; archaeological excavations of the Woolen Mill Chinatown showed that the Chinese came up with “an elaborate system of wood and ceramic drains and pipes that carried waste out of the houses” from Chinatown to the main city (Baxter

2008:31). Archaeological research can also speak to the biases in the written record. A zooarchaeological study of the ecological impact of Chinese abalone fishing on California's Channel Islands interpreted the results against a backdrop of racism (Braje, Erlandson, and Rick 2007). In 1910, California's Board of Fish and Game Commissioners passed an ordinance that limited the size of abalone shells that could be harvested; ostensibly, this was passed as a conservation effort, but Fish and Game were targeting Chinese fisherman who dominated the abalone industry. Chinese fishermen were routinely accused of harvesting abalone without regard to size, but measurements of abalone shells discarded at Chinese abalone sites indicate that they were harvesting abalone within the legal limits (Braje et al. 2007).

Archaeologists have also begun to examine racism in the context of multiethnic communities. Van Bueren (2008) noted that Chinese and indigenous workers lived in segregated housing, but found it difficult to determine the interracial interactions between the Chinese and Native American laborers on the farm because their material assemblages are mixed; the archaeology of multiethnic communities has the potential to shed light on "social alliances between them" (2008:94). Sunseri (2015) explored this topic through her study of a multiethnic lumber mill in eastern California. Chinese, Paiute, and Euroamerican laborers all worked at Mono Mills, and archaeological investigations reveal that despite living in segregated areas, the Chinese and Native American laborers were exchanging goods with one another. Sunseri argued that these alliances were formed to negotiate Mono Mill's labor regime. Chinese diaspora archaeologists should look for evidence of interracial solidarity as a form of resistance against racism. Charles Orser Jr. (2007) provided the most theoretically grounded

framework for studying the archaeology of racism by employing the concept of racialization. He argued that “the artificial construction of race, racial markers, and the color line...means that the racialization process is amenable to archaeological examination” (2007:169). Using an assemblage from a Chinese laundry excavated in Stockton, California as a case study, Orser speculates that Chinese workers might have been using store-bought American medicines to avoid seeing white doctors. He is careful to note, however, that several medicine bottles were re-used to hold bluing dye for laundering clothes, which indicates that other lines of evidence should be used to support archaeological interpretations of racialization.

#### *Diasporic and Transnational Perspectives*

In an article outlining new directions for Chinese diaspora archaeology, Barbara Voss and Rebecca Allen argued that the field can make significant contributions to historical archaeology if scholars adopted transnational frameworks and conducted multi-sited fieldwork. Voss and Allen noted that archaeologists had yet to trace “complex economic, demographic, and cultural webs that have bound Chinese and U.S. communities together since the 1850s” (2008:19). Since then, archaeologists have heeded their call and examined the ties that Chinese diaspora communities have to China through theoretically oriented paradigms that rely on anthropological concepts such as diaspora and transnationalism. Edward González-Tennant (2011) argued that a diasporic approach should be used to study the linkages between the homeland and host communities. González-Tennant states that a diasporic framework “emphasizes the situational and complex connections between intra-group difference [among Chinese immigrants] and

the numerous overseas locations” (2011:511). In other words, gathering knowledge on the various counties in Guangdong—the homeland of Chinese migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—can shed light on the heterogeneity of the homeland prior to migration, and gaining baseline information on various emigrant areas in Guangdong contributes to understanding the diversity of the Chinese diaspora. A diasporic framework also forces archaeologists to conduct research at more than one site, which allows researchers to ask questions such as how differences among Chinese residents, such as dialect, are maintained in the host society. Researchers should heed González-Tennant’s calls for multi-sited and comparative archaeology, but I argue the ‘county’ is too large of a scale of analysis for examining the homeland. This is because in the U.S., the overwhelming majority of migrants came from Taishan county; I argue in this dissertation that an examination of specific villages or village clusters provides a better resolution for this analysis. Douglas Ross (2013) also used a diasporic framework in his dissertation research on identity and the consumer habits of Chinese and Japanese fish cannery laborers, who lived in separate work housing in British Columbia, Canada. In his analysis of the artifact assemblages, he found that both groups used tablewares and consumed alcoholic beverages imported from their home countries; therefore, dining and alcohol consumption was an important way of maintaining a diasporic identity for both Japanese and Chinese migrants.

Transnationalism is another framework for understanding the material culture of the Chinese diaspora. Ross explains that he is able to identify objects with a “complicated transnational history” by analyzing an artifact’s cultural origins rather than the object’s country of origin. He argues that typical archaeological categorizations of artifacts by

country of manufacture obscure their transnational and fluid origins (2017:200). For example, Japanese and Western beer bottles were both found at the Japanese housing area; Ross' research indicates that beer was introduced to Japan during the Meiji Restoration, which means that beer was indigenized before Japanese immigration to North America (Ross 2010). The transnational history of beer in Japan complicates the consumption of alcohol; drinking beer from a Western-style beer bottle might not be as new and novel as it seems, and Western beer consumption might have played a role in helping Japanese workers maintain diasporic identities. Ross' research provides an important intervention in how archaeologists have uncritically categorized objects by their country of origin, rather than researching their cultural origins in the homeland.

Denis Byrne's Chinese Australian transnational project examined the tangible heritage of Chinese migration and introduces the concept of a "heritage corridor" which is "the idea that the physical record of migration is not merely distributed or situated transnationally but is oriented that way" (2016b:6). Byrne argues that remittance-built houses or ancestral halls in Guangdong reside in a "transnational space" even though buildings are fixed-in-space; the affective ties that Chinese migrants have to family in the home village play a role in their transnational orientations. Byrne states that buildings are 'distributed' transnationally because they are agentic and involved in human-nonhuman collectives' (2016:15). For example, passé red-brick houses can cause embarrassment for a Chinese migrant, so new buildings must be constructed. This transnational perspective helps archaeologists rethink the nation as a unit of analysis, and the heritage corridor concept provides a framework for examining the agency of buildings.

Voss (2016) argued that transnational archaeology fieldwork can expand the range of research questions that archaeologists have tackled. In terms of geography and chronology, archaeological research in U.S. tends to frame questions that are site-specific, thereby limiting archaeological analyses to a short period of time. Including the home village as a part of Chinese migration expands the geographic and chronological boundaries of Chinese diaspora archaeology because migration from the villages in the Pearl River Delta to North America spanned over hundred years. Examining the home village can also provide insight into landscape and architecture, because it can lead to studies that explore “the emergence of cultural hybridism”; for example, the dense clustering of some Chinatowns might be attributed to influences from Chinese building traditions (Voss 2016:161). Voss also argues that archaeologists cannot assume that assemblages in the Chinese diaspora are reflective of the types of goods Chinese migrants used in the homeland; as a result Voss created a joint collaboration with Wuyi University and the Guangdong Bureau of Cultural Relics to conduct the first archaeological investigation of the home village to understand the impact of migration and remittances on the home village over time (Voss and Kennedy 2017; Voss et al. 2018; Voss et al. 2019).

### *Future Directions*

While early studies in Chinese diaspora archaeology relied on acculturation paradigms to frame research questions, current scholarship has moved towards theoretical models that center transnational ties to the homeland or intercultural exchanges in order to understand culture change. Unlike acculturation models, these frameworks



acknowledge that Chinese identities are fluid, consumption choices can change, and that objects can be manipulated. In addition, Chinese diaspora archaeology has much to contribute to the archaeology of racialization and archaeological investigations of pluralistic communities are one avenue to understanding how Chinese resisted structural racism. Future archaeological research should also continue focus on the home villages in order to collect more baseline data on what life was like in China for transnational Chinese migrants and their families and how that changed over time. Previous field research has centered on the U.S. and Australia, but archaeological investigations in Latin American countries will provide a fuller understanding of the diversity of the Chinese diaspora.

## **Conclusion**

My interest in the archaeology of Chinese transnationalism brings together scholarship on the Pearl River Delta, Chinese American studies, and Chinese diaspora archaeology. These three research areas have occasionally intersected, but have never fully been in conversation with one another. Scholars in Chinese American studies and Chinese diaspora archaeology should expand their research on diasporic communities by including research questions that center lineage and kinship relationships, which were so important to Chinese migrants in their home villages. Chinese American studies has illuminated the heterogeneity of the Chinese immigrant experience through examinations of migration networks that spanned from China and Hong Kong to various cities and towns in the Americas; Chinese diaspora archaeology would benefit from growing its geographic research areas, which have centered on North America and Australasia. At the

same time, it is archaeologists who are doing some of the most innovative work in Chinese diaspora studies because their archaeological projects focus on the transnational lives of Chinese migrants through comparative archaeological analyses of the home villages and diasporic sites. The results of those archaeological investigations, however, will not be innovative unless the interpretation of archaeological assemblages are in conversation with key concepts, themes, and methods used in Pearl River Delta studies, Chinese American studies, and Chinese diaspora archaeology.

## Chapter 4

### Historical Background: San Bernardino Chinatown and Riverside Chinatown

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the history of the various Chinese communities—often called Chinese quarters or Chinatowns—that formed in the cities of Riverside and San Bernardino in Southern California. Previous research on these communities include two volumes dedicated to the history and excavation of the Riverside Chinatown (GBF 1987a) and a report on the history and archaeology of the San Bernardino Chinatown (Costello, Hallaran, and Warren 2004). Both reports rely on historic newspaper accounts to create a narrative about Chinatown and its residents, but many of these articles contain racist language. To mitigate this bias, I have included Chinese voices through underutilized oral histories with descendants and newly available materials such as the Chinese Exclusion Act case files held at the National Archives at Riverside and San Bruno. As a result, I am able to present a diasporic history of transnational Chinese who lived and labored in San Bernardino and Riverside.

Previous historical treatments have examined these two Chinatowns separately, but in this chapter I study them together because evidence indicates the two communities were closely linked to one another. First, I show how the San Bernardino Chinatown (1878-1941) and Riverside Chinatown (1889-1941) came into existence because of anti-Chinese exclusion rather than through a preference to concentrate in one area. In addition, I examine the diasporic connections between the two Chinese enclaves to illuminate the networks that facilitated Chinese business relationships in Southern

California and transnationalism between the U.S. and China. I focus on people with the surname Wong from the Yinlong lineage who had strong diasporic connections to both the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns. Through archival research in Southern California and oral histories with Chinese American descendants, I am able to piece together the migration histories of many of the Chinatown residents to understand the formation of Chinese merchant store partnerships and the development of hundreds of acres of Chinese vegetable gardens.

First, I discuss the history and geography of San Bernardino valley to provide the setting for the growth of the region's Chinese communities, which were primarily located in Redlands, San Bernardino, and Riverside. Next, I discuss how Chinese laundries were evicted from the city centers of San Bernardino and Riverside, which led to the establishment of the San Bernardino Chinatown in 1878 on Third Street between B and C streets, and the construction of the Riverside Chinatown in 1885 on Tequesquite and Brockton. I also discuss the lineage ties that helped facilitate business relationships and return migration, and the role of transnational institutions and vegetable gardens in contributing to the longevity of the two Chinatowns.

Historically, the Chinese referred to Riverside as “Lip Ba Sai” (笠巴洗) and to San Bernardino as “Saan Baan Den Ah” (山班剪打) (Wong 1913). Read without context, the Chinese characters appear to be random words strung together (e.g. the literal translation of 笠巴洗 is “Cover Cling Wash”), but in the Siyi dialect, Lip Ba Sai and Saan Baan Den Ah are comprehensible as transliterations. Immigration records and grave markers indicate that most of the Chinatown residents came from the counties of Taishan

and Kaiping; the Wongs from the Yinlong lineage came from villages in northern Taishan County.



Map 4.1. San Bernardino and Riverside in San Bernardino County by Rand McNally, 1888; the inset shows the towns of San Bernardino and Riverside. Courtesy of Stanford University David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. Public domain.

## **Methods and Sources of Data for Historical Reanalysis**

This chapter integrates a number of sources of data that were not used in previous historical analyses of the San Bernardino Chinatown (Thompson 1978; Costello et al. 2004) and Riverside Chinatown (GBF 1987a; 1987b). These sources include 1) Chinese Exclusion files held at the National Archives, 2) oral history interviews with descendants, and 3) digitized historic newspaper articles. Chinese immigration records were not used by Riverside Chinatown researchers in the 1980s because they were unavailable at the time, but San Bernardino Chinatown researchers did not consult these files for unknown reasons. While the Riverside Chinatown researchers conducted oral history interviews with descendants, these were limited to a small number who lived in Southern California; I have conducted interviews with geographically dispersed descendants, including those who only speak the Taishan dialect. Lastly, the digitization of historic newspapers in recent years has made it easier to access newspaper articles that discuss individual Chinese residents and major events in each Chinatown. Drawing on multiple sources of data to understand each community helps to mitigate biases in each dataset.

### *Chinese Exclusion Files at the National Archives*

The Chinese Exclusion Act created a large archive of immigration records on Chinese migrants who entered the U.S. between 1882 and 1943. Each time a Chinese migrant landed at a U.S. port of entry, they were interrogated about their personal history, mainly to ensure they held the immigration status they had claimed on their forms. Scholars note that Chinese women were more heavily scrutinized than men because the 1875 Page Act had banned Chinese women who might be immigrating as prostitutes,

which partially accounts for why fewer women than men entered the country (Lee 2003a). Immigration files were also generated when Chinese migrants sought return certificates to ensure that they could return to the U.S. after visiting China; these migrants were interviewed by local immigration officers who would cross reference answers with files mailed by immigration officials in San Francisco where most Chinese migrants had landed when they first came to America. Return certificates for laborers were granted if migrants could prove that they were owed a sum of at least \$1,000 by individuals residing in the U.S.; those who owed this money—usually other Chinese migrants—were also interviewed and their transcripts are included in these files. Historian Adam McKeown notes that while Chinese immigration inspectors found many of the loan amounts dubious, most ended up approving these certificates, particularly after 1905, when President Theodore Roosevelt ordered the Bureau of Immigration to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act “without harshness” (2003:386).

Chinese merchants who wanted to obtain a return certificate were exempt from the Chinese Exclusion Act, but still had to prove that they had not been involved in any manual labor. The proof required included obtaining the testimony of their Chinese business partners and securing affidavits from at least two white people testifying that the Chinese migrant seeking a merchant return certificate had indeed maintained their merchant status while in America. Immigration records related to return certificates for Chinese laborers and merchants residing in Southern California are now part of the Chinese Exclusion Act Files held at the National Archives in Riverside. Riverside Chinatown researchers did not access these files because they were unavailable for examination during the 1980s and for reasons not stated, researchers for the San

Bernardino Chinatown did not conduct historical research at the National Archives (Costello et al. 2004).

In the summer of 2019, I visited the National Archives in Riverside and located immigration files for Chinese migrants in the San Bernardino valley that had been identified in previous historical analyses. These files include information on Wong Nim, part-owner of the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns; Wong Ho Lung (also called Wong Ho Leun and George Wong), the last owner of the Riverside Chinatown; and several merchants associated with the Gee Chung store in San Bernardino Chinatown.

I was able to locate the files of other Chinese migrants relevant for my study by requesting files with the given name “Sai” or “Chun” and surname “Wong” because they were likely to be from the Gom Benn village cluster. When pulling these specific files, I also examined immigration files within the same box to locate more individuals with the surname Wong who had associations with the San Bernardino or Riverside. Other immigration files on Chinese residents of the San Bernardino valley were accessed via newly digitized Chinese Exclusion Act file records that were uploaded to the National Archives at Riverside online database; this work was spearheaded by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California in Los Angeles (Bentz 2020:2). Entering search terms such as “San Bernardino” and “Riverside” enabled me to locate immigration records for dozens of Chinese migrants, many of whom had the surname Wong; these records date from 1893 to 1899 because only the earliest records have been digitized so far. Unlike the Chinese Exclusion Files from the early twentieth century, these late nineteenth century records rarely contain information about the specific villages that Chinese migrants came from, but they do provide information about occupation,



residences, dates of immigration, and interviews with friends or business partners. As a result, I have been able to compile a database of over 150 Chinese migrants who lived in the San Bernardino and Riverside area.

The personal information provided by Chinese migrants in these files, however, must be checked against other sources of information such as oral histories and genealogies because many Chinese migrants adopted false identities in order to immigrate during the Chinese exclusion period. These Chinese migrants were called “paper sons” because they did not have the exempt status to immigrate to the U.S.; they purchased false immigration papers and circumvented the Chinese Exclusion Act by claiming to be the son of a U.S. citizen. As a result, historian Erika Lee argues that “much of the personal information recorded in the files can be considered unreliable” and cannot be used to create family genealogies (Lee 2003:6). I have found, however, that many files provide true personal information because they are congruent with oral history interviews that I have conducted with descendants and with family trees in the lineage genealogy book. Historian Haiming Liu found this to be true in his study of the Chang family who lived transnational lives between a village in Kaiping and Los Angeles. Liu checked information in the immigration records against a large archive of family correspondence between the U.S. and China and found that much of the personal information matched. In fact, Liu argues that the Chinese Exclusion Act files have the potential to contribute to a “detailed social history of Chinese immigrants” that includes the social landscape of migrants in their home village because they were asked about the multiple names they possessed, villages, neighbors, ancestral halls, schools, and markets

(2005:9). These immigration records also reveal social relationships in the U.S. because they required the testimony of Chinese associates as well as white people.

### *Oral History Interviews*

I conducted oral histories with six descendants of two Chinese migrants associated with the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. I interviewed four siblings who were the grandchildren of Wong Sam, a merchant in the Gee Chung store: Don Wong, Janlee Wong, Linda Huang, and Julie Duncan. Janlee had been previously interviewed for *Chinese Americans in Riverside: Historic Context Statement*, but his interview focused on his family's mid-twentieth century experience operating a Chinese restaurant in Riverside and not their earlier history in the San Bernardino Chinatown. In addition, three of his siblings had not been previously interviewed and all provided important stories, family artifacts, and family photos that I have used throughout this dissertation. In addition, I interviewed their cousin Mildred Cheung, also a grandchild of Wong Sam, who was born in Wo Hing village in 1935. In 2020, I was also able to interview Shook Hing Lau, the granddaughter of Wong Shoon Jung, a Riverside vegetable farmer. Shook Hing was born in Wo Hing village in 1933 and I interviewed her online using Zoom, a video conference platform, because she was visiting Guangzhou at the time. The latter two interviews were conducted in Taishanese (also see Chapter 7).

Historian Judy Yung notes the power of oral history interviews to fill in gaps in Chinese American historiography. In her book *Unbound Voices*, which focuses on recovering the history of Chinese women, Yung notes that the oral histories she conducted using her bilingual English-Chinese background help to challenge imposed

stereotypes of Chinese women as exotic or passive victims. At the same time, she argues that oral histories “need to be substantiated and contextualized with archival research” and that she also drew on published and unpublished writings by Chinese women, including poems, essays, and editorials (Yung 1999:512).

In 2018, I submitted an Institutional Review Board protocol at Stanford University to conduct these interviews and received an exemption because they were categorized as oral histories. Each individual signed a consent form that allowed me to use their interviews for my dissertation and any related publications; with their permission, I was also allowed to photograph their personal archives and take their portraits.

#### *Newspaper Articles*

In recent years, companies focusing on genealogical research have digitized historic newspapers to make it easy for the average person to collect biographical information for their family trees. Taking advantage of these digitization efforts, I signed up for two online historic newspaper archives to search for and collect stories related to the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. Digitized newspaper articles from the *San Bernardino County Sun*, *Daily Courier*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Los Angeles Herald* are available on the Newspapers.com database, which is owned by Ancestry, while the *Riverside Daily Enterprise*, *Riverside Daily Press*, *Press and Horticulturalist*, and *Riverside Independent Enterprise* are available on Genealogybank.com. The obituaries I found for Chinese provided information on age, occupation, how long the person had been living in town, when they first came to California, and where they were interred.

Most articles on the Chinese, however, were biased; Chinese residents were called Chinamen, Celestials, or chinks and newspaper editors in the San Bernardino and Riverside were known to support and promote anti-Chinese rhetoric (Lawton 1987a). The digitization of these newspaper records allow me to track how anti-Chinese rhetoric changed over time and how the racial harassment of Chinese shifted from organizing anti-Chinese meetings to police raids on the Chinatowns.

### **Geography and History of the San Bernardino Valley**

The counties of Riverside and San Bernardino form a metropolitan area that is now called the Inland Empire because of its geographic location in the interior of southern California and inland from Los Angeles. San Bernardino and Redlands are the largest cities in San Bernardino County, while Riverside is the largest in Riverside County; all three cities, however, were part of San Bernardino County in the mid- to late-nineteenth centuries. Geographically, the Inland Empire is located in the San Bernardino Valley—an area bordered by the eastern San Gabriel Mountains and the San Bernardino Mountains in the north, the San Jacinto mountains on the east, and Pomona valley in the west. The Santa Ana River is another important feature of this landscape as it is the largest river system in California; the river begins high in the San Bernardino mountains, flows through San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, and ends at the Pacific Ocean.

The first people to live in the San Bernardino Valley were Native groups that included the Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseños, and the Maarenga'yam and Yuhaviatam (Serrano). These indigenous communities were established 12,000 to 13,000 years ago (Carpio 2019:24). Historically, the Maarenga'yam and Yuhaviatam mainly lived in the

San Bernardino mountains, while the Cahuilla were concentrated in the San Jacinto mountains. The Cajon Pass, located in the Mojave Desert, was an important mountain pass for Indigenous people crossing into the San Bernardino Valley from the east. A Franciscan friar named Francisco Garcés from New Mexico also used this pass in 1776 when crossing the Mojave Desert to reach Mission Gabriel near present-day Los Angeles (Ocegueda 2017). During the period of Spanish colonialism (1769-1821), this path linking New Mexico and the San Bernardino Valley would become well-established and became known as the Old Spanish Trail. While there was never a centralized mission in the San Bernardino Valley, present-day Riverside was incorporated into Mission San Gabriel in 1771; under Spanish colonial rule, Indigenous groups in this region were dispossessed of their lands and forced into live and labor in Spanish missions (Carpio 2019).

Spanish colonial rule ended when Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 and took control of California. The Mexican government secularized the missions between 1834 and 1846 and this became an important historic period in the San Bernardino Valley because Californios were given land grants during this era; Indigenous communities, however, largely remained dispossessed. José del Carmen Lúgo, part of an elite Californio ranching family, was granted Rancho San Bernardino by the Mexican government in 1842 and this land would become the site of present-day San Bernardino (Janin and Carlson 2017).

After the Mexican-American War (1848), California was ceded by Mexico to the United States. California officially became a U.S. state in 1850 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago ensured that Mexican land grants were honored. During the Gold

Rush, Spanish and Mexican land grant ranchos in the San Bernardino Valley were extremely profitable because cattle raised were sent north to sell to the mining areas (Patterson 1971). These cattle ranching operations soon went into decline, however, because of droughts. Lúgo sold Rancho San Bernardino to the Mormons, who had come into Southern California from Utah through the Cajon Pass. The Mormons established a fort in 1851 and the site would later become the city of San Bernardino (Costello et al. 2004). The Mormon settlement in San Bernardino lasted less than a decade because many of its leaders were recalled by Brigham Young to Utah and others in the colony also followed; nearly one-third of the Mormon population, however, chose to leave the church and stayed (Lyman 1996:348).

During the Mexican period, the land that would become the town of Riverside was called Rancho Jurupa and owned by Louis Robidoux, a large landowner. Robidoux, also sometimes spelled Rubidoux, had purchased the rancho in 1848 and used it for raising livestock and farming; he was a wealthy migrant from New Mexico and one of six brothers of French ancestry originally from St. Louis who are noted for their role in opening up the American West (Willoughby 2012). Rancho Jurupa previously belonged to an American named Benjamin David Wilson, who originally purchased the land from Juan Bandini in 1843; Bandini was granted Rancho Jurupa in 1838 and it was the first Mexican land grant to be officially recognized in Riverside County (Lech 2012).



Figure 4.1. Image of the 1850s Mormon settlement in San Bernardino, no date. Courtesy of the Honeyman Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material. Public domain.

In 1870, John W. North and Dr. James P. Greeves of Knoxville, Tennessee purchased Rancho Jurupa, and land owned by Louis Robidoux, to establish a colony in anticipation of a second transcontinental railroad that would pass by the nearby town of San Bernardino (Patterson 1971). North and Greeves advertised their purchase as the Southern California Colony and called for 100 “good” families to settle on the land. While Riverside was the name given to the town site, it eventually became the name for the entire colony. The city center of Riverside was known as the Mile Square. Another important promoter of the Riverside area was banker and real estate investor Samuel Carey Evans, or S.C. Evans, who moved from Fort Wayne, Indiana to Riverside in 1875. He placed advertisements of the colony’s farmlands, which he stated were ideal for

growing citrus and other fruit, and is credited with increasing the population of the town of Riverside in the late 1870s (Patterson 1971).



Figure 4.2. Lithograph of the town of Riverside, 1877. Courtesy of the Honeyman Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material. Public Domain.

The promise of fertile agricultural lands for growing fruit is what drew many white settlers to San Bernardino and Riverside. After experimenting with different varieties of oranges, the Washington navel orange became the most successful for locals to cultivate and the San Bernardino Valley turned into an important orange-growing area (Moses 1982). In the late nineteenth century, other Southern California communities followed and began to develop their own orange orchards in the region. While the citrus industry made white farmers wealthy, it depended heavily on Chinese workers, considered cheap labor, to be profitable. My analysis of the documentary record indicates that Chinese laborers contributed to the wealth of these cities in many other ways. In the



next section, I discuss the role of permanent Chinese residents who primarily worked in service industries for the white townspeople of San Bernardino and Riverside from the 1870s to the 1940s. These occupations include laundry, cooks, house servants, and vegetable peddlers. Chinese merchants who sold goods to Chinese laborers were also important, and as I show below, enterprising Chinese were often involved in more than one industry.

### **Chinese in San Bernardino and Riverside**

Newspaper articles indicate that Chinese migrants were laboring in Riverside as early as 1868 when a group of Chinese brick masons were hired from Los Angeles to build Cornelius Jensen's house (Lawton 1987a). A more permanent Chinese population in San Bernardino and Riverside began to appear in the 1870s, and the Chinese were employed in a variety of occupations. According to Richard Thompson's research on the federal census, there were 16 Chinese living in San Bernardino in 1870, and the most common occupation listed was laundry worker, followed by cook and house servant (1978:3). The first Chinese businesses in Riverside appeared in the 1870s and were also likely laundries (Lawton 1987a). Chinese migrants provided much-needed services to new white colonists. Thomas Patterson notes that an 1875 advertising circular for Chinese labor was placed by S.C. Evans on behalf of the Riverside Land & Irrigation (R.L. & I.) Company and it stated that Chinese house servants could be hired for between \$16 and \$25 per month (Patterson 1971:194-195). The R. L. & I. Company had relied on the recruitment of Chinese laborers to dig the irrigation canals needed to bring water to Riverside's fruit orchards; Chinese laborers were likely hired by the company in 1875 to build the "Lower Canal" (Brown and Boyd 1922). It is possible that some of these

Chinese laborers stayed in Riverside area because my research revealed that a Chinese man named Wong Hong served as a cook for the R.L. & I. when they were building a canal in 1878 and would come to own a share in the Duey Lee store in Riverside Chinatown as well as a large vegetable garden (Pliny T. Evans testimony 1895a). In the 1870s, the second transcontinental railroad was completed by the Southern Pacific. A line east from Los Angeles into the San Bernardino Valley was built, but it passed through a new town called Colton rather than San Bernardino (Brown and Boyd 1922:54).

In the 1880s, the Chinese also found work in the San Bernardino Valley building infrastructure in addition to picking and packing fruit. In 1887, the East Redlands Water Company brought 60 Chinese from San Francisco to dig ditches for water pipes (Several 2011:414-415). Another group of temporary laborers were Chinese railroad workers. In the 1880s, construction began on the California Southern Railroad—a subsidiary of the Santa Fe Railroad—from San Diego to Barstow, going through Riverside, Colton, and San Bernardino. One second-hand account of the Chinese railroad workers hired by the Santa Fe working through the Cajon Pass is that they went on strike demanding an increase in pay from \$0.75 a day to \$1.00 a day (Doyle 1976). In March 1886, the *Riverside Press and Horticulturist* newspaper reported on a Chinese strike at the Edward T. Earl Fruit Company in Riverside regarding wages and “the amount of packing necessary to do a day's work” (Lawton 1987a:81). These examples counter the anti-Chinese rhetoric of the nineteenth century that portrayed Chinese laborers as “coolies” willing to work for poverty wages. Chinese migrants were also hired in the San Bernardino Valley to harvest raisin grapes and oranges. The different growing seasons

for grapes and oranges enabled Chinese laborers to have 8 months of continuous work in the same area (Moses and Focht 1991).



Figure 4.3. Chinese workers harvesting raisin grapes in Riverside, circa 1888. Courtesy of the California Historical Society. Public domain.

The Chinese field hands who picked fruit crop might have been the ones who slept in tents around the Chinese quarter inside city's Mile Square, which referred to downtown Riverside. A Sanborn map from 1884 shows that these Chinese businesses was originally concentrated on Eighth (now University Avenue) and Ninth streets and bounded by Main and Orange Streets (Lawton 1987c). According to Patterson, the Chinese were on these blocks no later than 1875 (1971:58). The Chinese in Riverside were not enumerated until the 1880 census; there were 20 Chinese recorded, all men, and one-fourth were vegetable gardeners (Lawton 1987a:71). Many Chinese were employed as domestic servants who lived in the homes of their employers (City of Riverside 2016:44). It was, however, the visibility of Chinese laundries in the urban center that

made the Chinese a target for nativists, and anti-Chinese ordinances were aimed at removing Chinese laundries in order to remove the Chinese population. For example, the Quong Tung Hang Laundry in San Bernardino's city center was taken to court in September 1878 for being a "public nuisance" as Chinese laundries were accused of creating bad smells and pollution; this was the first major enforcement of an anti-Chinese ordinance that had passed earlier in 1876, which stated wash houses were not allowed within the town limits (Thompson 1978).

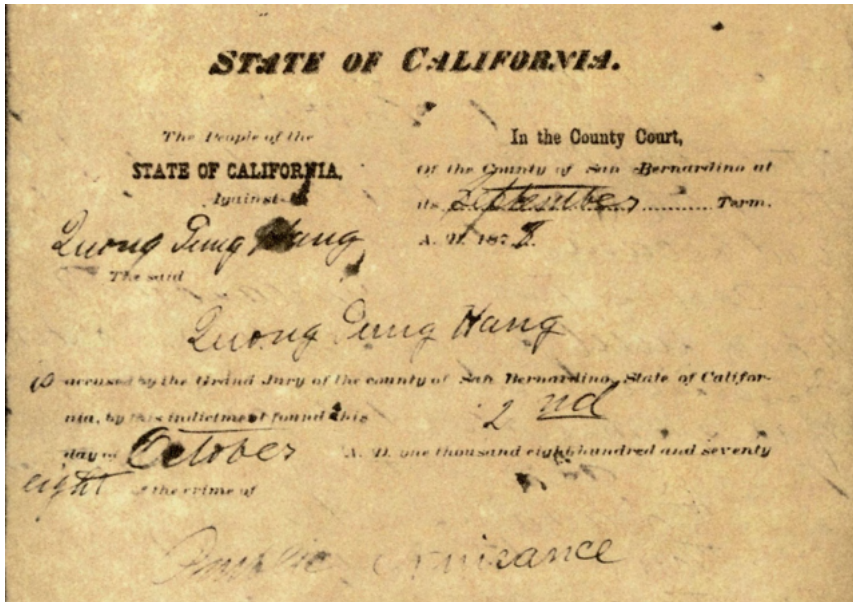


Figure 4.4. The Quong Tung Hang laundry was charged with being a "public nuisance" on September 26, 1878. Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society.

### Racism and the Formation of the Chinatowns

The anti-Chinese laundry ordinance in San Bernardino is what prompted the establishment of concentrated Chinese community on Third Street, just outside of the town's limits. The Quong Tung Hang laundry was part of the move as a news item dating to October 19, 1878 reported that the business and other Chinese laundries had built shanties just below Starke's Hotel (Thompson 1978:13). A photo from the 1880s shows

the Quong Tung Hand laundry in the new Chinatown on Third Street. Other Chinese businesses soon popped up on the south side of Lot 18 and north side of Lot 15 on Third Street. The San Bernardino Chinatown would become established on Third Street with Chinese businesses on both sides; the area was bounded by B (now called Mountain View) Street on the east and C (now called Arrowhead) Street on the west. The Chinese likely rented property from a number of landowners, including August Starke of Starke's Hotel, the Alley and Cochrane firm, Daniel M. Bradford, and the Wozencraft family (Costello et al. 2004:5.65).



Figure 4.5. Photo of Third Street looking east from Arrowhead with the Quong Tung Hang laundry in the foreground, circa 1880. Courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society.

Chinese businesses that were located in Riverside's downtown area—the Mile Square—also moved because of anti-Chinese ordinances. In 1885, a number of Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley were arrested on public nuisance charges, including

representatives of the following businesses: Duey Wo Lung, Hop Sing, Chow Gee, Quong Wing Chung, Quong Wo Sung, Sem Shing, Ah Kee, Yee Gee, Sam Gee's laundry, Yuen Woo, Quong Chung Hong and individuals named Ah Nim (possibly Wong Nim) and "John Doe Chinaman"; resident Dr. J.T. Jenkins suggested that "strict abatement procedures can be accomplished without moving any portion of the population" and observed that many sanitation abuses elsewhere in Riverside were overlooked (Lawton 1987a:78). Another ordinance in Riverside banned wooden buildings from the city center and Chinese businesses were the only ones in wooden structures (City of Riverside 2016).

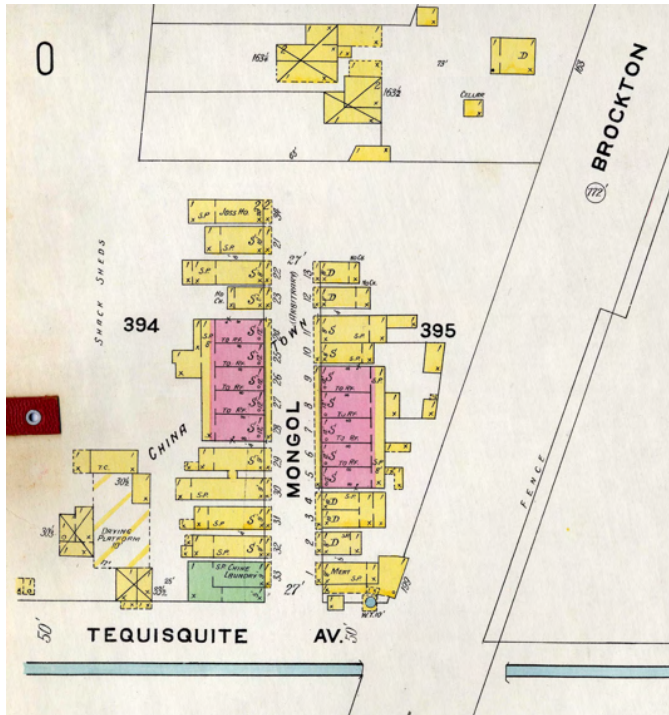
As a result of these anti-Chinese ordinances, the Quong Nim & Company was formed by Chinese businessmen Wong Nim, Wong Gee, and Gin Duey to locate a new site for the Chinese to live in (Lawton 1987a). Some Chinese businesses, however, continued to be located outside of a recognizable Chinese enclave. In 1885, Quong Nim Company began to rent land in Tequesquite canyon (also known as Tequesquite arroyo) from John Cottrell, and hired A.W. Boggs, a local contractor, to construct twenty-six permanent wooden buildings in what would become the new Riverside Chinatown (NRHP 1990). In the late 1880s, Quong Nim Company purchased the arroyo property on Tequesquite and Brockton (Lawton 1987a:80). Two businesses that likely made the move to the new Chinatown include the Duey Wo Lung and Hong Wo laundries because Gin Duey was a partner in the Duey Wo Lung laundry and Wong Gee was associated with Hong Wo laundry.



Figure 4.6. Painting of “Riverside’s Chinatown” by Lillian Waite, 1892. The wooden structure with a gabled roof is a dovecote built for raising doves (Lawton 1987c:18). Courtesy of the Museum of Riverside.

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1893, a kitchen fire started a large blaze that engulfed most of Riverside Chinatown. The *Riverside Daily Press* noted that the entire row of structures on the eastern side was destroyed by the fire (Lawton 1987a:102). Eighteen buildings went up in the fire, including Wong’s barber shop, Wah Kee restaurant, Bow Lung restaurant, and the following merchant stores: Chong Yuen, Bow Hing, Lum Sing, Hi Kee, Chow Gee [sic Chow Kee], Yot Kee, and Song Sing & Co. (Raven 1987). Eight of the community’s wooden buildings on the western section survived because two Chinese men climbed onto a roof and stopped the fire from spreading with a hose. At this time, Wong Nim was visiting China, but his brother Wong Sue (sometimes spelled Wong See) was in Riverside and handled the insurance claim (*Los Angeles Herald* 1893). The Chinese leaders came together once again and contracted local non-Chinese to rebuild their community; they hired architect G.W. Griff and contractor H.A. Knapp to design

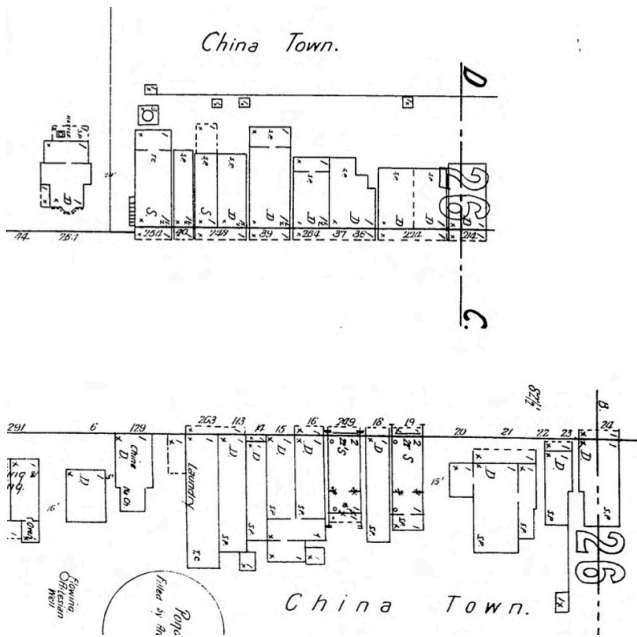
and construct two commercial brick buildings on Chinatown's main street (NRHP 1990:13). One reason for the change in material was that the new structures would be insured only if they were built with brick.



Map 4.2. Sanborn map of the Riverside Chinatown in 1908, fifteen years after the fire. The derogatory term “Mongol Street” is used on the map, but it was widely known as Chinatown Street; Tequesquite Avenue is also misspelled.

Wong Nim also desired a sense of durability for the San Bernardino Chinatown where he resided and maintained his businesses. Costello et al. (2004) discovered that Wong Nim made an unsuccessful attempt in 1897 to purchase the Starke hotel, a brick building adjacent to Chinatown and owned by August Starke. Daniel M. Bradford, however, successfully took ownership of the foreclosed property in 1897 and one newspaper account suggested that Bradford was involved in blocking Wong Nim from purchasing the hotel in order to continue collecting rent from Chinatown stores, which were located on his property (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1897).





Map 4.3. Sanborn map of the San Bernardino Chinatown in 1894.

Several years later, the antagonistic relationship between Wong Nim and Daniel Bradford appears to have dissipated. In April 1900, Wong was able to purchase the northern portions of Lots 7 and 8 located in San Bernardino Chinatown from Bradford (Costello et al. 2004:6.34). This land amounted to half of a city block between B and C streets. Wong Nim's store was located on the property, and he rented the other buildings to Chinese businesses (Costello et al. 2004:5.65). In 1911, a fire swept through a part of the San Bernardino Chinatown and burned down three wooden buildings on the south side of Third Street (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1911a). The fire started in a rooming house and spread to an adjacent business owned by Wong Nim as well as the [Tie] Yaw store. The *San Bernardino Sun* reported that Wong Nim had contracted with W.J. Monroe to rebuild this portion of Chinatown with a one-story brick building (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1911c). One likely reason he decided to use brick as the new

building material is because on September 6<sup>th</sup>, the city council approved an ordinance extending the fire limits that banned framed buildings to Chinatown (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1911b). It is also likely that this ordinance was also meant to discourage the Chinese businesses from being rebuilt.

It is remarkable that Wong Nim was able to hold onto the property he purchased in Riverside and San Bernardino up until his death in 1941 because the passage of California's Alien Land Law in 1913 prevented Asian immigrants – “aliens” who were ineligible for citizenship – from owning land. Many sources state that Wong Nim was able to remain a landowner because he was born in Alameda County, California and therefore a U.S. citizen by birth (Thompson 1978; Costello et al. 2004; City of Riverside 2016). My research indicates, however, that Wong Nim did not claim to be born in America until January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1913, and that he was denied certification of U.S. citizenship status by immigration officials because two of the white witnesses who claimed to know him at birth would have only been 8 years old at the time (Wong Nim interview 1913). Before that, Wong Nim believed he had been born in China and had been looking into acquiring U.S. citizenship as early as 1901 when it was reported that he had hired lawyers to inquire into how he could become naturalized (*The Los Angeles Times* 1901). It is not known if he was later able to prove to the federal government that he was entitled to U.S. citizenship, but he did continue to state that he was born in Alameda County in the 1920 census, and it was noted in his 1941 obituary (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1941).

Perhaps Wong Nim was able to fly under the radar because the main target of the Alien Land Law were Japanese immigrants, particularly those who wanted to live in white residential neighborhoods. In 1915, a Japanese immigrant named Jukichi Harada

purchased a house in Riverside in his American-born children's name to circumvent the Alien Land Law, but was taken to court by a white neighbor who felt he was in violation of the law. In 1918, the judge ruled in favor of Harada and stated that his children born in America had the same constitutional rights as any other U.S. citizen (Rawitsch 2012). The ruling did not overturn the Alien Land Law, but allowed Japanese immigrants, who had few rights and no pathway to citizenship, the right to own and retain property in the name of their native-born children.

### **Family and Lineage Ties**

Another question that Wong Nim's property ownership history brings up is, why was he so willing to help a group of Chinese in Riverside finance the construction and purchase of a new Riverside Chinatown when his residence and business were located in San Bernardino Chinatown? One reason might be because he was a labor contractor, and it was likely in his best interest to see that the Riverside Chinatown continued to thrive. My research points to another reason: that migrants from the same lineage in China were able to rely on each other for aid. For Wong Nim, there was already a history of mutual trust between migrants from his branch of the Wong clan—the Yinlong lineage—who lived in the adjacent village clusters of Gun Tin (*Guantian* 灌田), Gom Benn (*Ganbian* 甘邊), and Ha Tung (*Xiadong* 下洞) (see Chapter 5 for more on this lineage). Wong Nim spent his formative years in his ancestral Gun Tin village called Tung Hau (*Dongkou*), and immigration records and grave markers indicate that nearly all Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley with the surname Wong came from villages belonging to the Yinlong lineage. It is clear that Wong Nim actively sought to maintain these lineage ties in the

U.S., because he erected a temple in the late nineteenth century dedicated to the deity Guanyin in the San Bernardino Chinatown (Costello et al. 2004). This temple had special significance to people from Wong Nim's lineage because a temple dedicated to Guanyin is attached to their shared ancestral hall in Taishan (also see Chapter 7). Wong Nim's partner in the Quong Nim Company was Wong Gee, who was affiliated with the Hong Wo laundry (Haggland 1987); it is possible that Wong Gee came from Wong Nim's village, or from one nearby. I discuss this relationship and other lineage connections in more depth in the next section. While Chinese people with the surname Gin (*Zhen* 甄), Lew (*Liu* 劉), Joe (*Zhou* 周), and Quon (*Guan* 關) also lived in the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns, I focus on those with the surname Wong (*Huang* 黃) from Taishan County to illustrate how lineage ties were the basis of diasporic links between southern China and the San Bernardino Valley.

### *Wongs in Riverside*

Wong Gee's business, the Hong Wo laundry, had a long history in Riverside and was originally located in the Mile Square on Seventh Street between Main and Market. The laundry is mentioned by the *Riverside Press* in 1878 as one that gifted its customers with white narcissus lilies during the Chinese New Year (Lawton 1987c). Later that year, it was fined \$5 after a county health inspection found the laundry was creating pollution (Lawton 1987b:4). The laundry employed different people over time, but nearly all laundry operators and workers had the surname Wong. In 1884, Charles Wong was hired as a manager and placed an ad in the *Riverside Press and Horticulturist* announcing his previous 10 years of experience working at a San Francisco laundry (Lawton 1987a).

After Wong Gee moved the Hong Wo laundry to Riverside Chinatown, the business appears to have been unaffected by the Chinatown fire in 1893. Immigration files indicate that Wong Ling Yous, Wong Ying, and Wong Hong owned the laundry in 1893 (Wong Ling Yous interview 1897) and Wong Woe did ironing work there in 1896 (Wong Woe interview 1898). One of Wong Woe's witnesses is Wong Yee Hing (also spelled Wong Gee Hing) who came from Tung Hau, the same village as Wong Nim (Wong Gee Hing interview 1915). Wong Woe likely came from the same village as well because he is well-acquainted with Wong Yee Hing's parents in China and knows his cousins in the U.S.

Another important business in Riverside Chinatown was the Yin Chong store, located in the first brick house on the right in Chinatown (Monfort interview 1912). The manager was a merchant named Wong Sue, and prior to his death in 1913, he was a remittance banker in Riverside Chinatown (see below). In addition, he was Wong Nim's younger brother and they stayed in close communication with one another even though they lived in two different cities (Wong Sue interview 1913). Wong Sue's business in Riverside might have been another reason why Wong Nim wanted to finance the Riverside Chinatown site in 1885. The first mention of Wong Sue living in Riverside Chinatown, however, dates to 1899 when he helped in Wong Nim's attempt to purchase the Starke Hotel near San Bernardino Chinatown (Costello et al. 2004). In 1909, Wong Sue reorganized his merchandise business as the Yin Chong & Company and added several partners, including two who immigrated from the Ha Tung (*Xiadong* 下洞) village cluster: Wong Yot from Wing Hing (*Yongxing* 永興) village and Wong Din from Ng Woo (*Donghua* 洞華) village (Wong Din & Wong Yot interviews 1913).

While Riverside Chinatown has been given the nickname “Little Gom Benn” by researchers, there is no evidence that this name was used by local Chinese residents. The most important business in Riverside related to people from Gom Benn was the Sing Kee store. Sing Kee was a general merchandise store in Riverside that dated to at least 1893, which is when manager Wong Pon Sai states he joined the company. Wong Pon Sai’s village is Yan Wo, which is located in the Gom Benn village cluster (Wong Pon Sai interview 1911). The Sing Kee store sold Chinese goods but also served as a ‘bank’ for Chinese (Wong Seong interview 1902). The Sing Kee store also had a safe for keeping certificates of residence for local Chinese residents (Wong Pon Sai interview 1910). Wong Ben Jew and Wong Shoon Jung, vegetable farmers in West Riverside, stated that Sing Kee served as their headquarters; both farmers were from Gom Benn as well. Wong Pon Sai returned to China around 1911 and died there soon after, according to George Wong; at his deathbed, he repeatedly mentioned his desire to return to the Sing Kee store (Chace 1990). Wong Pon Sai’s grandson Charlie Wong took over operations of the Sing Kee store and eventually returned home to China wealthy (B. S. Wong 1986). George Wong recalls that Charlie opened up a bank in Foshan, China, but was killed by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War (Chace 1990). Another Riverside Chinatown business run by migrants from Gom Benn was the Hai On Wo Company, which was in operation between 1909 and 1920. The manager, Wong Sai Hee, stated that he was from Gom Hong (*gantang*) village in Gom Benn; his partner Wong Hing Seen also stated that Gom Hong was his ancestral village, but had been born in San Francisco (Wong Sai Hee interview 1911).

### *Wongs in San Bernardino*

Wong Nim first arrived in San Bernardino around 1881 (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1941). He was a merchant of the Wey Yuen store as well as a laundry operator (Costello et al. 2004). It is likely that he operated these businesses concurrently and also served as a labor contractor. In the photo of the San Bernardino Chinatown below, there is a building with a sign that reads it houses the Wey Yuen store, Quong Nim Co., and a labor contracting firm. Wong Nim appears to have been involved in providing Chinese field hands for local ranchers; a court case from 1894-1895 indicates that Wong Nim sued a rancher named E. A. Phillips of West Highlands for non-payment on a labor contract (Costello et al. 2004:5.76). In 1885, Wong Nim formed the Quong Nim Company to purchase the Riverside Chinatown with Wong Gee and Gin Duey. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the Chinese population was declining, he turned his attention to farming and grew vegetables until the late 1920s. Wong Nim also owned parts of the San Bernardino Chinatown and one of his renters was the Gee Chung store, which was run by several people from Gom Benn (Wong Sam interview 1922).



Figure 4.6. Photo of Third Street in San Bernardino Chinatown with Wey Yuen store and Quong Yuen Hi laundry storefront signs visible, circa 1880s-1890s. Courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society.

The Gee Chung Company store was located on 245 Third Street in San Bernardino Chinatown, and mainly provided Chinese goods to laborers. It was one of the longest-standing Chinese businesses and operated from circa 1887 to 1941. Wong Hing Sam (sometimes spelled Wong Him Sin) was the manager in 1896 and might have founded the company, as the name on his certificate of residence was “Gee Chong” (Wong Him Sin interview 1896). The store was later managed by Wong Hand, who started out as a cook in Redlands (Internal Revenue Service 1894). Wong Hand helped recruit his relatives into the business as partners: his nephew Wong Sam joined the store as a partner in 1894 and another nephew named Wong Tong Din entered in 1908. These familial relationships were never discussed in the immigration records, but were revealed by Wong Sam and Wong Tong Din’s descendants in oral history interviews (J. Wong 2016; B.S. Wong 1986). Immigration documents indicate that the Gee Chung store owned an interest in the Mow Sang garden between 1913 and 1916 (Wong Hand interview 1922).



Figure 4.7. Immigration photos of the Gee Chung Company members: left to right, Wong Hand (1912), Wong Tong Din (1915), Wong Sam (1913), and Wong Hang John (1912). Courtesy of the National Archives in Riverside.

The ownership of a garden share by the merchant store demonstrates the profitability of Chinese vegetable farming in the area and it is likely that other merchant



stores also owned garden shares. Most vegetable gardens, however, were managed and operated through cooperative partnerships, which I discuss in the next section.

### **Chinese Vegetable Gardeners**

Outside of Chinatown, gardening was an important industry for Chinese migrants in the San Bernardino Valley from the 1880s to the 1920s. The crops grown included potatoes, onions, tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, and corn for local consumption. These vegetables were peddled door to door via horse and buggy by the gardeners themselves; the Chinese often lived in wooden shacks in the gardens (Lawton 1987b). Reminiscing in 1928, Wong Nim recalled that the Chinese cultivated hundreds of acres of land under lease near San Bernardino where they grew vegetables and peddled them; he told a reporter that “they made a reasonable amount of money and contributed to the prosperity of Chinatown” (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1928). A veteran police sergeant who patrolled Riverside Chinatown at night noted that Chinese laborers in the valley often spent their evenings in Chinatown where they enjoyed playing cards and other games (Patton 1928). Leases and immigration documents indicate that the Chinese gardens were located in rural areas south and east of San Bernardino’s city center, west and south of downtown Riverside, in Yucaipa east of Redlands, and in Agua Mansa near Colton. Chinese vegetable farmers formed cooperative partnerships and leased land ranging from 10 to 135 acres on ranches belonging to local families or land companies.

In San Bernardino, land on the former Waterman Ranch was leased to Chinese vegetable gardeners. One important Chinese garden partnership was the Mow Sang Company. In the 1890s, Mow Sang Co. leased 60 acres of land on the old Waterman

Ranch; the garden had 10 partners, including Wong Si Foo, who had been a member since 1896, and Wong Si Gun who joined in 1900 (Wong Yee Hing file 1910). In 1902, the Mow Sang company leased thirty acres of land on the Garner Place portion of the Waterman Ranch for 3 years (SB County lease book D:269). In 1909, Mow Sang leased 60 acres of land for 10 years, and the lease was signed by Ah Sam (SB County lease book E:386). Ah Sam was possibly Wong Sam, a merchant in the Gee Chung store in San Bernardino Chinatown, who in 1913 was caught hauling vegetables for the Mow Sang garden by a local immigration official (see next section). Another merchant who was involved in vegetable farming was Wong Nim, whose garden was possibly located in Chinatown. Rose Ung (nee Wong) remembered that as a child, she and her family would go from Riverside Chinatown to Wong Nim's garden to pick large Chinese melons to take home and make soup with (Ung and Lui 1986).

In Riverside, the Kong Sing Company garden and Wing Wo Company garden were two of the longest-lasting Chinese garden partnerships; although the partners and size of leased acreage changed over the decades, the farmers of these companies were all Wongs. The Kong Sing Co. leased a garden from 1880 to 1885 from Cornelius Jensen, a long-time resident of Riverside. The lease included 20 acres of land on the island tract of the Santa Ana River (San Bernardino County 1880). In 1895, P.T. Evans noted that the R.L. & I. Company recently won a lawsuit in the Supreme Court that gave them ownership of the land that Jensen was leasing out; Evans states that Wong Fong's 120-acre garden lies in this land (Wong Hong testimony 1895). This lease was signed on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1895 and Wong Fong hired 14 Chinese laborers, including his brother, to work on the vegetable garden (Wong Fong testimony 1895). In 1909, the Kong Sing Co.

signed a 3-year lease with the Evans' for 135 acres of river bottom land located 1 mile from Riverside; the garden was leased by Wong Tong of Gom Benn and his partners Wong Hoy, Wong Sai Gan, Wong Ying, and Wong Seou, and Wong Jeow (Wong Tong 1909). Wong Jeow might have been Wong Ben Jew who lived and farmed the Kong Sing garden around this time with his partners. The flood of 1916 in Riverside, however, destroyed the West Riverside Bridge and Wong Ben Jew lost all of his vegetables and several of his partners went to Stockton. Some of his partners stayed and Wong Ben Jew's teenage son George learned how to grow crops from these men when he was not in school (Chace 1990).



Figure 4.8. Photo of the washed-out bridge between Riverside and West Riverside after the 1916 flood. Courtesy of Nancy Wey Papers, UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library.

Another garden that was operated by people with the surname Wong was the Wing Wo Company garden. Their garden was 3 miles away from Riverside Chinatown and located between the towns of Colton and Riverside. The earliest information on the

Wing Wo Co. dates to 1901; the land was leased for 5 years for 100 acres from the R.L. & I. Company (Wong Seong 1902). Wong Ling stated that he had six partners in Wing Wo—Wong Seong, Wong Hor, Wong Kim, Wong June, Wong Chung, and Wong Yen—and that 15 men were hired to work in the garden (Wong Ling interview 1902). Wong Chung and Wong Yen might have been misspellings of Wong Shoon Jung and Wong Yan—two Chinese vegetable men that white Riverside residents remember because they peddled their produce door to door. Wong Yan eventually moved to Arizona and P.T. Evans was once called by immigration officials to identify a photograph of Wong Yan; Evans stated that he recognized him as a former manager of Wing Wo Co. who might have recently sold vegetables via wagon to his wife (Pliny T. Evans interview 1910). Speaking to researcher Harry Lawton in 1959, Mrs. Fred Estes reminisced about one Chinese vegetable peddler named Big Charlie (Wong Shoon Jung) who would give gifts to his customers each year during the Lunar New Year (Lawton 1959). Bill Evans remembered Wong Shoon Jung and his brother Wong Hock, and noted that Chinese vegetable men would visit the R.L. & I. offices to pay rent on their leases to his father P.T. Evans and his uncle S.C. Evans Jr. (Lawton 1987b:307). According to Bing Sum Wong, Wong Shoon Jung was a good friend of “old man Evans” and was “the only success in Riverside” because he made a fortune in a year on a good onion crop that he withheld from the market until prices were extremely high (B. S. Wong 1986).



Figure 4.9. Mrs. Estes displaying four Chinese bracelets and a parasol gifted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by vegetable farmer and peddler Wong Shoon Jung. Photo by *Riverside Press* (Lawton 1959).

With Wong Shoon Jung's wealth, he returned to Wo Hing village in Gom Benn in 1925; he briefly returned to Riverside in 1927 to cash out his remaining money (Wong Ho Lung interview 1934). During his retirement in China, he was able to purchase a three-story mansion for he and his wife to live in and never returned to America (see Chapter 8). Wong Ben Jew continued to live in the U.S. and was part of a small community of Chinese who maintained a vegetable garden in the 1920s. He abandoned the Kong Sing garden in 1921, however, and moved to Fairmount Park to raise vegetables with a partner named Wong Wey; in 1929, he died at the Riverside County Hospital (Chace 1990). During this period, the late 1920s, Wong Nim declared to a newspaper reporter that there were no more Chinese vegetable farmers in the San Bernardino Valley; the Chinese leased no land in the area and only two of them still peddled vegetables from old carts (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1928).

## **Deportation Regime**

Throughout the American West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese were often the target of racial violence. Jean Pfaelzer (2007) calls these “driving out campaigns” and they were part of widespread anti-Chinese rhetoric that resulted in the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and its renewal through the 1892 Geary Act. Many of the white residents of the San Bernardino Valley agreed with or were receptive to anti-Chinese propaganda. Dennis Kearney, leader of California’s nativist Workingmen’s Party, visited San Bernardino in 1879 and drew the largest crowd in the city’s history when he made an anti-Chinese speech (Lawton 1987a). The Chinese in Riverside and San Bernardino were never driven out by racial violence, but anti-Chinese meetings were organized by locals in each city (Lawton 1987a; Thompson 1978). Nearby in Redlands, an anti-Chinese meeting in 1893 nearly culminated in a mob attack on that city’s Chinatown. As Michael Several (2011) notes, white businesspeople who relied on the Chinese for their labor did not attend these gatherings, but sometimes gave in to demands to cease hiring Chinese workers. The local newspapers blatantly stated their contempt for local Chinese residents and called for their expulsion; periodically, they expressed ambivalence as they also acknowledged that the Chinese were largely responsible for picking the orange and raisin crop in the region (Raven 1987).

### *1892 Geary Act and Deportation*

While the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Law sought to ban new Chinese laborers, the purpose of the 1892 Geary Act was to deport Chinese laborers already in the U.S. Under the Geary Act, all Chinese were ordered to register for a certificate of residence and carry

it with them at all times to show that they had entered into the country legally. The new law likely emboldened local xenophobes and racists who scapegoated the Chinese as the cause of white unemployment. In the fall of 1892, there were two separate attempts by individuals to burn down the San Bernardino Chinatown; the fact that the arson attempts occurred a few months after the passage of the Geary Act is likely not coincidental. Following these incidents, two fed-up Chinese merchants published a message in the local newspaper warning “boys and bums” to stay out of Chinatown at night (Costello et al. 2004:6.49). The passage of the Geary Act is also what motivated white residents in Redlands to propose violently attacking and arresting Chinese laborers without a certificate of residence in order to deport them (Several 2011).

In the proceeding years, the Geary Act was enforced by immigration officials in the San Bernardino Valley through deportations raids. One Chinese house servant in Riverside, named Horn, hid in the orange groves during the first raid in September 1893 (Raven 1987:255). During this raid, Gin Ling was arrested in a Riverside laundry and ordered to be deported because he had not registered as a laborer (Lawton 1987a). His brother, Duey Wo Lung (real name Gin Duey), was able to produce a document showing that his brother had an interest in a laundry and property worth several thousand dollars.

The deportation cases of Wong Hong and Wong Fong in 1895 also shed light on the enforcement of the Geary Act. The two Chinese residents of Riverside were accused of being laborers instead of merchants because they had been “caught” conducting work related to their vegetable gardens. Chinese Inspector John Putnam of Los Angeles was involved in both arrests and was a relentless enforcer. The lawyer representing the U.S. government argued that it did not matter if Wong Hong and Wong Fong were in China

during the period of registration, they violated the law by not registering for a certificate of residence once they returned. Wong Hong was a merchant with the Duey Lee Company in Riverside Chinatown, but was also called Duey Lee. He had lived in Riverside since at least 1878 as a cook for the R.L. & I. Company when they were digging canals (Pliny T. Evans testimony 1895b). Wong Fong was a merchant as well, but he was associated with the Chow Kee store in Riverside Chinatown (Carpio 2019). He was arrested while attempting to purchase a vegetable wagon permit for one of his employees. Both were ordered to be deported, but Wong Fong successfully appealed his case and was released from jail in December 1896 (Raven 1987:256).



Figure 4.10. Photo portrait of Wong Hong, circa 1893, who was ordered to be deported in September 1895. Courtesy of the National Archives Riverside.

At the turn of the twentieth century, deportation raids were periodically conducted by immigration officers called “Chinese inspectors” who often worked in conjunction with local law enforcement. Immigration officers went to the San Bernardino Valley



Chinatowns and to the Chinese gardens looking for Chinese in the country illegally. In 1906, a deportation raid resulted in three Chinese arrested for having fake certificates in San Bernardino while six were arrested in Riverside Chinatown and two were arrested in the Redlands Chinatown (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1906). Deportation raids in Chinese gardens continued in the 1907 and the newspapers reported these with racist headlines such as “Officers round up bunch of Chinks” (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1907). One particularly cruel tactic of deportation raids was to conduct it at night; it was reported that one deportation raid at the San Bernardino Chinese gardens began at four in the morning, waking up startled Chinese in bed and violently dragging them out to be arrested (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1908).

In the 1910s, Chinese migrants continue to be surveilled by immigration officers. One day in 1912, an immigration officer named William Brazie with the title “Chinese inspector” found Wong Sam, a Chinese merchant associated with the Gee Chung store, hauling vegetables and accused him of being in the country illegally because merchants were not permitted to perform manual labor. Wong Sam admitted that he did sleep overnight at the Mow Sang garden, which his firm owned a share of, and that he had delivered potatoes to a hotel, but argued that he only did this occasionally. For reasons unknown, he was not arrested and after spending several months at his store and acquiring new affidavits from white witnesses, he was able to prove that he was a merchant and made a return trip to China (Wong Sam interview 1913). During this time in China, Wong Sam moved his family to new village in Gom Benn (see Chapter 8); with his merchant return certificate secured, he return to the U.S. without incident in 1915.

Other Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley were similarly harassed by immigration officers, but Wong Sai Hing's case has a tragic ending. Wong Sai Hing, also known as Henry Wong, was arrested by Inspector Harry Blee in February 1914. He was a laundry worker in Colton, a town near San Bernardino, and did not have any papers to show that he was able to work in the country legally. When interrogated, he stated that his merchant papers were burned in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake fire; eventually, however, he confessed that he was not a merchant but had purchased a fraudulent merchant's paper. He first came to the U.S. in 1897 and had worked as a laundry worker ever since. The immigration inspector gave Wong Sai Hing the opportunity to gather his things at home before being deported, but the next day his body was found in his laundry where he had hung himself from the rafters. It is impossible to know all of the factors that compelled him to end his life, but the local paper noted that he was a well-known laundry worker in Colton (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1914). Whatever the reasons, the deportation order was clearly devastating to Wong Sai Hing who had integrated himself in the community where he lived and worked.

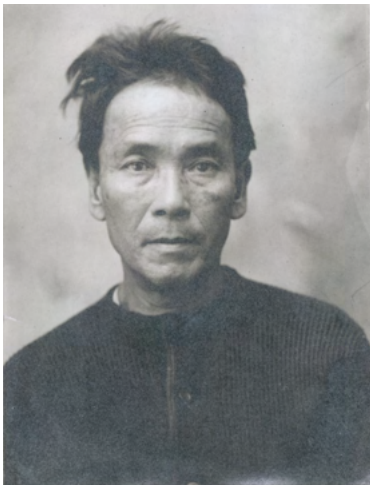


Figure 4.11. Photo of Colton laundry worker Wong Sai Hing. Courtesy of the National Archives Riverside.

## **Transnational Institutions**

Transnational institutions played an important role in the lives of Chinese migrants, particularly in immigration. Wong Sai Hing's tragic story also points to this importance; his fraudulent merchant's paper was purchased in Hong Kong, where he depended on a friend to help prepare it for him (Wong Sai Hing interview 1914). As a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act, only exempt classes were able to immigrate to America. The place in Hong Kong where Wong Sai Hing purchased his fraudulent papers was likely a Gold Mountain firm that served customers who shared a surname. In the 1900s and 1910s, Chinese migrants from Gom Benn patronized a firm called Quong Nam Hing, and in the 1920s they relied on a firm called Kung Wo. Wong Pon Sai stated in an immigration interview that the Quong Nam Hing firm was a place where Chinese people bought tickets to go to the United States (Wong Pon Sai interview 1910). In 1911, it was also where P.T. Evans and Wong Ben Jew physically met up to help identify Wong Pon Sai's son so that he could immigrate to America; Evans happened to be in Hong Kong for a business conference. According to Evans, Wong Pon Sai's nephew ran the Quong Nam Hing store (Pliny T. Evans interview 1911). Immigration records indicate that Gom Benn migrants from both Riverside and San Bernardino utilized the Quong Nam Hing as their foreign address.

While Wong Pon Sai appears to have been an important figure in helping to facilitate transnational migration, another important person in Riverside involved in transnational institutions was Wong Sai Chee. A collection of accounting records and letters in the Museum of Riverside archives kept by Wong Sai Chee show how money

was remitted from Riverside, and possibly San Bernardino and Redlands, to China. My research on the Chinese Exclusion Files and cross referencing his married in the Yinlong lineage genealogy book led to the discovery that Wong Sai Chee and Wong Sue—Wong Nim’s brother and merchant of the Yin Chong store—were the same person. Wong Sue stated in his immigration interview that his married name was Wong Sai Chee, which matches the name on the remittance records. One letter addressed to Wong Sai Chee was a thank you note sent from Gin Toon Log’s shop in Hong Kong; the letter also mentions Gin’s shop in Sun Cheong (Xinchang) City, which is located on the Tan River in northern Taishan well (Moses and Focht 1991). Sun Cheong in the early twentieth century was an important embarkation point for Chinese who lived near the Tan River, including the Yinlong Wong villages in northern Taishan and Gin villages along the Taishan-Kaiping border. Sun Cheong was important for Chinese migrants from Gom Benn in other ways; Wong Pon Sai, manager of the Sing Kee store, owned a dry goods store in Sun Cheong city (Wong Sai Hee interview 1909) and in 1930, Wong Bing Sum from the Gee Chong store noted that his address in China would be in Sun Cheong City (Wong Sam interview 1920).



Figure 4.12. Left, a photo of Wong Sai Chee (Wong Sue), 1913; right, a letter from Hong Kong addressed to Wong Sai Chee, 1906. Photos courtesy of the National Archives at Riverside and Museum of Riverside.

The exhumation of skeletal remains for reburial in China was another transnational practice that the Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley participated in. Bodies were disinterred after a number of years and the flesh would be removed so that the bones could be shipped to the deceased's home village in China. Wong Sue, for example, passed away in 1913 and was buried in San Bernardino's Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, but records indicate that his body was "removed" at some point (Pioneer Cemetery Sexton's Record 1913); his brother, Wong Nim, likely hired someone to exhume the body and send the bones back to his wife and children in China for reburial. The process was taken seriously by Chinese migrants and was usually carried out by district associations; some went to great lengths, travelling thousands of miles to repatriate remains back to the deceased's home village (Yung, Chang, and Lai 2006). Two years after house servant Ah Jim (real name Quon Ock) died in 1928, several Chinese men, likely from Los Angeles, came to his former employer's house—the Malloch family in Riverside—to inquire about where they had been buried so that they could send his bones back to China (Raven 1987:262). The Mallochs turned down the request, but most Chinese wanted to have their bones sent back to their home village because it was important to be buried with their ancestors. For example, Wong Sam had two sons working with him in the Gee Chung store in San Bernardino at the time of his death in 1938, but the plan was for his bones to eventually be shipped to China (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1938). Wong Sam's remains, however, were never sent back to his village because the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1938 halted bone repatriation.

## **Gender and Family**

The fact that Wong Sam lived and worked with his two sons in the San Bernardino Chinatown disrupts the traditional narrative that Chinese communities were comprised of bachelor men. The low numbers of women in Chinatowns across the U.S. gave the impression that Chinese men were “bachelors,” but the reality was that most Chinese migrants in the San Bernardino Valley were married and a number of these men brought their young sons over from China. Many migrants also had brothers, cousins, and uncles that they worked with or lived with. In addition, there were a small number of nuclear Chinese families in the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. I discuss some these families in more detail below.

### *Paternal and Fraternal Ties*

Many Chinese migrants came to the U.S. as teenagers to join their fathers in America as minor sons of merchants or as sons of native-born citizens. In San Bernardino, Wong Gan Poy came to San Bernardino as a thirteen-year-old boy to live with his father Wong Sam; his father’s reason for bringing him to the U.S. was for his son to learn the merchant business (Wong Sam interview 1913). Wong Tong Din likely brought his two sons to San Bernardino for the same reason. In Riverside, vegetable gardeners Wong Ben Jew and Wong Shoon Jung were able to bring their teenage sons from China because they had been able to prove to immigration officials that they themselves were born in California (see Chapter 8).

Most of these sons attended local schools, which indicates that learning English and receiving an education was important to Chinese fathers. The Chinese Exclusion Act

allowed Chinese merchants and American citizens to bring their wives and daughters over, but few did so; one reason is that wives were assumed by immigration officials to be prostitutes and were interrogated harshly (Lee 2003a). Many Chinese men who could not immigrate under exempt status purchased their papers and took on the surnames of their “paper fathers.” One example is Wong Nim’s grandson Lim Dawg who joined him in San Bernardino Chinatown some time before 1930 (Census 1930). Lim Dawg was a paper name because Wong never brought any of his sons to the U.S. (B.S. Wong 1986). Immigration records indicate that Wong Nim did prepare immigration paperwork for two minor sons to immigrate in 1914, but they were denied landing for unstated reasons (Harry Blee letter 1914).

Chinese migrants in the San Bernardino Valley also had brothers, paternal cousins, and paternal uncles in the U.S. and they often worked together as business partners. For example, the Gee Chung store was founded by Wong Hand, who brought in his nephews Wong Sam and Wong Tong Din in as members of the firm. Wong Sue had a merchandise store in Riverside, but prior to that he appears to have been a merchant at his brother’s business, the Wey Yuen store in San Bernardino (Wong Nim interview 1913). Although they lived in different cities, Wong Sue assisted his brother four times, serving as his agent: once while dealing with insurance claims after the 1893 fire in Riverside, another during Wong Nim’s attempt to buy the Starke Hotel in 1897 and possibly again in 1899, and in 1900 when he helped his brother purchase land in San Bernardino Chinatown from Daniel Bradford. There is evidence that Wong Sue did not always agree with his brother. In 1913, Wong Nim attempted to obtain certification from immigration officers to certify that he was born in Bay Island, California in present-day Alameda, and

stated that his younger brother Wong Sue was born in the same place (Wong Nim interview 1913). When immigration officers questioned Wong Sue about this claim, he dismissed it and affirmed that he continued to believe that he was born in China (Wong Sue interview 1913).

### *Nuclear Families*

The presence of nuclear Chinese families in the San Bernardino Valley was rare, but not completely absent. In the 1910s, one family in Riverside Chinatown included merchant Wong Sai Jock, his wife Chan Shee, and their three children. Immigration records for Wong Sai Jock could not be located, but two of his daughters—Rose Ung and Helen Lui—were interviewed by in the 1980s and they said that he started as a grocery store merchant in Redlands (Ung and Lui 1986). His daughter Rose Ung was born in Redlands and at some point, the family moved to Riverside Chinatown where her parents had at least one son and one daughter. Ung also remembers that the whole family went back to China when she was a child and stayed for several years, indicating that transnational ties were maintained despite the citizenship status of all the children. Wong Sai Jock died in 1915, but the family did not follow the tradition of returning his bones to his home village of Song Lung (*Shuanglong*), in Ha Tung, Taishan County; his daughter Rose Ung stated that this was a family decision, and his grave marker can still be found at the Olivewood Cemetery in Riverside.

My research on the Chinese Exclusion Files also indicates that merchant Wong Moi brought his wife Jin Kwon Nu and young son Wong Quoon Sin to live in San Bernardino Chinatown with him in 1927. In an immigration interview, the Wong Moi



stated that he was from Yau Yu (*Youyu* 游魚) village in Ha Tung, Taishan County and was the sole proprietor of the Chung Lee store (Wong Moi interview 1927). Fellow villager and San Bernardino resident Wong Run Hing testified on Wong Moi's behalf that the two were indeed his wife and minor son and both were admitted to the U.S. and lived with him in San Bernardino. Little is known about this family's life in U.S., but Wong Moi's obituary mentions a surviving son named Daniel. Daniel Jin Wong was born in San Bernardino in 1929 and received a degree in civil engineering from San Bernardino Valley College in 1947 (San Bernardino Valley College Foundation 2014). Jin Kwon Nu, Wong Moi, and Daniel J. Wong are all buried in San Bernardino's Mountain View Cemetery.



Figure 4.13. Photos of San Bernardino merchant Wong Moi and his wife Jin Kwon Nu and minor son Wong Quoon Sin, 1927. Courtesy of National Archives at Riverside.

Wong Moi's obituary notes that he also served as the leader of the Bing Kung Tong, a Chinese fraternal organization that will be discussed more in-depth in the next section (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1955).

### **Transnational Politics**

Three important Chinese political figures made visits to the Americas between 1894 and 1911: Sun Yat-Sen, a pro-revolution leader who wanted China to become a

republic, and Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao—two “reformers” who called for a constitutional monarchy in China. Because these reformers and revolutionaries were in exile, their parties were established abroad. Sun began the Revive China Society in Hawaii in 1894 and Kang established the Emperor’s Reform Society in Canada in 1899 (Ma 1990). These were two competing platforms, and the Emperor’s Reform Society sought to gain the loyalty of Chinese migrants by advocating for the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act; the two political factions also relied on the support of fraternal associations such as the Chee Kung Tong and the Bing Kung Tong (Lai 2010).

A Chee Kung Tong building was erected in Riverside Chinatown in 1900, but the organization was mentioned in local newspapers as early as 1889. Non-Chinese Riverside residents referred to this building as a “joss house” because the second floor contained a shrine to Guandi, the god of war. Guandi was a popular deity among merchants and fraternal organizations such as the Chee Kung Tong (Williams 2008).



Figure 4.14. Photo of Virginia Wong in front of the Chee Kung Tong building in Riverside Chinatown, 1920. Courtesy of the Museum of Riverside.

The only photo of the Chee Kung Tong hall depicts one of Wong Sai Jock's daughters, Virginia Wong, in front of the building; the photo was likely taken by George Wong around 1920 because it appeared in a 1959 newspaper article where he had been interviewed (Lawton 1959). The building reportedly burned down in a fire around 1920 and was never rebuilt (Patton 1928).

Newspaper accounts indicate that the Chinese in San Bernardino actively followed political changes in China. On October 18, 1911, the local paper wrote reported that a Chinese merchant named Pong Ching raised the flag of the Chinese republic at his business on 140 D Street, a couple of blocks away from Chinatown (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1911d). The newspaper noted that dozens of Chinese visited Pong Ching's store to see the new flag and were supportive of the 1911 Chinese Revolution. In addition, many Chinese migrants reportedly cut off their queues at this time. When the *San Bernardino Sun* questioned Wong Nim about why had not yet cut his queue off, his response was, "Wait awhile." When Wong Nim finally did remove his queue, he told a local reporter that he decided to do it once "he received word that the republic was assured beyond all doubt" (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1912).



Figure 4.15. Photos of San Bernardino merchant Wong Nim with his queue wrapped around his head, circa 1912 and a photo without his queue, circa 1913. Courtesy of National Archives at Riverside.

Local newspapers began reporting on the activities of the Bing Kung Tong association in San Bernardino in the 1920s and early 1930s when Chinese merchant Wong Moi was the leader of the local Bing Kong Tong. The association building was located in Chinatown next to 240 Third Street, the address of Wong Moi's merchant store, but it is unclear when the local chapter was organized in San Bernardino (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1933). The Bing Kong Tong was first established in Los Angeles sometime in the 1880s as an offshoot of the Chee Kung Tong and the rivals of the Bing Kong Tong were the Hop Sing Tong, who already had a lodge in Los Angeles (Greenwood 1996:21-22). This rivalry appears to have spilled over into the San Bernardino Valley in the 1920s. In February 17, 1921, a local newspaper reported that members of the Bing Kong Tong and Hop Sing Tong from other cities would arrive San Bernardino and Riverside to fight each other (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1921a); a similar article appeared in 1926 (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1926).

While the newspapers sensationalized impending "tong wars" in San Bernardino, the leaders of the Bing Kong Tong always stressed that the organization strove for peace. A news article dating to December 14, 1921, shows how the Bing Kong Tong sought to be recognized by dominant society as a politically oriented organization. Prominent white men of San Bernardino were invited to the Bing Kong Tong banquet to celebrate a disarmament conference and all speakers expressed hopes for friendly relations between the U.S. and China (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1921b). The Chief of Police was honored at the banquet, and this might have been a strategic move because Bing Sum Wong recalled that the Bing Kong Tong were involved in narcotics and the operation of lotteries in San Bernardino Chinatown (B.S. Wong 1986). A critical reading of historic

newspaper articles provides a more nuanced view of the rise and decline of fraternal organizations such as the Bing Kong Tong and Chee Kung Tong.

### **The Declining Chinese Population**

After the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the Chinese population declined in the San Bernardino Valley. The citrus economy in the region attracted other ethnic and racial groups and Japanese, Korean, South Asian, Mexican, and Black laborers began moving in. The Japanese and Korean labor force was smaller in number than the Chinese, but had a significant presence beginning in the 1900s. In Riverside, Japanese migrants worked in the citrus industry and rooming houses and restaurants sprung up to serve the growing Japanese labor force (Rawitsch 2012). Korean migrants also worked on citrus farms and created a settlement called Pachappa Camp on what is now Commerce Street (Chang and Brown 2018). In the 1910s, white citrus ranchers in need of a large and cheap labor force began to recruit Mexican laborers from northern Mexico (Carpio 2019). The number of Mexican migrants grew in the town of San Bernardino in the 1920s and they were the dominant workers in the citrus and railroad industries (Ocegeda 2017).

In 1922, Wong Sam was asked by an immigration officer why his store in San Bernardino Chinatown, the Gee Chung, did not have more goods on stock; his answer was,

“This place used to be a very prosperous place for Chinese, but it isn’t now. Formerly we kept several thousand dollars’ worth of goods on hand but we can’t do it now. The last two or three years, people are getting scarce down here and we don’t dare to keep so much” (Wong Sam interview 1922).

Echoing this assessment in 1928, Wong Nim stated in a newspaper interview that the Chinese population was much higher in the past, but blamed the decline on young Chinese who moved to big cities because “they do not like to work hard like their fathers did” (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1928). A *Riverside Press* article from the same year also noted a drop in the Chinese population in the Riverside Chinatown and the number of Chinese gardens as compared to the late nineteenth century (Patton 1928).

During the 1930s, illegal lotteries took the place of legitimate businesses in the two Chinatowns. The Chinese lottery thrived because it was popular among white residents from San Bernardino and Riverside (Odell 1996). Chinese migrants were often arrested on gambling charges; for example, Wong Nim was arrested for operating a gambling place and authorities confiscated gambling paraphernalia (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1935). Bing Sum Wong stated that his father Wong Tong Din, a Gee Chung merchant, was involved in the lottery and wanted him to follow in his place (B.S. Wong 1986). When Voy Wong arrived to join his brother Wong Gan Poy (also known as Poy Wong) and father Wong Sam in San Bernardino at the Gee Chung store in 1937, he realized that the store was merely a front for a gambling operation (J. Wong 2016; 2018). One of Voy’s daughters, Linda Huang (2018), inherited a Chinese lottery ticket punch machine made in San Francisco; this object appears similar to a device from the Bakersfield Chinatown (Boyd 2002:126).



Figure 4.16. Left, example of a Chinese lottery ticket that was played in the 1930s. Courtesy of The California Room, San Bernardino Public Library. Right, lottery ticket puncher from the Gee Chung store in San Bernardino Chinatown. From Linda Huang's collection.

Chinese migrants in the 1930s continued to maintain transnational connections with China. For example, Bing Sum Wong returned to China to marry Ting Fung Fong in 1930 and had to leave her behind in the home village because of restrictive immigration laws (Bing Sum Wong interview 1935; *The San Bernardino County Sun* 1980). Poy Wong—also associated with the Gee Chung store—visited his wife Soo Hing Lee in China in 1934 and their daughter Mil Goon (Mildred) was born the following year (Cheung 2019). Instead of continuing the lottery business in the Gee Chung store, Poy Wong, Voy Wong and Bing Sum Wong chose to turn to operating restaurants instead (L. Huang 2018). In the 1930s and 1940s, many young Chinese migrants with connections to the San Bernardino Valley turned to Chinese restaurant work to make a living. Bing Sum Wong ended up moving to Calexico to open up a restaurant, but was unsuccessful and eventually found his way back to San Bernardino where he established an upscale Chinese restaurant that primarily served white customers (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1980). At the onset of World War II, Voy Wong was able to purchase a restaurant at

a low price from a Japanese American resident of Riverside who was being forcibly sent to a Japanese American incarceration camp on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona (J. Wong 2018). Voy employed his brother Poy to work in the Chungking Restaurant as a cook and Voy's young children and wife would work in the restaurant prepping food (D. Wong 2018). While the younger generation was moving away from the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns in the 1930s and 1940s, some older migrants remained. In the 1930s, George Wong looked after the last group of elderly Chinese men living in Riverside Chinatown (Raven 1987). In San Bernardino, Wong Nim had already sold most of his property in San Bernardino Chinatown before passing away at the age of 89 in December 1941. While the San Bernardino Chinatown was no longer be owned or occupied by any Chinese, George Wong would come to purchase the entirety of Riverside Chinatown at Wong Nim's estate auction and live there until his own death.

## **Conclusion**

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley were an important workforce for the fruit industry and provided services to white residents through laundry work, serving as house servants, working as cooks, and peddling vegetables. Entrepreneurial Chinese worked as laundry operators, merchants, and vegetable gardeners and my research indicates that the majority of Chinese-owned businesses and gardens were cooperative partnerships. By tracing diasporic connections, I found that many partnerships were between family members or those who shared the same ancestral lineage. The Chinese living in Riverside and San Bernardino used these lineage ties, and what little rights they had, to band together to



build and rebuild Chinese communities that underwent devastating fires and racist ordinances that sought to remove the Chinese population from white spaces.

While the residents of Riverside and San Bernardino depended on Chinese labor, anti-Chinese rhetoric was rampant among the white working class and local newspaper editors. The Chinese in the San Bernardino Valley were never the victims of mob violence, but they were terrorized nonetheless through what I call the U.S. government's "deportation regime"—a program that involved everyday harassment and carefully planned deportation raids that often involved the use of violence to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act. The attack on Chinese labor also hurt merchants in Chinatown who relied on vegetable gardeners and field hands to purchase goods from them. Some Chinese merchants also relied on vegetable farming as an additional source of income, but as I have shown, this often put them in danger of being arrested and deported.

The Chinese in the Riverside and San Bernardino also depended on transnational institutions in their everyday lives. Many migrants circumvented anti-Chinese immigration laws by purchasing fraudulent immigration papers through Gold Mountain Firms in Hong Kong. These firms also facilitated legal immigration and my research indicates that they were often organized by village or lineage ties. In addition, transnational institutions in Hong Kong connected the San Bernardino Valley Chinese communities to home villages in China through remittance services and the shipment of burials. Overall, family and lineage ties played a vital role in the resiliency of the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns and the continuation of decades of Chinese transnationalism.

## Chapter 5

### Historical and Archaeological Background: Wo Hing Village

#### Introduction

Wo Hing is the newest village in the Gom Benn village cluster and was established around the turn of the last century. Located in the town of Shuibu (水步) in Taishan County, Wo Hing is an ideal site to examine the materiality of Chinese transnationalism because several migrants connected to the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns moved their families to the village when they had earned enough money abroad to build a new house. At the end of December 2018, I conducted an eight-day archaeological survey of Wo Hing village to investigate the impact of Chinese transnationalism on the home village. In this chapter, I will provide a history of the village, discuss the research design for the archaeological survey, and summarize key findings from the artifact surface collection.



Figure 5.1. Overview drone photo of Wo Hing village.

My survey of Wo Hing village is the first project in Taishan County to employ historical archaeology research methods to study migrant home villages. Another research project that has focused on the home villages from an archaeological perspective is Denis Byrne's work on the concept of transnational heritage corridors in the Chinese diaspora (2016a; 2016b). Byrne is now co-leading a new project, with Ien Ang and Michael Williams, at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, called "The China-Australia Heritage Corridor Project," which focuses on documenting the late nineteenth and early twentieth century cultural heritage of Chinese migrants who moved back forth between Australia and Zhongshan County (2019). The first archaeology project to focus on Chinese migrants' material practices in the home village was conducted at Cangdong Village in Kaiping County through a joint project between Stanford University and Wuyi University; I participated in the Cangdong Village Project during the 2016 and 2017 fieldwork seasons (Voss and Kennedy 2017; Voss 2018; Voss, Kennedy, and Tan 2019). Cangdong Village is over 600 years old, and researchers found that consumption in the home village was not merely a continuation of traditional practices; the production of "home" was being enacted in both the home villages and diasporic sites.

While archaeological research in China seldom focuses on the everyday lives of Chinese villagers, the UNESCO World Heritage inscription of five Kaiping watchtowers (*diaolou*) and their associated villages in 2007 has further legitimized the study of Chinese migrant villages or *Qiaoxiang* (Tan 2007). As a result, the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center at Wuyi University is a leader in *qiaoxiang* research and has produced studies covering topics ranging from remittance letters sent by migrants

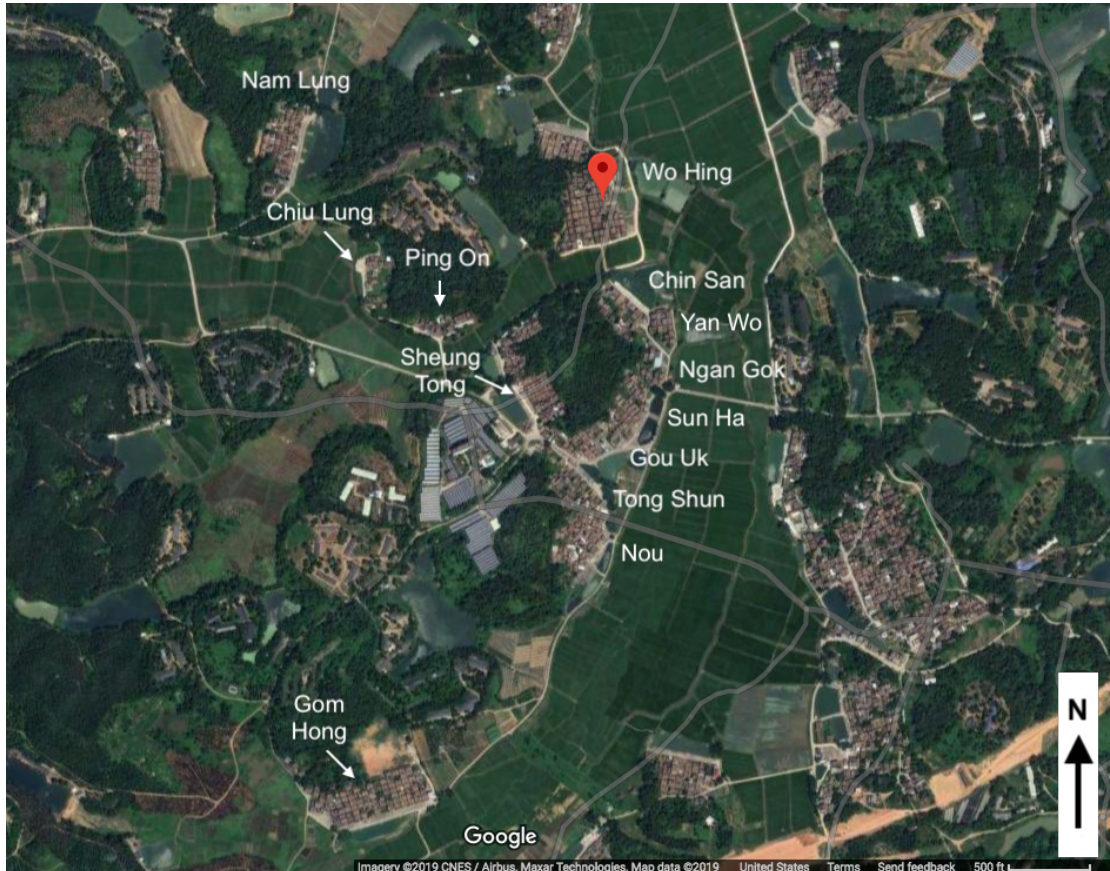
to their families (Liu and Li 2011) to the architecture of remittance-built houses and watchtowers (Tan 2007; 2013a; 2013b; 2015).

My project has been conducted in collaboration with Wuyi University *qiaoxiang* scholars and research at Wo Hing village was authorized by a November 24, 2016, “Intention of Co-operation” established among the Guangdong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of the People’s Republic of China, the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center at Wuyi University, and the Stanford Archaeology Center at Stanford University.

### **Wo Hing Village Historical Background**

Wo Hing is part of the Gom Benn village cluster, which is comprised of 13 villages: Chin San (*Chenshan* 陳山), Chiu Lung (*Chaolong* 潮龍), Gom Hong (*Gantang* 甘棠) Gou Uk (*Gaowu* 高屋), Nam Lung (*Nanlong* 南龍), Ngan Gok (*Yanjiao* 眼角), Sun Ha (*Xinxia* 新霞), Yan Wo (*Renhe* 仁和), Sheung Tong (*Shangtang* 上棠), Ping On (*Pingan* 平安), Nou (*Nao* 腦), Tong Shun (*Tangchun* 塘唇), and Wo Hing (*Heqing* 和興) (Huang and Huang 2014). Wo Hing village has nearly one hundred houses, but only thirteen households currently live in the village. According to the former village head Huang Qingzhong, a dozen or so additional families live nearby in Taicheng (台成), the urban center of Taishan, and the rest of the unoccupied houses in Wo Hing are mostly owned by people living in Hong Kong or the U.S. (Q. Huang 2019). The Gom Benn village cluster sits in close proximity to other Wong village clusters such as Ha Tung, Gun Tin, and Sam Se; these are the same village clusters that Inland Empire Chinese residents with the surname Wong came from and are part of the Yinlong lineage. Before I

discuss the history of this lineage, I want to provide a brief overview of social organization in the Pearl River Delta region to better elucidate the relationship between village and lineage.



Map 5.1. Location of Wo Hing village within the Gom Benn village cluster.

### *Social Organization*

The dominant form of residential organization in rural areas of the Pearl River are single surname villages in which villagers share common descent. Villagers are members of a patrilineal lineage, which enables them to exploit shared lineage resources such as corporately owned paddy fields (R. S. Watson 1982). Marriage in these villages is exogamous and patrilocal, which is why women are not lineage members. In this region, one important duty of patriline is to construct and maintain ancestral halls to ritually

honor the apical ancestor as well as sublineage ancestors (Faure 2007). A lineage's apical ancestor begins with the first person to settle in a particular geographic area, which usually covers one or two neighboring counties (Telford 1986). Lineages also compile genealogy books with the names of ancestors and descendants, which are important in keeping track of who is a "villager" and has settlement rights (Faure 1989).

Organizationally, a lineage is part of a larger clan in which members trace common descent from an apical ancestor far back in time, but this ancestor is often mythical.

According to anthropologist James Watson (1982), it is important to note that lineage and clan are oftentimes used interchangeably, especially in everyday Chinese speech, but one important distinction between the two is that lineages own land while clans do not.

### *Yinlong Lineage*

Wo Hing villagers belong to the Yinlong (隱龍) lineage, which claims to be part of the larger Wong clan that traces their descent from the mythical emperor Huang Di. According to the Yinlong genealogy book or *zupu* (族譜), Yinlong was the lineage's apical ancestor as he was the first ancestor to move to Tung Hau (*Dongkou* 洞口) Village in Shuibu Town, Taishan County, in the year 1253 AD (Huang 2013). During the Ming Dynasty, Yinlong's descendants spread out from Tung Hau to four other nearby villages. These villages were under the jurisdiction of Tung Hau village, which was eventually promoted to a *li* (里); at the time, there were 60 designated *li* in Xinning (the old name for Taishan) (Huang 2013:27). In 1732 AD, an ancestral hall was constructed in Tung Hau village to honor Yinlong; the hall was first renovated in 1862 and underwent another complete restoration in 2013.



Figure 5.2. The Yinlong Ancestral Hall in Tung Hau village.

During the Qing Dynasty, Tung Hau switched to the designation of a *bao* (堡) and in the Republican Period, Tung Hau became known as a *xiang* (鄉); both terms refer to village clusters. Today, Tung Hau is the collective name for three geographically proximate Yinlong village clusters: Gom Benn, Gun Tin, and Ha Tung; currently, these clusters are designated as *xiang* and each cluster has its own village administration office.

The founding ancestors of the Gom Benn village cluster can be traced to three descendants of Yinlong: Huang Fushao, Huang Chaozuo, and Huang Yingzuo. They moved from Tung Hau village to Gom Benn around 1411-1424 AD (R.Z. Huang 2013:378). Fushao is a sixth-generation descendant of Yinlong and established Chin San village. Chaozuo and Yingzuo were two brothers whose father was Fuzheng; they are the seventh-generation descendants of Yinlong and founded the villages of Ngan Gok (formerly a part of Sun Ha), and Sun Ha, respectively. Ancestral halls were built in these

villages to honor these sublineage apical ancestors (Huang and Huang 2014). Over time, the descendants of these three sublineages spread out to other villages in Gom Benn or moved to a nearby village cluster called Sam Se (*Sanshe* 三社) while others established villages in various towns in Taishan County.

### **Previous Research on Wo Hing Village**

Wo Hing village has never undergone in-depth historical study. The village was the subject of a *Los Angeles Times* newspaper article about the history of remittances to villages in Taishan County and the reporter spoke with an elderly man in the village named Wong Kong Chuan who stated that Wo Hing was first established in 1902 (Pierson 2007). The article, however, focused on the village's history of immigration to Los Angeles in the early twentieth century and overlooked an earlier era of emigration from Wo Hing village to the Inland Empire region of southern California. The Inland Empire connection to these villages, however, is just one node in the larger Chinese diaspora. According to Wong Kong Chuan, he had journeyed to the U.S.—referred to as “Gold Mountain” (*Jinshan* 金山) or Gum Saan in Cantonese—once, but unsuccessfully attempted enter California in the 1931 to join relatives in Stockton. His son, Huang Qingzhong, the former Wo Hing village chief, still has a trunk that Wong Kong Chuan returned to China with.





Figure 5.3. A “Gold Mountain” trunk in belonging to Wong Kong Chuan.

While research on Wo Hing has been scant, it is clear that overseas migration played a role in the establishment of the village. For example, the internal migration that occurred within the Tung Hau area Wong villages was made possible by overseas migration. And although Wo Hing was established in 1902, documentary evidence indicates it was a village that was settled over time by people moving out of other villages in Gom Benn. In an immigration interview, George Wong (also known as Wong Ho Lung) stated that he was born in 1900 in a Gom Benn village called Gom Hong but that his father Wong Ben Jew—a vegetable farmer in Riverside—had moved the entire family to a new village called Wo Hing some time before 1914 (F. 14 Wong Ho Lung interview 1934). Similarly, San Bernardino merchant Wong Sam reported in an immigration interview that he moved his family to Wo Hing village in 1914 (Wong Sam interview 1922). According to Wong Sam’s granddaughter Mildred Cheung, the family originally came from a Gom Benn village called Sun Ha (Cheung 2019). The current president of the Gom Benn Village Society, William Wong, is also from Wo Hing, and stated in an oral history interview that his grandfather had farmed in Riverside (W. Wong 2014). My oral history research indicates that Wo Hing was not the only new village that Chinese migrants could move to. The Gom Benn genealogist Huang Zhengxing informed

me that some people from Gom Benn also moved to a new village called Hong Lok (*Kangle*) in the Sam Se village cluster, which was also built at the turn of the twentieth century (Z. Huang 2019).

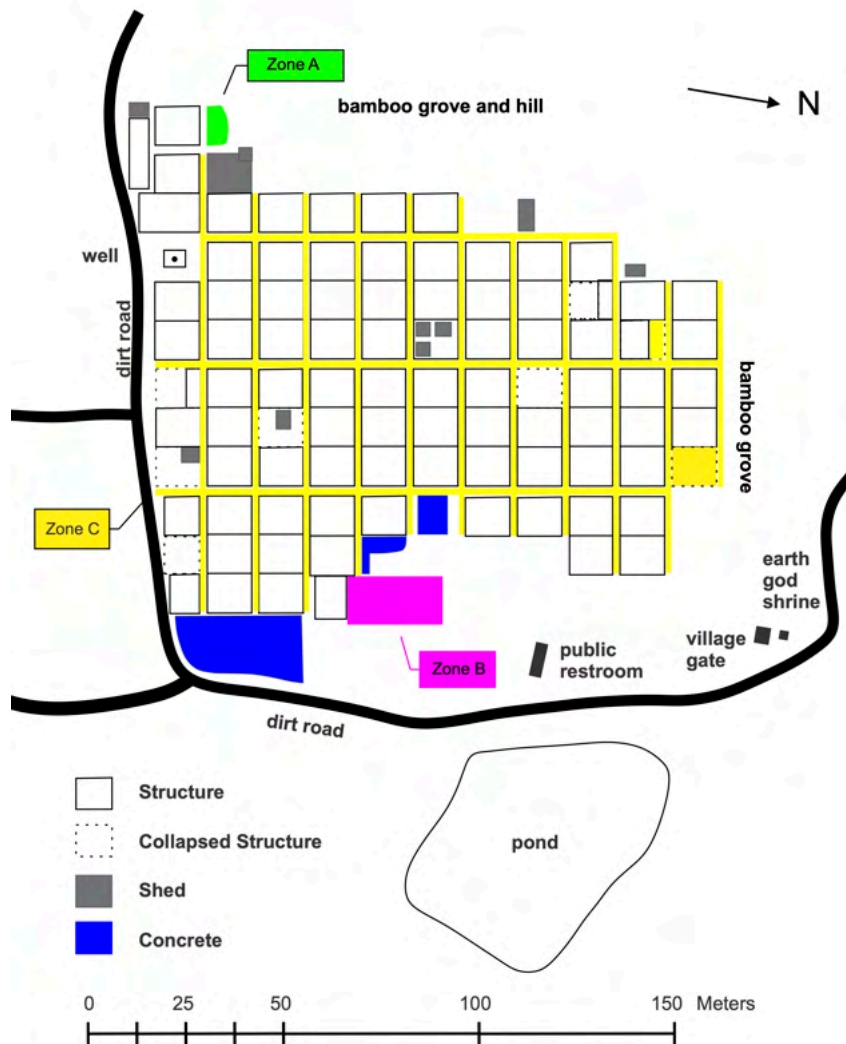
In this chapter, I make the argument that transnationalism not only helped establish Wo Hing as village, but that the home village and diaspora sites are co-constitutive communities—the well-being and development of one community depended on the well-being of the other. In the following sections, I will show how the everyday objects used by transnational Chinese migrants and their family members played a role in this co-constitution process. I begin my discussion by outlining the methods I used to conduct my archaeological survey at Wo Hing village.

## **Wo Hing Village Archaeological Surface Survey**

### *Survey Methods*

Three major areas in Wo Hing village were surveyed: Zone A, a historic trash dump area, Zone B, the site of demolished pig pens, and Zone C, the village alleyways (Figure 5.4). A crew of two to three walked in transects spaced 2m apart in Zone A and B because they were in open areas without structures. Artifacts observed on the surface were collected. Alleyways in Zone C were divided into three types: alley lanes that ran east-west, alley lanes that ran north-south, and intersections between the alleyways; the field crew collected surface artifacts from each alleyway and intersection. Artifacts were also collected from two demolished houses, House A and House B. Villagers living in House C and House D donated bowls from their ancestors' time period to the project's comparative collection.

The following types of artifacts were collected, based on the methods of the Cangdong Village Project research design (Voss and Kennedy 2017): 1) all ceramic sherds (except for non-diagnostic Chinese brown-glazed stoneware body sherds smaller than 5cm diameter), 2) glass bottle fragments (except for non-diagnostic body shards), 3) historic shell and animal bone, and 4) potentially diagnostic historic artifacts including metal objects, non-bottle glass, and artifacts made of stone or mineral. Objects clearly dating to after 1949 were not collected. Each artifact was individually cleaned, weighed, measured, identified, cataloged, and photographed in Taishan County, China.



Map 5.1. Survey areas of the 2018 Wo Hing Village Project.

### *Survey Results*

Zone A is a trash dump located in the southeastern corner of the village. It is subdivided into sections: Upper Half, Lower Half and Surface; the upper and lower section of the trash dump is divided by orange string in Figure 5.4. One Chinese medicine bottle was found to the west of the trash dump boundary and collected for the comparative collection. Villagers state that Zone A is a historic trash dump; residents currently take out their trash to cement vaults on the eastern edge of the village near the pond. Visibility was very good in Zone A.

Zone B is the site of recently demolished pig pens located on the east of the village, in front of several houses. These pig pens were built during the Cultural Revolution but pig raising ended in the 1980s. Because of a government village beautification initiative, the pig pens were knocked down just before surface collection began. Surface visibility varied because of architectural debris from the demolition.



Figure 5.4. Conditions in Zone A, facing northwest.

Zone C is comprised of village alleyways. Village alleyways run east-west and north-south, which creates a regular grid for the village. North-South, East-West, and Intersections were each given names. East-West lanes measure 1.4mx10.0m, North-South lanes measure 2.5mx11.4m, and intersections measure 1.4x2.5m. Surface visibility varied in these spaces because of vegetation in some alleyways. Personal belongings were avoided. Some alleyways were concrete or paved with stone but some were merely dirt and vegetation, such as the horizontal alleys running North-South. Artifacts from the surface of two demolished houses were collected: House A and House B. The bricks from these structures had clearly been taken away but many of the broken objects that had fallen during demolition remained on the surface.



Figure 5.5. Conditions in Zone B, facing north.



Figure 5.6. Conditions in Zone C east-west alley EW 2D, facing east.



Figure 5.7. Conditions in Zone C north-south alley NS 2B, facing north.

All three zones were archaeologically sensitive areas. While the survey at Cangdong village focused only on open spaces in the village where historic trash dumping likely took place, the surface collection in Wo Hing demonstrates that village alleyways are archaeologically significant areas and should be considered in future

surface collections on home villages. In addition, the demolished houses (House A and House B) were archaeologically important areas for recovering a wide range of artifacts related to daily life.

### **Site Formation Processes and Taphonomy**

Based on the social organization of villages in South China by lineage, Wo Hing is a closed residential community, which means that the artifacts deposited on the surface belong to the villagers themselves. As Voss (2008) noted, the social organization of Chinese migrants enables archaeologists to study entire Chinese communities rather than individual households. Site formation processes provide context for my archaeological interpretations of artifacts collected during the Wo Hing Village Project archaeological survey. The villagers informed me that artifacts were deliberately dumped in Zone A as it was a historic trash dump. Most of the artifacts collected from Zones B and C, however, were objects that were likely swept out as trash when the item broke inside a home. Some of these artifacts were likely carried downslope by natural processes such as annual monsoon rains. Like most villages in South China, the back of Wo Hing is elevated as a higher level than the front of the level and the low amount of vegetation in east-west alleys likely helped move artifacts downslope, from west to east. These same artifacts were also likely trampled on by residents and animals that were raised for food in the village, such as pigs.

Artifacts from the archaeological survey could also have been reused for other purposes and deposited on the surface long after their manufacturer, particularly Asian porcelains. My observation from visiting several residences in Wo Hing, however, is that

heirloom tableware ceramics are kept in the same households where they came from. Additionally, some of the artifacts initially collected were modern artifacts deposited by current residents, but closer examinations of diagnostic markers on artifacts such as ceramic motifs and glass manufacturing technology ruled out post-1949 artifacts for my analyses. For example, decal-printed porcelains bowls and machine-made bottles dating to the mid- and late-twentieth century were excluded.

### Artifact Analysis

In total, 851 historic archaeological specimens were collected weighing a total of 19,181 grams. Only historic artifacts that date from the period of 1850 to 1949 are included for analysis in this chapter. In addition, complete historic ceramic vessels donated by villagers for the project’s comparative collection were excluded from artifact analyses. As the tables below indicates, Asian porcelains represent the most numerous artifacts and comprise 56.05% of the entire assemblage by sherd count while glazed stonewares are the dominant artifacts by weight and comprise 60.15% of the assemblage.

<b>Material Type</b>	<b>Zone A</b>	<b>Zone B</b>	<b>Zone C</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Faunal - Unmodified	6	7	11	24	2.82%
Faunal - Modified	0	0	1	1	0.12%
Glass	12	9	48	69	8.11%
Ceramics - Earthenware	0	1	9	10	1.18%
Ceramics - Asian Porcelain	20	29	428	477	56.05%
Ceramics - Glazed Stoneware	36	15	180	231	27.14%
Ceramics - Unglazed Stoneware	4	0	28	32	3.76%
Metal	0	1	4	5	0.59%
Mineral	0	0	2	2	0.24%
				851	100.00%

Table 5.1. Historic artifact counts from each zone, sorted by material.



<b>Material Type</b>	<b>Zone A</b>	<b>Zone B</b>	<b>Zone C</b>	<b>Total (g)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Faunal - Unmodified	6	9	27	42	21.90%
Faunal - Modified	0	9	1	10	0.05%
Glass	521	281	1,131	1,933	10.08%
Ceramics - Earthenware	0	7	45	52	0.27%
Ceramics - Asian Porcelain	488	358	3,646	4,492	23.42%
Ceramics - Glazed Stoneware	2,049	2,143	7,346	11,538	60.15%
Ceramics - Unglazed Stoneware	134	0	998	1,132	5.90%
Metal	0	7	25	32	0.17%
Mineral	0	0	2	2	0.01%
				<b>19,181</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 5.2. Historic artifact weights from each zone, sorted by material.

In the following sections, I discuss the historic artifacts collected by their material type. I provide descriptions and analyses for five artifact material types: ceramics, glass, faunal, metal, and mineral artifacts.

### **Ceramics**

To analyze the ceramics recovered from Wo Hing, I have divided the materials into the following sub-categories: Asian porcelains, earthenwares, glazed stonewares, and unglazed stonewares. Asian porcelains comprise most of the analysis in this section because of the wide variety of decorated tablewares in this sub-category. Most of the glazed stonewares comprise of Chinese brown glazed stoneware, which were used to store foodstuffs. Earthenwares are mainly comprise of British whitewares and most unglazed stoneware vessels were used for cooking.

### *Asian Porcelains*

Asian porcelain sherds from the historic period include patterns that fall into four category types: blue-on-white (also called blue and white in the literature), colored glaze, polychrome overglaze, and polychrome underglaze. Bamboo and Double Happiness ceramics are handpainted blue designs and are considered blue-on-white ceramics but most vessel bodies tend to appear gray; one exception is an underfired Bamboo bowl in the Wo Hing assemblage, which appears white-bodied. The Double Happiness and Bamboo decorated ceramics at Wo Hing only show up in bowl form, which conforms to what is found at diasporic sites (Greenwood 1996). Double Happiness bowls in the Wo Hing collection are generally similar in size and appearance to one another except for one small sized bowl, which was likely used by a child.

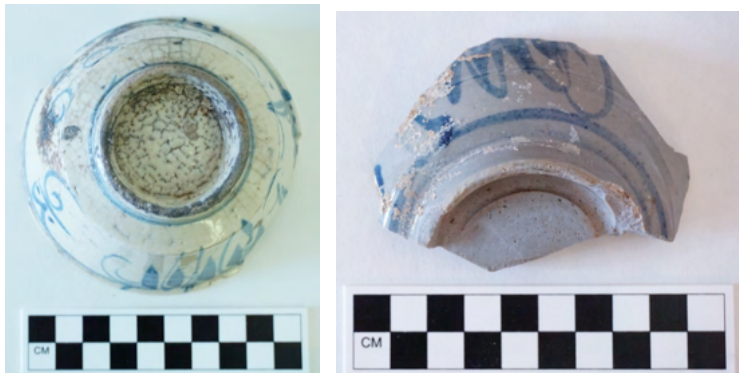


Figure 5.8. Bamboo bowls. *Left*, one with a white body IN-00025.001 and *right*, one with a gray body IN-00143.001.



Figure 5.9. Double happiness bowls. *Left*, typical sized bowl IN-00384.001 and *right*, small sized bowl IN-00256.002.

Winter Green is a colored glaze Chinese tableware pattern that has been mistakenly called “Celadon” in the past (Sando and Felton 1993). Identifiable Winter Green vessel forms found at Wo Hing include spoon, cup, condiment dish, and bowl. Winter Green also comes in plate form (Choy 2014:8). Some of the Winter Green vessels had partial maker’s marks hand painted on their base. Choy notes, however, the base marks on Winter Green were sometimes devolved forms of reign marks or undefined patterns or strokes (2014:9).

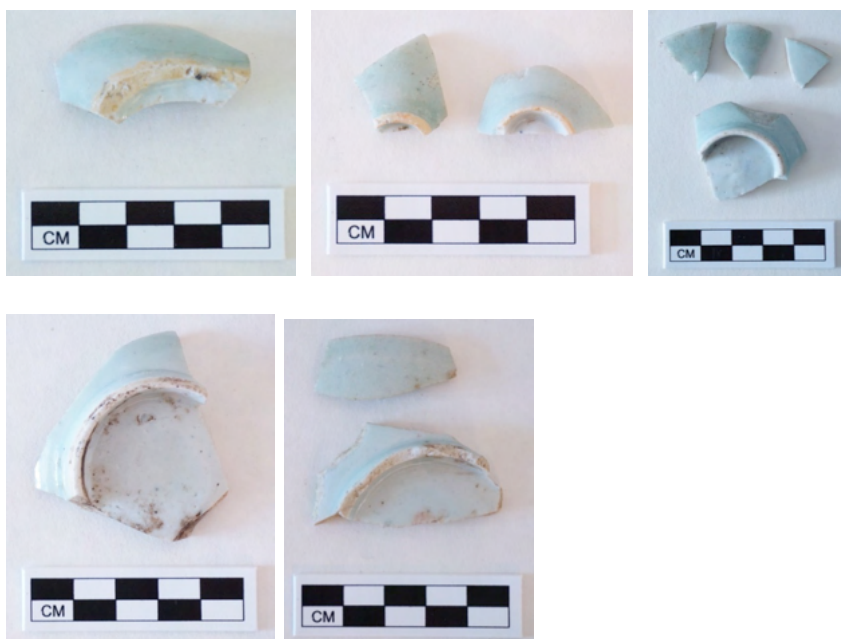


Figure 5.10. Winter Green vessel forms. *Above left*, spoon exterior IN-00213.002, *above left*, small cup IN-00086.003, *above right*, medium cup IN-00051.003, *below left*, bowl IN-00089.002, *below right*, condiment dish (bottom right) IN-0256.004.

The Four Seasons Flower (also called Four Seasons) vessel forms collected at Wo Hing include spoon (decoration on interior), condiment dish (decoration on interior), flatware (decoration on interior, possible from a plate or condiment dish) and hollowware (decoration mostly on exterior, possibly from a cup or bowl). Four Seasons tablewares

are found at Chinese diaspora sites at late nineteenth century sites as well as twentieth century contexts such as the Tucson Chinatown (Lister and Lister 1989). This pattern, however, is notably absent from the Cangdong Village surface collection (Voss and Kennedy 2017) and excavated contexts (Voss et al. 2019). Some of ceramics used in Voy Wong’s restaurant, which he owned and operated from 1942 to 1974 in Riverside, CA, are Four Seasons vessels with “CHINA” painted in red on the base (see figure below). Lister and Lister (1989) posit that Four Seasons ceramics painted with a red ‘eternal knot’ might indicate an earlier period of production for this particular design. One Four Seasons flatware sherd, IN-00008.005, from the Wo Hing assemblage has a faint red mark that appears to have this mark.



Figure 5.11. Four Seasons Flower vessel forms. *Above left*, Wo Hing spoon IN-00001.001, *above middle*, Wo Hing condiment dish IN-00256.007, *top row*, Wo Hing hollowware sherd IN-00228.004, *below left*, interior of Voy Wong’s restaurant condiment dish, and *bottom row*, exterior base of Voy Wong’s restaurant condiment dish.

Two sherds from a teacup are comprised of a green stylized *shou* character and red eternal knot motif. This polychrome overglaze Shou pattern is also called “Longevity” and has also been found at excavations of the Riverside Chinatown (GBF 1987), Los Angeles Chinatown (Greenwood 1996), and Yreka Chinatown (Heffner 2019), which are all sites that span from the late nineteenth- to early twentieth century. One Shou cup base from the Los Angeles Chinatown had a red stamp on it that read “China” in reverse, which was a mark required by the United States beginning in 1890 for imported wares from China (Greenwood 1996:73). Another identifiable polychrome overglaze pattern is a porcelain sherd from an octagonal-shaped bowl with an exterior rim band comprised of a design in red, blue, yellow, and black. A more complete version of this bowl was found at the Los Angeles Chinatown, catalog number UPT 5775A, with an illegible red stamp reign mark.



Figure 5.12. Polychrome tableware ceramics. *Above left to right*, Shou (Longevity) cup and sherds from Wo Hing (IN-00324.029 and IN-00324.032); *below*, octagonal bowl sherd from Wo Hing (IN-00067.006).

Neither of the two polychrome tableware patterns—Four Seasons and Shou—were found at Cangdong Village. Wo Hing’s polychrome porcelain assemblage has much more overlap with ceramics found at Chinese diaspora sites in the American West.

Tzu Chin or Batavia Brown polychrome underglaze pattern is found in both Chinese diaspora contexts as well as the home village. This pattern is a lustrous brown on white motif and as Greenwood notes, the pattern dates back to around 1750 with Dutch importers but the pattern clearly continued to be copied and produced after that (1996:73).

In addition to ceramics typically found at diaspora sites, many of the Asian porcelains match those found at Cangdong Village. Apart from Double Happiness and Bamboo, the most common blue-on-white patterns found during test excavations at Cangdong Village include Scrolled Chrysanthemum, Peach and Fungus, and Rock and Orchid (Voss et al. 2019). Scrolled Chrysanthemum came in plate and condiment dish form while Peach and Fungus liquor cups and Rock and Orchid plate sherds were recovered. In Wo Hing, one unique blue-on-white spoon was identified as a match to a spoon excavated at the IJ56 Block of Sacramento where a Chinatown existed (Hellmann and Yang 1997:168). Researcher Gary Weisz notes the Sacramento Chinatown spoon is identical to spoons recovered from the 1830s Desaru Shipwreck (Weisz 2014:194).

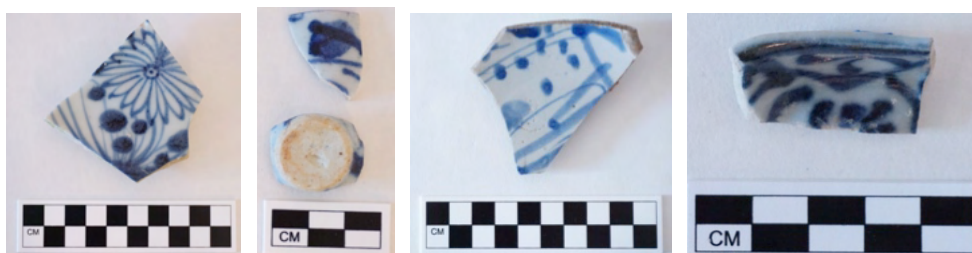


Figure 5.13. Common blue-on-white Asian porcelains. Left to right: Scrolled Chrysanthemum plate sherd IN-00228.005, Peach and Fungus liquor cup IN-00228.016, Rock and Orchid plate sherd IN-00164.005 and Desaru Shipwreck-style spoon IN-00256.018.

Another important subset of blue-on-white Asian porcelains in the Wo Hing assemblage are ceramics with unglazed firing rings or circles on the interior; some fragments also have unglazed bases. I categorize these as Unglazed Ring ceramics and these appear in bowl and plate form. This waretype was also found at Cangdong Village and ceramics with an unglazed ring were produced by being stacked on top of each other when fired (Voss and Kennedy 2017:135). Some of these vessels could be the *fu* (福) ceramics described in a nineteenth-century Chinese store ledger from Northern California; *fu* ceramics were decorated with one to three Chinese characters representing prosperity and are characterized by unglazed firing rings (also known as biscuit bands) on the interior (Sando and Felton 1993). During the surface survey, 17 sherds were collected weighing a total of 570 grams; most had little to no decoration.

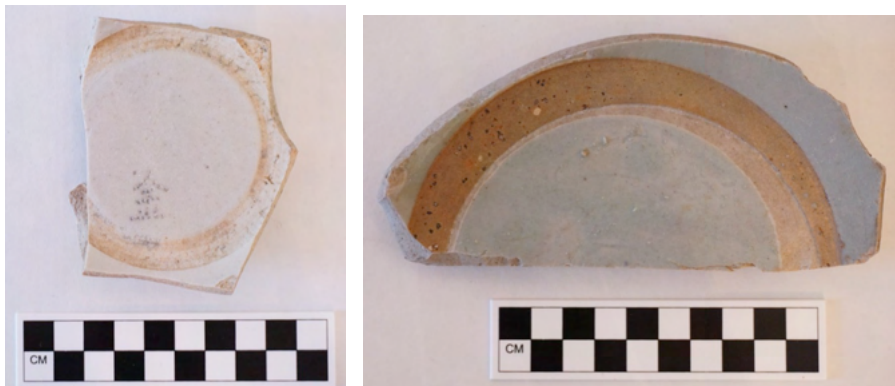


Figure 5.14. Asian porcelains with unglazed firing rings on interior. *Left*, bowl IN-00341.008 and *right*, plate IN-00307.001.

Three other additional noteworthy blue-on-white ceramic patterns include a *fu* pattern bowl with a matte brown exterior glaze, a brown-dressed rim sherd, and a cormorant medallion bowl. The highly stylized *fu* (福) character in the interior center medallion of the bowl matches nineteenth century types found in Indonesia and Malaysia; some important differences are that the Southeast Asian ceramics have an

unglazed firing ring, additional motifs on the cavetto, and do not have an exterior brown glaze (Willets and Lim 1981:82). The brown-dressed rim sherd matches the “Lotus motif with brown-dressed rim” sherds found at Cangdong Village. Voss et al. (2019) note that these have also been found at Northern Pacific Railroad Sites (1881-1883) and complete examples are shallow with the center interior unglazed. Linda Huang allowed me to photograph examples of these bowls that she collected from her father Voy Wong’s house in Wo Hing and was told by her mother that they were for grinding food. Another pattern that is found at both Cangdong village and Chinese diaspora sites is the Cormorant motif in medallion form. One handpainted sherd from Wo Hing is a match for a Cormorant bowl that was found at Tucson’s Chinatown (Lister and Lister 1989:58). Archaeologists at Cangdong Village found that villagers had access to a larger variety of blue-on-white tablewares than those living in Chinese diaspora sites where Double Happiness, Bamboo, and Sweet Pea dominate; Wo Hing appears to have been in a similar situation (Voss et al. 2019).



Figure 5.15. Rarer blue-on-white Asian porcelains. *Left to right*, complete *fu* bowl IN-00383.002, brown-dressed rim sherd IN-00338.005, and hand-painted cormorant hollowware rim sherd IN-00190.002.

An analysis of the relative frequency of tablewares within the Asian porcelain assemblage can reveal villager preferences for expensive or inexpensive wares.



Additionally, it illuminates differences between Asian porcelain tablewares found at Wo Hing and those found at Cangdong Village and at various Chinese diaspora sites. In order to determine the most dominant Asian porcelain patterns, I only included identifiable patterns with six or more sherds in my analysis.

<b>Ceramic Pattern</b>	<b>Sherd Count</b>	<b>% By Sherd Count</b>	<b>Weight (gram)</b>	<b>% By Weight</b>
Double Happiness	235	49.27%	2098	46.71%
Winter Green	33	6.92%	171	3.81%
Bamboo	23	4.82%	382	8.50%
Unglazed Ring	17	3.56%	570	12.69%
Peach and Fungus	16	3.35%	45	1.00%
Scrolled Chrysanthemum	7	1.47%	54	1.20%
Four Seasons	6	1.26%	95	2.11%

Table 5.3. Frequency of Asian porcelain patterns by sherd count and weight.

As the table above indicates, the most frequent blue-on-white patterns in the Wo Hing assemblage are: Double Happiness, Bamboo, Peach and Fungus, and Scrolled Chrysanthemum; Partially Unglazed tablewares do not constitute one pattern but are included because they make up a significant portion of Asian tablewares. The color-glazed ceramic pattern Winter Green and the Four Seasons polychrome overglaze pattern, were also popular ceramic patterns. The high frequencies of Four Seasons Flowers, Double Happiness, Bamboo, and Winter Green patterns matches the types of *minyao* or folk wares that are also commonly found Chinese diaspora sites (Choy 2014). The only common pattern that is completely absent in the Wo Hing surface collection is a blue-on-white motif called Sweet Pea; Voss et al. have also pointed out that this pattern is notably missing from the Cangdong Village assemblage and that its absence might indicate that

people living in the home village were acquiring their ceramics from different suppliers than migrants abroad (2019:76).

In general, Double Happiness ceramics appear in smaller quantities at many Chinese diaspora sites in the U.S. after the year 1870 (Sando and Felton 1993). Sando and Felton (1993) note that blue-on-white porcelains such as Bamboo and Double Happiness were the least expensive of the folk wares that Chinese migrants could purchase in America. Taken together, Double Happiness and Bamboo vessels comprise just over half of the Asian porcelain assemblage by sherd count and weight; assuming that prices were the same in southern China, it appears that villagers in Wo Hing preferred purchasing inexpensive porcelains. This is similar to Cangdong Village where a minimum number of vessel analysis of excavated contexts showed that villagers were inclined to purchase simple blue-on-white ceramics, which made up anywhere from 63% to 83% of the ceramic tablewares across the site (Voss et al. 2019:93). The Unglazed Ring waretype is found at Chinese diaspora sites in small quantities and appear to make up a small portion of Asian tablewares at Cangdong village (Voss and Kennedy 2017).

Another example of the impact of transnationalism on Wo Hing village comes from analyzing pecked marks on Asian tablewares. Many of the Asian porcelain ceramic sherds at Wo Hing have marks pecked on the interior, particularly on bowls and other hollowwares. These pecked marks likely indicate ownership (Michaels 2005). Asian porcelains at Cangdong Village also have pecked marks, but virtually all are Chinese characters (Voss and Kennedy 2017). The thirty-two pecked marks found on various Asian porcelain vessels at Wo Hing are mostly comprised of Chinese characters (n=25), but also include an English letter (n=1) and depictions of objects such as a leaf or coins

(n=4); only two pecked marks were completely undecipherable. Many of the pecked characters and figures served as symbols, which I discuss more in-depth discussion in Chapter 6. Chinese characters, however, might represent given names or nick names. For example, descendants of Voy Wong—one of San Bernardino merchant Wong Sam’s sons—recovered several double happiness rice bowls with the character 仲 (*zhong*) pecked on it; letters addressed to Voy Wong indicate that this was the same character as his childhood nickname.



Figure 5.16. Asian porcelain bowls with peck marks on interior. *Left*, Chinese 同 character IN-00355.002, *middle*, “W” in cursive IN-00345.001, and *left*, “leaf” figure IN-00324.003.

The English letter pecked mark is a cursive “W” appears on a Double Happiness pattern bowl and might be an abbreviation for a given name or for the surname “Wong.” The cursive “W” pecked mark is a unique artifact that provides material evidence that Chinese migrants applied skills they had acquired abroad into their daily lives in the home village. This pecked mark was undoubtedly created by a returning migrant because the elegantly pecked “W” indicates good penmanship. At the turn of the twentieth century, penmanship in the American education system was as important as learning to read and arithmetic (Eaton 1985). Because pecked marks are used to indicate personal ownership, this individual’s use of an English letter to identify their Chinese bowl was likely a signal to other villagers that they were rooted both in their home village as well as another country.

### *Earthenwares*

Ten Euroamerican whiteware ceramic fragments weighing a total of 52 grams were collected. Most are likely British and are comprised of undecorated sherds such as the pitcher handle and flatware rim below. One hollowware fragment, IN-00093.001, matches a sherd found at Cangdong Village that has the same repeating blue stencil or stamped design. Other possibly diagnostic sherds include an unidentified maker's mark in green and a green transferprint-ware fragment. Voss and Kennedy also found these improved whitewares at Cangdong Village, which as they state was most commonly produced in the late nineteenth century; they argue that the presence of these wares demonstrates that villagers were a part of the global mass consumption of these goods (2017:67).

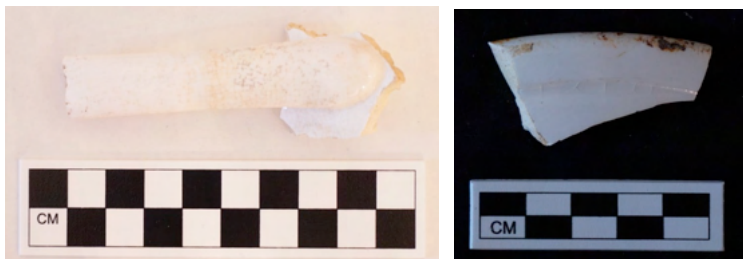


Figure 5.17. White earthenware vessels. *Left*, pitcher handle IN-00356.001 and *right*, flatware fragment IN-00232.001.

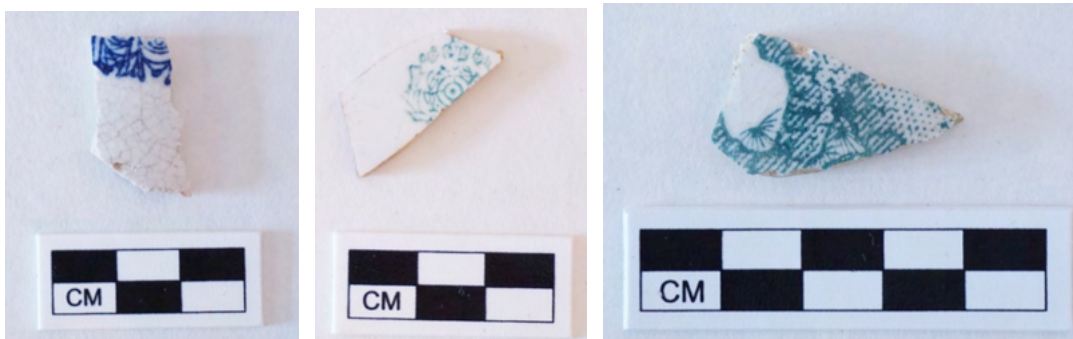


Figure 5.18. White earthenware sherds with decoration or marks. *Left*, hollowware fragment IN-00093.001, *middle*, flatware fragment IN-00082.001, and *right*, flatware fragment IN-00215.001.

### *Stonewares*

Chinese brown-glazed stoneware (CBGS) sherds represent most of the stoneware ceramics recovered from Wo Hing. Diagnostic sherds are similar to vessel forms found on Chinese diaspora sites such as liquor bottles, barrel jars, globular jars, shouldered jars, straight-sided jars, and wide-mouth jars (Yang and Hellmann 1998). Unlike the CBGS found at Cangdong Village, there are no impressed patterns on any of the sherds at Wo Hing. The most numerous CBGS vessel forms at Wo Hing are shallow bowls and medium to large wide-mouth jars with flat rims; whole vessel forms were found in the kitchen storage area of the village community hall indicating the possibility that sherds from these vessel forms represent more modern ceramics. A small number of color glazed stoneware include a white-glazed rim with an opening similar to that of a globular jar and flared rims from one green-glazed vessel and one blue-glazed vessel.

Common unglazed stoneware fragments include concave lids for jars, cooking grater fragments, and cooking pots. One unusual artifact in this category is the corner of an unglazed rectangular vessel decorated on the exterior with a key fret pattern.



Figure 5.19. Examples of Chinese brown glazed stoneware bowls. *Left to right*, modern shallow bowl and two modern flat-rimmed bowls from the Wo Hing community hall and kitchen.



Figure 5.20. Chinese brown glazed stoneware barrel jar fragments. *Left*, rim and base IN-00257.001 and *right*, the same jar with barrel jar lid IN-00257.002.



Figure 5.21. Chinese brown glazed stoneware globular jar fragments. *Left*, large globular jar with lug IN-00041.001 and *right*, unglazed globular jar lid IN-00016.002.



Figure 5.22. Chinese brown glazed stoneware straight-sided jar. Small jar, IN-00016.001.



Figure 5.23. Unglazed Chinese stoneware. *Left*, interior of cooking grater IN-00258.001, *right*, exterior of vessel with key fret design IN-00027.001.

## Glass

One common category of historic artifacts in the glass assemblage are medicinal containers. One unique medicine bottle is a machine-made amber bottle that is the same shape and color as an Anacin aspirin pill bottle; the embossed base mark indicates that the bottle was manufactured in the United States by Owens-Illinois in 1944 (Lockhart and Hoenig 2018). Other medicine bottles have the characteristics of a two-part vertical mold with a separate base part glass and were likely manufactured in China; in the U.S. this manufacturing technique was most common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Jones and Sullivan 1985:28). Several of the Wo Hing Chinese medicine bottles are embossed. One round bottle has the Chinese characters “平和司” which translates to “gentle department” or “department peace” depending on how it is read; this is likely a

brand but research could not confirm this. Two other bottle types have embossed hatch marks for liquid measurements and have hand-tooled prescription finishes with openings that originally held a cork. Only one rectangular Chinese medicine vial was recovered; this aqua vial is missing its neck but is similar to tubular vials with a hollow that matches the diameter of its neck. These vials are commonly found at Chinese diaspora sites (Greenwood 1996).



Figure 5.24. American and Chinese medicine bottles. Left to right: Owens-Illinois pill bottle IN-00310.001, Chinese medicine bottle embossed with 平和司 IN-00311.001, Chinese medicine bottle IN-00312.001, Chinese medicine bottle IN-00313.001, Chinese medicine vial IN-00244.001.

One unique glass medicine bottle fragment in the Wo Hing assemblage is a bottle neck with the letters “GRE...” embossed on the shoulder; the embossing and shape of this fragment matches the bilingual Abietine medicine bottle found at Cangdong Village. The bottle would have had a stopper finish with a metal screw cap and likely held liquid medicine; the full embossing probably read, “GREENS LUNGS RESTORER” (Voss and Kennedy 2017:93-96). Voss et al. (2018) theorize that that this medicine bottle was the product of a partnership between Taishanese immigrant Chun Kong You and Abietine Medical Company owner R.M. Green who both lived in Oroville, CA; the company



operated from 1885 to 1921. The presence of this bottle at both Cangdong and Wo Hing indicates the possibility that the home villages were a market for Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs.

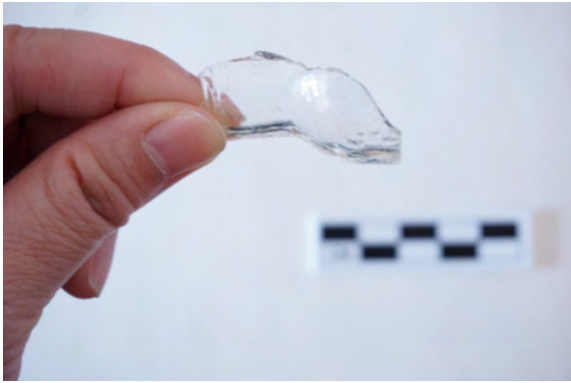


Figure 5.25. Abietine medicine bottle. Neck and shoulder fragment IN-00070.001.

A group of glass medicine bottles provides some supporting evidence for the idea that home villages were markets for Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs. Three topical medicine bottles collected in Wo Hing have Southeast Asian origins but were probably produced by factories in mainland China or Hong Kong for local consumption. These medicine bottles include an unidentified brand from Singapore, White Flower Embrocation Oil (also known as Pak Fah Yeow), and Kwan Loong Oil; the latter two brands were started by Chinese immigrants. White Flower Embrocation Oil was produced by Hoe Hin Pak Fah Yeow, a company that was founded in 1927 in Penang, Malaysia (Hong Kong Memory 2012) while the Kwan Loong Medicated Oil Distribution Company Limited was incorporated in Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia in 1933 (Ipoh World 2012). White Flower Embrocation Oil and Kwan Loong Oil medicines were so successful in marketing their products that they continue to manufacture the very same products in similarly shaped bottles to this day.



Figure 5.26. Southeast Asian topical medicine bottles. *Left*, Singapore brand medicine bottle IN-00385.001, *middle*, White Flower Embrocation Oil IN-00263.001, *right*, Kwan Loong Oil IN-00330.001.

Cold cream jar fragments made of milk glass were also identified as historic artifacts. Only one cold cream jar was identifiable and it has an embossed base mark “蝶霜” that translates to “Butterfly Cream,” a beauty product for women. This product was manufactured by a company based in Shanghai, China and was popular in the 1930s where advertisements featured female film stars; it continued to be manufactured after 1949 (Baidu 2020). The presence of this product and other cold cream jar fragments indicates that women in the village occasionally consumed luxury products.

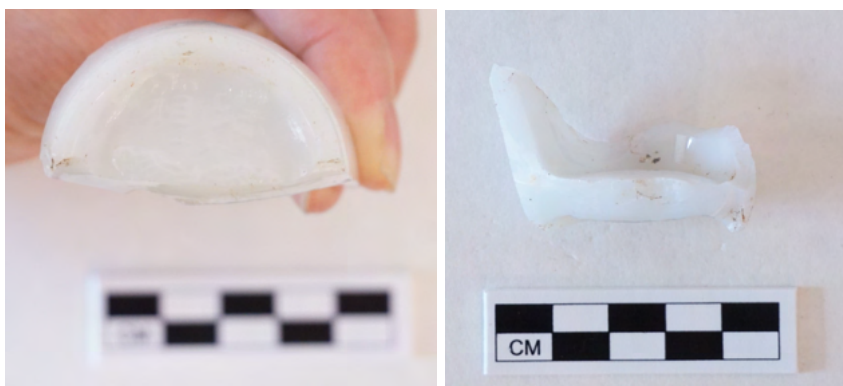


Figure 5.27. Butterfly Cream (蝶霜) jar. *Left*, base and *right*, interior IN-00247.001.

## Faunal

Faunal materials at Wo Hing were a small part of the total assemblage and are comprised of animal remains and one four-hole shell button. The animal remains include pig teeth, bivalve shells, and snail shells. The pig teeth likely derived from pigs that were communally being raised in the village pig pens between 1949 and the 1980s; it is, however, possible that individual households raised their own pigs within their own residences in the early twentieth century. The oyster shell was likely consumed as food but the clam shells and snail shells are very small and were probably present on the land rather than a food source.



Figure 5.28. Pig teeth. *Left*, IN-00274.001 and *right*, IN-00282.001.

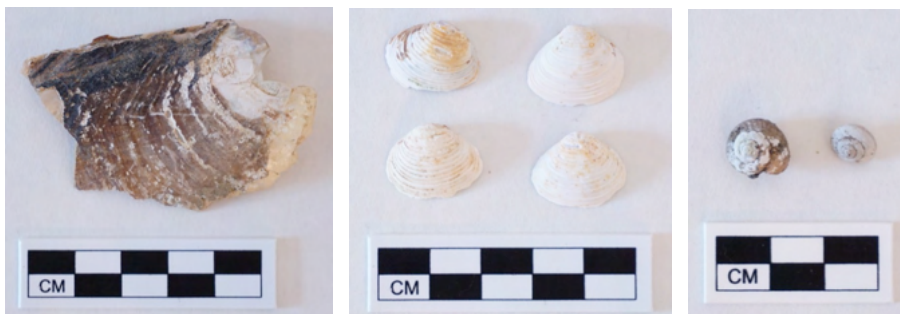


Figure 5.29. Mollusc shells. *Left*, Oyster shell IN-00252.001, *middle*, clam shells IN-00252.002, and *right*, snail shells IN-00252.003.

A round one-piece four-hole shell button matches the shape and size of American and European cut or carved shell buttons. These shell buttons were manufactured in England, France, Austria, and the U.S. from ocean or freshwater shells beginning in the early 1800s and continue to be manufactured today (Rogers 1996:863).



Figure 5.30. Four-hole shell button. Face and back of button IN-00077.001.

## **Metal**

The metal assemblage from Wo Hing includes ferrous and non-ferrous objects. Many of the ferrous objects are related to door hardware and tools such as a pair of scissors and a sickle. Non-ferrous objects include a copper alloy spoon and several Chinese coins; I have only included these as non-ferrous artifacts for analysis. The silverplated copper-alloy spoon has a fiddle pattern that was manufactured in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and then became popular in England and the United States (“Fiddle Spoon” n.d.). The spoon from Wo Hing has five illegible hallmarks impressed on the back of the handle, which indicates it is likely a British-manufactured spoon (“British Sterling” 2018). The spoon’s short length (14cm or 5.5 in.) indicates that it was likely a teaspoon or condiment spoon.



Figure 5.31. British-manufactured metal spoon. Front (left) and back (right) of spoon IN-00091.001.

While Chinese coins in diasporic sites were often used as gambling tokens or in medicinal practices (Costello et al. 2008), the coins recovered from Wo Hing were likely used for auspicious purposes. The photo below shows coins sewed onto red fabric as integral parts of the Wo Hing village community hall doorframes. The absence of any other gaming tokens such as black or white glass *zhu*, which are commonly found at Chinese diaspora sites, further points to the ritual use of these coins.



Figure 5.32. Chinese coins. *Left*, photo of coins sewed onto red cloth in the doorway of the village's community hall and *right*, obverse and reverse of Chinese coin IN-00087.00.

## Mineral

Artifacts made of stone or mineral comprise the smallest portion of the Wo Hing artifact assemblage. The two historic artifacts in the collection are a small chert flake and a stone button. The black color of the chert flake indicates that it is of British

manufacture (Luedtke 1999). The chert flake could have been struck from a gunflint because gunflint fragments were found at Cangdong Village during excavation (Voss et al. 2019).

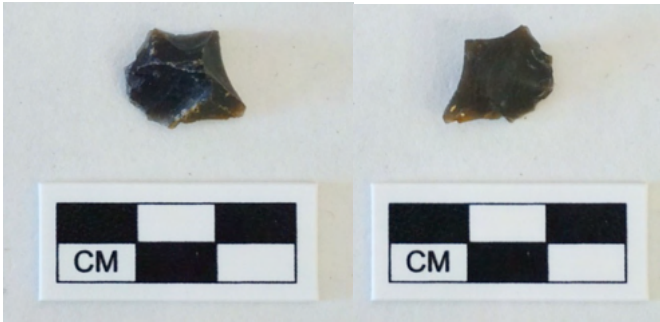


Figure 5.33. Chert flake, possibly part of a British gunflint. Dorsal and ventral surface of chert flake IN-00198.001.

As Voss et al. (2019) note, the gunflints reference the violence in the region caused by bandits; evidence of firearms should be expected because the numerous watchtowers in Taishan were often designed with rectangular gun-hole slots throughout. Another possibility is that the chert flake comes from a strike-a-light. In Huie Kin's memoir, he describes his childhood in a Taishan village in the 1860s before immigrating to the U.S. and recalls that his father always wore a fire starter kit belt in order to light his smoking pipe (Huie 1932).



Figure 5.34. Two-hole light green stone button. Face and back of button IN-00299.001.

A two-hole stone button was collected but the button's rock type has not yet been identified; its light green color and lack of luster point to the possibility that the button was carved from jadeite. The one-piece button has a recessed rim and fish-eye panel on its face, which matches the characteristics of Euroamerican shell buttons that were manufactured from 1800 to the present (Rogers 1996).

### **Summary of Findings**

The Wo Hing village surface survey assemblage analyzed in this chapter is important because it contributes a much-needed dataset of material culture related to daily life in the home villages of Chinese migrants. As the first archaeology project in Taishan County, the artifacts from this assemblage provide the only available information on consumption patterns in a county that has a long history of migration to North America. The Wo Hing artifact collection is also significant because it spans a tightly dated period of time—1902 to 1949—and will be useful in dating artifacts found in other home villages and at Chinese diaspora sites.

The artifacts are also significant because they illuminate how transnationalism affected consumption practices. My analysis of the ceramic assemblage reveals that blue-on-white vessels dominate the Asian porcelain tablewares, which is an indication that villagers preferred inexpensive tablewares; this is also what Cangdong Village researchers reported in their archaeological investigations. This finding appears to fit with the dominant narrative that villagers were reliant on overseas remittances to survive, but other artifacts indicate that Wo Hing villagers were also able to purchase more expensive polychrome tableware patterns such as Winter Green, Four Seasons Flower, and Shou. The presence of the Chinese “Butterfly Cream” jar fragment provides further evidence

that villagers were not merely using remittances for survival; this artifact illuminates the types of luxury products women in the village were consuming.

The artifact assemblage also provides insights into how Chinese migrants incorporated material practices from abroad into their daily lives. The presence of small quantities of Euroamerican ceramics, glass, metal, and mineral artifacts indicates that most of these objects were supplementing rather than replacing Chinese artifacts in the same categories. In many cases, the Euroamerican products were new waretypes or forms that did not replace existing categories of goods. For example, Chinese tablewares were dominated by bowls, specifically Double Happiness bowls, while four out of the ten Euroamerican earthenware sherds are flatwares and one sherd was a pitcher handle. Another example is an American aspirin bottle; villagers and returning migrants had access to Chinese medicine bottles, but those bottles held liquid medicines rather than medicine in a pill form. A final example is the silverplated copper-alloy spoon; this spoon has a smaller bowl than a ceramic Chinese spoon and would have provided exact measurements for Western-style food items such as sugar.

Some Euroamerican artifacts, however, had likely already been part of village life in the late Qing. For example, gunflints and strike-a-lights had already been introduced to China in the nineteenth century so by 1902, when Wo Hing was established as a village, these objects would have been what archaeologist Douglas Ross calls “indigenized material culture” and should be classified as transnational artifacts that are neither Western nor Chinese (Ross 2013). The British whitewares, which were widely available for global mass consumption in the nineteenth century, were likely also indigenized objects that residents of Wo Hing were already familiar with.



Overall, the limited number of new Euroamerican objects introduced to the home village were likely goods that were already a part of the migrant's daily practice abroad. Familiar Euroamerican artifacts from abroad probably provided comfort to migrants transitioning back to life in the home village, especially when home visits could last for up to two years. This finding shows that the impact of transnationalism on the home village does not merely begin and end with remittances; objects play an important role in facilitating the back-and-forth movement of Chinese migrants, which ensured the survival of communities on both sides of the Pacific. I provide further evidence for this argument in the next chapter, which is a comparative analysis of the artifacts recovered from Wo Hing and existing artifact collections from the two Inland Empire Chinatowns.

## Chapter 6

### A Comparative Analysis of Material Culture

#### Introduction

This chapter focuses on comparative analyses of material culture between the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns in Southern California and Wo Hing village in China. Comparing the two diasporic sites to the home village provides important insights into the transpacific circulation of goods, ideas, and material practices. My comparative analysis of the archaeological assemblages from all three sites includes an examination of Asian porcelain decorations and pecked marks, which sheds light on the aesthetic choices that Chinese migrants made in purchasing ceramic patterns and highlights differences in commensal eating practices. In addition, I examine artifact types that are commonly found in Chinese diasporic sites but not in the home village to illuminate gendered labor and how migrants in the early twentieth century engaged in specific types of work when the Chinese population was in decline and anti-Chinese sentiment remained high. First, I contextualize these comparative analyses with a historical background that summarizes how the San Bernardino Chinatown and Riverside Chinatown became archaeological sites. Both Chinatowns were archaeologically investigated by cultural resource management firms that produced a comprehensive report on the archaeological features and artifacts that were excavated.

#### Archaeological Site Histories

In 1925, the California Bureau of Highways, now known as the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), purchased land that comprised a part of the San

Bernardino Chinatown owned by Wong Nim, a resident Chinese merchant, with the intention of constructing offices. After Wong Nim's death in 1941, Caltrans purchased the remaining property he owned in the San Bernardino Chinatown at his 1944 estate auction. While Wong Nim property had comprised a large portion of the southern side of the San Bernardino Chinatown on Third Street, N.E. Van Ness owned the northern side. Van Ness sold a row of attached brick buildings on this northern side to the County of San Bernardino in 1942 for use as office space (Costello et al. 2004:2.39). Wong Nim's death in 1941 also triggered the sale of the Riverside Chinatown property, located 12 miles away from the San Bernardino Chinese community. The Riverside Chinatown was still partially owned by other Chinese partners who had moved away, but the title was cleared in 1943 and George Wong was able to purchase the property (Lawton 1987b:308).

In the 1960s, four original brick structures from northern side of San Bernardino Chinatown were demolished by the owner, the County of San Bernardino, "to make way for an expansion of the county courthouse parking lot" (Costello et al. 2008:138). The Chinatown in Riverside, however, received historic preservation attention by local residents. In January 1968, the Riverside County Historical Commission recognized the significance of Riverside Chinatown and designated it a County Historical Landmark; George Wong, the sole owner and resident of Riverside Chinatown, provided a brief speech at the dedication ceremony of a historical marker (Lawton 1987a). Wong died in 1974 and his estate, which included the land that Riverside Chinatown sat on, was auctioned off. In 1976, the Trans-Pacific Land and Development Corporation purchased the property and demolished all extant buildings in 1978; as archaeologists Clark Brott

and Fred Mueller Jr. noted, this was done “in violation of existing heritage protection statutes” (1987:435). The most prominent building demolished was a multi-bay red brick structure that was part of a pair of buildings constructed in 1893 after the Riverside Chinatown fire.



Figure 6.1. Left, George Wong at the dedication of the Riverside Chinatown historical marker, 1968. Right, partially demolished red brick structure in Riverside Chinatown, c.1976-1978. Photos courtesy of the Save Our Riverside Chinatown Committee.

In 1984, Eugene Moy from the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) in Los Angeles learned that the County of Riverside, specifically the Riverside County Office of Education, had purchased the site of the Riverside Chinatown from the development corporation; the CHSSC was concerned that the new landowner would be unwilling to pay for a comprehensive archaeological excavation of the site. This concern led to the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee called Save Riverside’s Chinatown, which urged the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to fund an archaeological investigation before developing the site into a parking lot. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors

agreed to share the cost of the excavation with the City of Riverside. In addition, the Great Basin Foundation (GBF), an archaeology contract firm affiliated with the San Diego Museum of Man (now the Museum of Us), offered to provide the rest of the money for the dig if they were chosen to conduct the excavation. GBF was awarded the contract and they commenced the first phase of excavations in November 1984 and continued with a second phase of excavations in 1985. Archaeological specialists were hired to analyze the artifacts by material and a two-volume monograph on the history and archaeology of the Riverside Chinatown was published as *Wong Ho Leun: An American Chinatown* (GBF 1987). The Riverside Chinatown excavation covered 2.7 acres of the nearly 7-acre site (Costello et al. 2004:6.97).

Development plans also prompted an archaeological investigation of the San Bernardino Chinatown. In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the demolition of the District 8 Caltrans Headquarters initiated historical and archaeological investigations of a part of the southern portion of the former site of the San Bernardino Chinatown in 2000. Archaeologists from Foothill Resources of Mokelumne Hill, CA and Applied Earthworks of Hemet, CA received the contract to conduct excavations and they produced a 575-page report on the history and archaeology of the San Bernardino Chinatown titled *The Luck of Third Street* (Costello et al. 2004). Many of the archaeological analysts from the Riverside Chinatown excavation were employed to produce the San Bernardino Chinatown archaeology report. The San Bernardino Chinatown excavation covered a 0.55 acre area—a much smaller project footprint than the Riverside Chinatown (Costello et al. 2004:6.97).

## **Riverside Chinatown Archaeology Summary**

The Riverside Chinatown archaeological collection is curated in the Museum of Riverside (MoR), formerly the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, which is located in downtown Riverside. The Riverside County Office of Education transferred the artifacts uncovered during the archaeological dig to the MoR for curation in October 1990; the collection weighs nearly three tons and comprises more than 45,000 artifacts (Bellew 2007). A large portion of the collection's weight is due to the large amount of Chinese stoneware recovered. In 2007, Laura Bellew noted that museum staff spent 15 years rehousing the artifacts into archival quality boxes as the assemblage was originally housed in liquor boxes. The artifacts remain divided by material type rather than feature, which makes it difficult to examine artifact assemblages from the specific features described in the archaeological report. Bellew (2007) notes that none of the artifacts from the archaeological excavation were by culled or deaccessioned by the MoR; the archaeological report does note that Chinese stoneware and Euroamerican ceramics were never fully analyzed (GBF 1987b). Between 2017 and 2019, I visited the collections in person several times to photograph a portion of the collection and locate documentation related to the artifact analyses. The paperwork associated with the archaeological collection did not include a complete artifact catalog, but a list of sherd counts for artifacts sorted by material does identify the archaeological features that unique artifacts were found in. During my research period, the MoR was shut down for renovations and many artifacts were boxed in shrink wrap at an offsite warehouse, but the staff allowed me to photograph the artifact collection that remained in the museum. This chapter relies

on those artifact photographs, the list of sherd counts, and the limited amount raw data published in the archaeology volume of the GBF monograph for my analyses.

### *Riverside Chinatown Features*

The Riverside Chinatown dig occurred between 1984 and 1985 and focused on the western side of Chinatown; Chinatown Street (derogatorily noted as Mongol Street on Sanborn maps) divides the community into western and eastern halves. A total of eighteen features were excavated during the Riverside Chinatown dig. Phase 1, which occurred in 1984, involved the excavation of Feature 0, a highly disturbed trash deposit, and Feature 17, artifacts collected from trench monitoring and the return of pot hunted artifacts from local residents; for this reason, these two features were not given a date range by GBF archaeologists (Brott and Mueller, Jr. 1987). Phase 2 of the archaeological investigation occurred in 1985 and involved the excavation of Features 1 through 16. It is important to note that Feature 16 was renamed Feature 7A and is often analyzed in combination with Feature 7 because of their stratigraphic similarity; some of the analysts who contributed to the final archaeological report, however, continued to analyze Feature 7A separately and refer to it as Feature 16 (Mueller, Jr. 1987). Features 1 through 16 were dated using diagnostic artifacts such as Euroamerican bottles, Euroamerican ceramics, and American coins. Features 2 and 9 are basements that date to the late nineteenth century based on the datable artifacts found; in addition, fire-affected artifacts reveal that these two features represent intact deposits capped by the 1893 fire that burned down most of Chinatown. Feature 10 also pre-dates the fire, but was heavily looted, which affects its archaeological integrity. Features 7 and 7A post-date the 1893

fire based on archaeological and historic information. Historic bottle analyst John Blanford argued that the 7 and 7A trash deposits can be even more tightly dated to the early twentieth century because bottle manufacturer marks indicate that the *terminus post quem* was established at 1905 (1987:224). Blanford (1987) also noted that the trash deposit was not looted and can be compared to Features 2 and 9 to understand continuity and change at the site.

### **San Bernardino Chinatown Archaeology Summary**

The San Bernardino Chinatown archaeological collection is currently housed at the San Bernardino County Museum (SBCM) in Redlands, CA. A total of nearly 10,000 artifacts were recovered from the Chinatown dig (Costello et al. 2008). All excavated artifacts were curated immediately after archaeological analyses were completed and are housed in 63 boxes that are organized by feature; this organization makes it easy to examine specific archaeological deposits. The collection also contains an artifact catalog with artifact counts, weights, descriptions, and notes. Between 2017 and 2019, I visited the collections in person and the Curator of Anthropology at SBCM allowed me to photograph artifacts in the collection from three chronologically discrete privy features.

#### *San Bernardino Chinatown Features*

The San Bernardino Chinatown excavation in 2000 focused on the southern portion of the community on Third Street; this was the street that separated the northern and southern half of the Chinatown. The San Bernardino Chinatown was occupied between 1878 and 1944 and archaeological features date from the 1880s to the 1930s.



The only artifacts that were not collected during excavations were construction materials, amorphous lumps of metal that could not be identified, non-diagnostic metal can fragments, and artifact fragments smaller than an American dime (Costello et al. 2004:4.13). Archaeologists excavated twenty-one features that can be divided into four categories: Wong Nim's Store and Temple, Cooking Structures, which includes a pig roasting oven area, Sheet Refuse and Drains, and Pits and Privies. The majority of the San Bernardino Chinatown artifacts came from the three privies excavated by archaeologists: Privy 1056 (1880s-c.1900), Privy 1058 (1900-c.1910), and Privy 1035 (c.1910-1940s). One privy replaced another once the former one was closed up through filling up with refuse. Privies are "frequently filled with trash when they were no longer being used in their initial capacity," which means that the date ranges refer to the period of use of the artifact assemblage and not when the privies were actively in use (Costello et al. 2004:3.2). More than 6,800 artifacts were found in Privy 1035 alone, which represents a large portion of the entire San Bernardino Chinatown archaeological assemblage (Costello et al. 2008).

### **Review of the Chinatown Archaeological Reports**

When the two-volume monograph on Riverside Chinatown was first published, archaeologist James Ayres provided a critical review of the report noting that there was little integration of the site's history and archaeology (Ayres 1990). This chapter attempts to rectify that separation by drawing on multiple sources of data, including newspaper accounts and oral history interviews. More recent critiques of the Riverside Chinatown archaeology report fall within general calls to move away from acculturation models in

Chinese diaspora archaeology (see Chapter 2). The photographs and illustrations of whole artifacts depicted in the Riverside Chinatown publication, however, have made it an invaluable source as an artifact identification guide for Chinese diaspora archaeologists over the past 30 years.

Data from some of the artifact classes compiled in the Riverside Chinatown report have been used for comparative analysis in other studies. For example, Ryan Kennedy compared the diverse zooarchaeological assemblage from Riverside Chinatown to food remains at rural Chinese railroad camps and found that railroad worker diets were different due to their localization of Chinese foodways rather than any changes in identity (Kennedy 2015). The *Luck on Third Street* archaeology report compared archaeobotanical findings and gaming artifacts found in San Bernardino Chinatown to those recovered from the Riverside Chinatown. The same types of gaming artifacts (domino tiles, dice, *zhu* pieces, and coins imported from China) were found in both Chinatowns, but San Bernardino Chinatown had an exceptionally high number of white and black glass *zhu* pieces and the largest Chinese coin cache ever found in North America (Costello et al. 2004; Costello et al. 2008). These artifacts indicate that gaming was an important recreational and economic enterprise in the San Bernardino Chinatown. Costello et al. (2004) also compared the plant and faunal remains from the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns. The Chinese residents in Riverside appeared to have enjoyed a much more diverse and varied plant diet; in addition, there was surprisingly no overlap in the types of Chinese vegetables eaten between the two Chinese communities. When zooarchaeologist Sherri Gust compared the faunal remains from San Bernardino Chinatown to Riverside Chinatown by frequency, she found that both sites shared a

similar proportion of pork, beef, and fish (birds could not be compared because that information was not reported in the Riverside Chinatown publication).

The *Luck on Third Street* report also includes an analysis of the soil from the privies. The archaeoparasitologists found that the eggs of a river fluke parasite were present in some Chinese residents' bodies—something they had to have picked up in Asia (Reinhard et al. 2008). This study shows that detection of these parasites in other privies might enable archaeologists determine the presence of Asian migrants in places where their residency was not documented.

### **Transnational Comparative Analyses of Artifact Assemblages**

#### *Methods*

My comparative analysis relies on comparing excavated material from the two Chinatowns to surface collections from the home village by examining artifact categories found at all three sites. This will illuminate the daily practices of a community rather than an individual or household. As Voss (2008) notes, household archaeology is not always an appropriate scale of analysis for Chinese diaspora archaeology because many Chinese migrants lived communally and relied on mutual aid from people of the same lineage, clan, town, county, and fraternal organization. Historians of the Pearl River Delta share the same perspective and have studied entire villages rather than individual households (Mei 1980; Tan 2007; 2013b).

Examinations of differences and similarities in the artifact assemblages of the diasporic sites and home village illuminate the transnational circulation of goods by focusing on the ways that material practices continued or changed. To carry out this

analysis, I examine decorations on Asian porcelains, pecked marks on tablewares, sewing-related artifacts, and opium-related artifacts across all three sites. The frequency and distribution of these artifact types in the two Chinatowns and Wo Hing village provide insight into consumption choices that Chinese migrants made, the entrepreneurial activities that Chinese men and women participated in, and the ways that the residents of the two Chinatowns used material goods to navigate race relations when anti-Chinese sentiment was high.

### *Asian Tablewares and Aesthetic Preferences*

Archaeologists find Asian tablewares at nearly all Chinese diaspora sites. This category of ceramic artifacts is mostly comprised of Chinese porcelain or porcelaneous stoneware and small quantities of Japanese porcelains as Chinese stores might also have sold Japanese goods. What ceramic patterns did Chinese migrants prefer to use in the Chinatown communities and how does this compare with Wo Hing village? I analyze this by examining the relative frequency of overlapping ceramic patterns at the diasporic sites and the home village. A small number of ceramic patterns overlap at Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village: Bamboo, Winter Green, and Four Seasons Flower (Table 6.1). These three decorations are the most common Asian tableware patterns found at Chinese diaspora sites in North America and tend to comprise the bulk of the Asian porcelain assemblages within a site (Sando and Felton 1993). As discussed in Chapter 5, Bamboo is a hand-painted blue-on-white design composed of bamboo with blossoms and a rock on one side and circle elements on the other side; Winter Green is a green-glaze ware previously called “Celadon”; and Four

Seasons Flower, a hand-painted polychrome overglaze pattern decorated with flowers representing the Four Seasons. The names used for these ceramics are derived from the 1871-1883 ledgers of the Kwong Tai Wo Company, a store in Northern California that sold Chinese goods (Sando and Felton 1993). Four Seasons and Winter Green are ceramics that come in a variety of vessel forms, which include liquor cup, teacup, bowl (of various sizes), serving dish (of various sizes), and spoon while Bamboo is only appears in bowl form (Choy 2014).

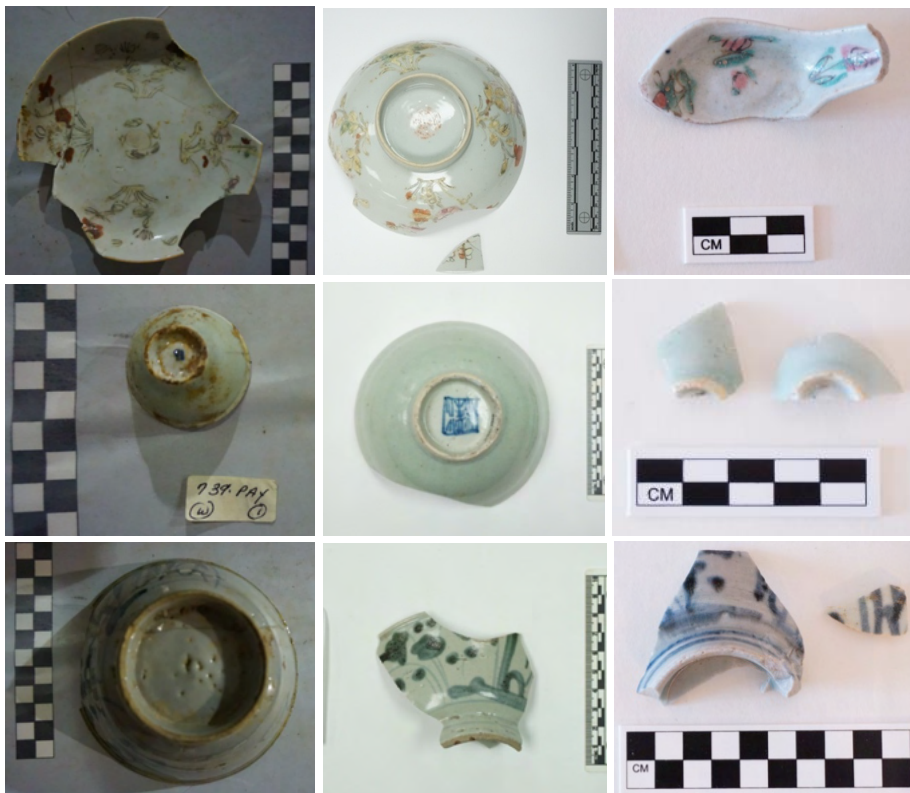


Figure 6.2. Asian tablewares that overlap across sites. Column left to right, Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village; rows from top to bottom, Four Seasons, Winter Green, and Bamboo.

A fourth Asian ceramic type that is found across all three sites are partially unglazed blue-on-white ceramics. Some refer to these as Southeast Asian ceramics

because individual sherds have designs that match late nineteenth century bowls found in Malaysia with partially unglazed interiors or bases (Mueller Jr.1987; Costello et al. 2004); at Wo Hing village, I refer to these ceramics as Unglazed Rings in Chapter 5 because these represent glazed bowls with unfired interior rings. Partially unglazed ceramics are not examined closely in this chapter's analysis because they represent a variety of patterns (Willets and Poh 1981).

Table 6.1 also indicates that Double Happiness and Shou ceramics overlap between the Riverside Chinatown and Wo Hing, but are completely absent at the San Bernardino Chinatown. Double Happiness is similar to Bamboo because it is a blue-on-white pattern that only appears in bowl form. Shou, on the other hand, is a polychrome overglaze ceramic pattern that only appears in teacup form.



Figure 6.3. Comparison of Double Happiness bowls (top) and Shou pattern cups (bottom) across sites. Column, left to right, Riverside Chinatown and Wo Hing village.

Riverside Chinatown		San Bernardino Chinatown		Wo Hing village		
<i>Asian Porcelain Pattern</i>	<i>MNI</i>	<i>Asian Porcelain Pattern</i>	<i>MNI</i>	<i>Asian Porcelain Pattern</i>	<i>Sherd Count</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Four Seasons Flower	935 (33.8%)	Four Seasons Flower	65 (36.7%)	Four Seasons Flower	6 (1.3%)	95g (2.11%)
Winter Green	594 (21.5%)	Winter Green	56 (31.6%)	Winter Green	33 (5.9%)	171g (3.81%)
Bamboo	475 (17.2%)	Bamboo	23 (13.0%)	Bamboo	23 (4.8%)	382g (8.50%)
Double Happiness	63 (2.3%)	Double Happiness	0	Double Happiness	235 (49.3%)	2,098g (46.71%)
Shou	69 (2.5%)	Shou	0	Shou	2 (0.4%)	2g (0.04%)
Sweet Pea	52 (1.9%)	Sweet Pea	0	Sweet Pea	0	0
Scrolled Chrysanthemum	0	Scrolled Chrysanthemum	0	Scrolled Chrysanthemum	7 (1.47%)	54g (1.2%)
Peach and Fungus	0	Peach and Fungus	0	Peach and Fungus	16 (3.35%)	45g (1%)
Partially unglazed*	20 (0.7%)	Partially unglazed*	1 (0.6%)	Partially unglazed*	12 (3.6%)	570g (12.7%)
Other	700 (25.3%)	Other	32 (18.1%)	Other	180 (37.73%)	2,394 g (53.29%)
Total	2,767 (100%)	Total	177 (100%)	Total	477 (100%)	4,492 g (100%)

\* Referred to as Southeast Asian ceramics in the Riverside Chinatown & San Bernardino Chinatown reports

Table 6.1. Comparing Asian porcelains by decoration between Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village.

To investigate the aesthetic preferences of Chinese migrants who lived transnationally between the Inland Empire Chinatowns and Wo Hing village, I compare the frequencies of overlapping ceramic decorations from contemporaneous features. At Riverside Chinatown, Features 7 and 7A date to 1893-1940s and include all five patterns, which represent 71.5% of the Asian porcelains in those features by MNI (Minimum Number of Items) counts. In two of San Bernardino Chinatown's excavated privies, which date from 1900-1940s when examined together, Double Happiness and Shou are completely absent, but Four Seasons Flower, Winter Green, and Bamboo comprise 75.7% of Asian porcelains in the privies when examining MNI counts. Calculations of MNI have not yet been completed for artifacts from Wo Hing village, but the number of individual sherds and the weight of all five ceramic patterns represent over 61% of the entire village (Zones A, B, and C). It is evident that these five ceramic decorations comprise a large proportion of each individual assemblage, particularly at the Chinatown sites.

Asian Porcelain Pattern	Riverside Chinatown Features 7 & 7A (1893-1940s)		San Bernardino Chinatown Privies 1058 & 1035 (1900-1940s)		Wo Hing Village Zones A, B, & C (1902-1949)		Weight (g)	
	<u>MNI</u>		<u>MNI</u>		<u>Sherd Count</u>			
Four Seasons	180	36.4%	25	33.8%	6	1.3%	95	2.1%
Winter Green	91	18.4%	23	31.1%	33	6.9%	171	3.8%
Bamboo	64	13.0%	8	10.8%	23	4.8%	382	8.5%
Double Happiness	14	2.8%	0	0.0%	235	49.3%	2098	46.7%
Shou	4	0.8%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	2	0.0%
Other	141	28.5%	18	24.3%	178	37.3%	1744	38.8%
Total within feature/zone	494	71.5%	74	75.7%	477	62.7%	4492	61.2%

Table 6.2. Overlapping Asian porcelain patterns in contemporaneous deposits/sites at Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village.



The frequencies of Bamboo and Double Happiness can be compared against each other because the pattern only exists in bowl form. In examining the bowls across all three sites, it appears that Double Happiness was preferred in Wo Hing village because it comprises nearly 50% of the entire Asian porcelain assemblage by count and by weight; Bamboo, however, represents only 4.8% of the village's Asian tablewares by count and 8.5% by weight. In the Chinatown sites, the frequencies are reversed; there are much higher quantities of Bamboo than Double Happiness, which only represents only 2.8% of the Asian porcelains in Riverside Chinatown's Features 7 and 7A. Winter Green and Four Seasons can be compared to one another because they share the same vessel forms, which include liquor cup, teacup, spoon, bowls with varying rim diameters, and serving dishes (e.g. condiment dishes and plates) of different sizes. At Wo Hing, Winter Green was clearly preferred over Four Seasons, but in the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns, there was a slight preference for Four Seasons ceramics.

The presence of Double Happiness ceramics in Riverside Chinatown and absence in San Bernardino Chinatown provides more evidence that aesthetic choices differed within diasporic communities. The lack of Double Happiness in San Bernardino Chinatown is not surprising as this ceramic pattern appears to mostly be found at Chinese diaspora sites that were established in 1850s or 1860s (Sando and Felton 1993). Costello et al. (2004) compared the number of Asian porcelain medium-sized bowls between eight Chinatown sites in California, which seemed to confirm Sando and Felton's assertion that Double Happiness bowls are absent at sites or deposits dating to the 1870s or later. The Riverside Chinatown, however, was not established until 1885 and Double Happiness bowls were recovered from several features at the site (Mueller Jr. 1987:310).

The Double Happiness bowls in the Riverside Chinatown were found in basements filled with artifacts that pre-date the 1893 fire (Features 2 and 10) as well as in deposits that post-date the fire (Feature 7 and 7A). The table above shows that in Feature 7 and 7A—deposits contemporaneous with Wo Hing village—sherds representing 14 Double Happiness bowls were excavated, but they only comprise a very small portion (2.8%) the Asian porcelain assemblage in those deposits. The low percentage of this pattern in Riverside Chinatown’s Feature 7 and 7A, compared to the high percentage found in Wo Hing village is intriguing. The Double Happiness bowls in Riverside Chinatown might have been heirloom vessels or inventory stock kept by Chinese migrants who had lived in other Chinatowns or work camps in the late nineteenth century; they appear more similar in size and decoration to other Double Happiness bowls from the U.S. than the larger vessels found at Wo Hing village. The use of these Double Happiness bowls in Riverside Chinatown, therefore, was an aesthetic choice that Chinese residents of the San Bernardino Chinatown, who were also connected to Wo Hing village, did not make.

Shou cup vessels are found in low quantities at Wo Hing and early twentieth century features in Riverside Chinatown. It would be reasonable to expect them at contemporaneous archaeological deposits in San Bernardino Chinatown, but they are completely absent. The low quantities of Double Happiness and Shou at Riverside Chinatown, and their complete absence at the San Bernardino Chinatown, indicates that these ceramic patterns were not widely available between the late 1870s and 1940s. Wherever they were obtaining these rare Asian tableware ceramics, migrants were clearly making consumption choices in the diasporic sites that oftentimes diverged from choices made in the home village.

### *Tablewares and Commensal Eating Practices*

Another noticeable difference between the two Chinatowns and Wo Hing village is that there are no pecked marks on any of the tablewares recovered from the Riverside Chinatown or San Bernardino Chinatown. As noted in Chapter 5, pecked mark vessels have interior marks that were pecked by hand with a sharp pointed object after purchase; archaeologists often interpret pecked mark vessels as ownership marks. Tablewares with pecked marks are generally rare at Chinese diaspora sites, but they have been found at the Weaverville Chinatown (Brott 1982), the Sacramento Chinatown (Hellmann and Yang 1997), the Market Street Chinatown in San Jose (Michaels 2005), the Los Angeles Chinatown (Greenwood 1996), a farm in the California Mother Lode where Chinese migrants lived (Van Bueren 2008), and a salmon cannery in British Columbia (Ross 2010). Most pecked marks appear on Asian porcelain tablewares, but some marks are also found on the interior of Euroamerican ceramics such as plates. Thad Van Bueren (2008) noted that all of the documented Chinese diaspora sites with pecked vessels were established in the late nineteenth century, and this could be an indication that the practice of pecking marks became less common over time.

Various archaeologists have attempted to interpret the presence of pecked marks at Chinese diaspora sites. Van Bueren (2008) found an earthenware plate pecked with two Chinese characters meaning “communal” or “grow together” at a rural farm in the Mother Lode and believes these might have been used in communal meals in places where ceramics were difficult to procure because of the rural location of the site. Gina Michaels (2005) noted that pecked vessels associated with names at the Market Street Chinatown were concentrated around tenement houses, while pecked vessels with

auspicious meanings were found in areas with family-run stores. Michaels also posits that pecked marks were an attempt to ameliorate the alienation that Chinese migrants felt in the U.S. by creating a sense of familiarity. Chinese residents in the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns clearly chose not to add pecked marks to any of their ceramics because this practice did occur in Wo Hing, a village established at the turn of the early twentieth century. One explanation is that Chinese migrants in the two Chinatowns did not own the ceramics that they ate from; their meals might have been primarily eaten at restaurants or they might have been provided with meals as part of their employment.

In contrast, pecked marks appear ubiquitous in tablewares recovered from Wo Hing village; this is also the case at Cangdong Village (Voss and Kennedy 2017). At Wo Hing, I identified 32 pecked marks, and most can be categorized as wishes for prosperity or luck. Some archaeologists refer to pecked marks as “blessings” and they often appear as Chinese characters. Pecked marks of auspicious symbols such as coins are similar to Chinese characters that represent blessings. Another category of pecked marks represent the names or nicknames of individuals; in the Wo Hing assemblage; these include the Chinese characters 仲 (*zhong*), 堂 (*tang*), 有 (*you*), and “W” in cursive (a more in-depth analysis of the cursive “W” mark can be found in Chapter 5). One vessel is pecked with the Chinese character 月 (*yue*), which has multiple meanings because it translates to “month” or “moon,” but this character is also commonly used as part of female names. A third category of peck marks have no auspicious meaning and are not normally used in given names; for example, one pecked mark is the Chinese character 食 (*shi* or *sik* in Cantonese), which means “to eat,” and another mark was formed in the shape of a leaf.

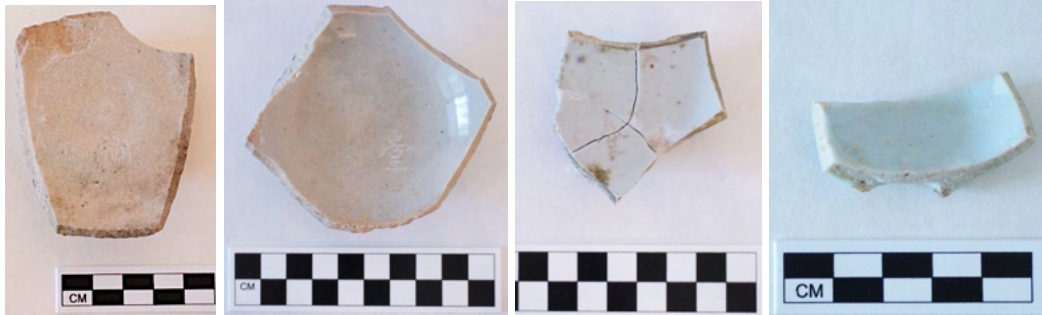


Figure 6.4. Pecked marks on vessels from Wo Hing village. Left to right: coin on IN-00004.001; Chinese character 堂 on IN-00341.001; Chinese character 食 on IN-00341.002; and a partial Chinese character on a Winter Green liquor cup IN-00181.001.

The lack of pecked marks in the two Chinatowns illuminate differences in material practices between the diasporic community and home village. One possible explanation is that there might have been differences in commensal eating practices between the home village and diasporic sites. Many villagers in Wo Hing still retain collections of old tablewares and all of the vessels within a household usually bear the same pecked mark. One explanation for creating pecked marks in a village setting is that it made it easier for people to retrieve vessels after shared meals, and big communal meals often occurred in the ancestral halls during festivals. In the U.S., newspapers reported that Chinatown residents celebrated the Lunar New Year, but it is possible that they had small group commemorations with those they already lived and worked with rather than large communal feasts. More evidence is needed to understand why pecked mark vessels are absent in Chinatown communities.

#### *Sewing Baskets and Gendered Labor*

Sewing basket-related artifacts illuminate the types of goods sold at Chinese diasporic communities for Western consumption and might also represent the type of goods that the few Chinese women living in diasporic communities might have used.

These decorative baskets were called “Chinese sewing baskets” and adorned with sewn-on glass bangles, glass beads, Chinese coins, and silk tassels. Materials that match decorative items on Chinese sewing baskets—items used to store sewing kits—were found during the Riverside Chinatown excavation as well as in the private collections of descendants of a San Bernardino Chinatown merchant. In the Riverside Chinatown, bangles and beads were categorized under “personal adornment,” but were identified as possibly belonging to a Chinese sewing basket. Similar bangles were excavated from the Los Angeles Chinatown, which were also identified as bracelets belonging to the category individual personal adornment (Greenwood 1996:89).



Figure 6.5. Chinese sewing basket and glass bangles. Left, a Chinese sewing basket, AAC-94-066. Courtesy of the University of Idaho Asian American Comparative Collection. Middle, green glass bangle fragment from the Riverside Chinatown excavation, Feature 7A, Lot #1609. Right, tri-colored glass bangles from Guangzhou, China sold in the Gee Chung Store in San Bernardino.

Collector and author Betty Lou Mukerji (2008) notes that these sewing baskets were popular items purchased and owned by white women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The baskets and decorations were also sold separately, and customers could create their own personalized sewing basket. Solid-colored and multi-colored bangles for Chinese sewing baskets were both found in Riverside Chinatown (Noah 1987). These bangle fragments were identified as “peking glass” in the Riverside

Chinatown sherd count catalog. In examining the distribution of glass bangles, Feature 7—a trash deposit—had the highest count (n=128); for reasons unknown, Noah left out sherd counts or MNI calculations for these bangles and only noted 3 glass bangle fragments. The high frequency of this artifact type in a feature that postdates the 1893 fire indicates that these items were most popularly sold and consumed in the early twentieth century.

Glass bangles are absent in San Bernardino Chinatown artifact assemblage, but tri-colored glass bangles of pink, green, and white are present in the personal collection of Linda Huang, a granddaughter of merchant Wong Sam who worked at the Gee Chung store. Figure 6.5 shows the Gee Chung store bangles and that they came in two sizes—4cm and 8cm in diameter. The measurements on these San Bernardino Chinatown bangles indicate that they were either too small or too large for wearing on the wrist, but their size would have been ideal as decorative “handles” for sewing baskets; according to Mukerji, these types of glass bangles were too delicate to be used as actual handles and were purely decorative. Therefore, glass bangles found at these archaeological sites should not be categorized as personal adornment, but as domestic goods. In addition, the baskets or bangles alone could also have been purchased by Chinese residents in Riverside and San Bernardino and given to white customers or business associates as gifts. As I noted in Chapter 4, there is evidence that Riverside vegetable gardener Wong Shoon Jung gave each of his customers, who were mostly white women, a porcelain bracelet and parasol as gifts.

Mukerji notes that Chinese glass beads used to decorate Chinese sewing baskets were manufactured by the same companies in Guangdong who made bangles; these are

distinct from European beads because they are crudely made as evidenced by rough surfaces, the presence of clay perforation deposits, and visible bubbles in the glass. While Riverside Chinatown had no Chinese glass beads, archaeological analyst Anna Noah (1987) identified a small number of non-Chinese beads (n=5) with wide openings that were likely made in Czechoslovakia, Italy, or the Netherlands. These five beads were interpreted as artifacts belonging to the “personal adornment” category, but they also could have been used as decoration on a Chinese sewing basket.

<b>Riverside Chinatown</b>		
<i>Location</i>	Bangles for baskets <i>Fragment Count</i>	Beads for baskets <i>MNI Count</i>
Feature 0	2	3
Feature 4	1	
Feature 5	4	
Feature 7	128	1
Feature 7A	1	
Feature 10	1	1
Feature 17	1	
TOTAL	138	5

Table 6.4. Distribution of glass bangles and beads in Riverside Chinatown.

Chinese sewing baskets also could have been used by the very few Chinese women who lived in the Chinatown communities. For example, an oral history recorded with Rose Ung (nee Wong) conducted by previous researchers reveals that she and her mother Chan Shee mended clothes for Chinese vegetable gardeners who came into Riverside Chinatown and that is how they made money after her father Wong Chung (Wong Sai Jock) died in 1915 (Ung and Lui 1986). Sewing basket materials, however, are absent in Wo Hing village, which supports the idea that these were not used in the



villages and were mostly sold for Western consumption. A red stamp on the interior of each bangle box from the San Bernardino Chinatown notes that the product came from a store called Lun Yick in Canton [Guangzhou], China indicating the product would have been available to villagers living in the Pearl River Delta. While there is no physical evidence that Chinese sewing baskets were used in the home village, sewing was also an important way to earn income for girls. In the 1930s, Riverside vegetable gardener Wong Shoon Jung retired and lived in Wo Hing village with his wife and his young granddaughters Shook Hing and Sun Woo; during the Sino-Chinese Japanese War, Shook Hing and Sun Woo turned to mending old clothes to sell them as second-hand clothes in order to survive (A. Wong 2020b).

This analysis of sewing-related goods reveals how labor was gendered in the home village and Chinese diaspora communities. The overwhelming majority of Chinese residents were adult men who made their living by selling to other Chinese and Euroamericans, including products such as Chinese sewing baskets. Basket decorations could also have been purchased by Chinese vegetable gardeners because they regularly gifted Chinese products to white customers as part of their jobs. There is no direct evidence that these sewing baskets were used by Chinese women in the diasporic community or home village, but oral accounts indicate that mending clothing was an important source of income for women on both sides of the Pacific.

#### *Opium as a Social drug, Medicine, and Merchandise*

Early archaeological studies of opium-related artifacts among Chinese migrants in North America often described opium smoking it as a recreational activity. William

Evans (1980) placed opium paraphernalia from Chinese diaspora sites in the “fantasy” category while opium artifacts from the Riverside Chinatown as part of “the pleasures” that Chinese migrants indulged in. These categories placed emphasis on the idea that smoking opium was primarily a recreational activity. Later archaeological scholarship on opium highlighted its importance as medicine for Chinese migrants. Chinese railroad workers, for example, likely self-medicated with opium because they worked in remote locations where doctors were not readily available (Wylie and Fike 1993:291).

Historic newspaper accounts indicate that opium was also used as medicine in urban contexts like the two Chinatowns. For example, Wong Chung Shee (Mrs. Wong Chung in English), who lived in Riverside Chinatown, explained that the brick of opium found in her home during a so-called opium raid had belonged to her recently deceased husband who was prescribed it as heart medicine before his death (*Riverside Enterprise* 1917). Wong Chung Shee was arrested, but eventually acquitted of the charge of opium possession after hiring a lawyer and having several witnesses, including her ten-year old daughter, testify that she was not an opium addict (*Riverside Daily Press* 1917). Wong Chung Shee’s arrest illustrates how the enforcement of the 1915 Harrison Narcotics Act was used as an excuse by local police to conduct surveillance on and justify the harassment of Chinese residents of the San Bernardino Valley. Local newspapers sensationalized the usage of opium among Chinese migrants to racialize them as unclean and contributors of vice in society; the racial anxiety among Euroamerican Riverside residents was that Chinese would infect white youth with an opium smoking habit (Raven 1987:240). Newspapers indicate that white residents did smoke opium, and one policeman reported that the solution to this problem was to get rid of the Chinese by

burning Chinatown down (*Riverside Daily Press* 1914). Newspaper articles reported that Chinese vegetable gardeners in Riverside were also subject to opium-related fines and arrests; for example, a Chinese man named Wong Fung Sai who lived and farmed west of the Santa Ana River was fined \$100 for merely possessing an opium pipe (*Riverside Independent Enterprise* 1915). A comparative analysis of the archaeological assemblages from the two Chinatowns and home village provides more nuance to opium smoking and its place in the lives of Chinese migrants.

In the Riverside Chinatown, hundreds of fragments of opium paraphernalia were found throughout the site, but analysts Jerry Wylie and Pamela Higgins (1987) were careful to note that this category of artifacts accounts for a very small portion of the site's overall assemblage. Despite this caution, Fong (2007) noticed that their chapter on opium comprised the largest portion of the Riverside Chinatown archaeology report, thereby contributing to the stereotype that opium smoking was a primary activity in lives of Chinese migrants. I argue that Wylie and Higgins' main research question, which focuses on locating opium dens, also has the potential to reinforce stereotypes about the Chinese as opium addicts if they are unsupported by other lines of evidence. Wylie and Higgins (1987) referenced newspaper accounts of white men and women visiting opium dens in Riverside Chinatown as substantiation for their existence, but they failed to note as Shelly Raven (1987) did that these stories were used to promote an anti-Chinese agenda. As a result, the analysts examined the distribution of opium paraphernalia and proposed that concentrations in various features would help to identify the location of opium dens.

In re-examining Wylie and Higgins' tabulations, I calculated 399 opium pipe bowl sherds even though they reported 404 (see Table 6.5). Many of the sherds represent

intact or nearly intact opium pipe bowls and it is estimated that the hundreds of fragments represent a MNI of 88 bowls (Wylie and Higgins 1987:334). In addition, a total of 430 glass opium lamp fragments were counted. Wylie and Higgins, however, note that most of the brass opium tins—the boxes that would have held the prepared opium product that was smoked—were not well-preserved, which is why the number of opium tin fragments was not included in their raw data.

Riverside Chinatown								
	Opium Pipe <i>Sherd Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	Opium Tin <i>Sherd Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	Opium Lamp <i>Sherd Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Feature 0	29	7.3%			9	29.0%	38	8.84%
Feature 1	17	4.3%					17	3.95%
Feature 2	55	13.8%			1	3.2%	56	13.02%
Feature 2 & 17	2	0.5%					2	0.47%
Feature 3	4	1.0%					4	0.93%
Feature 4	7	1.8%			1	3.2%	8	1.86%
Feature 5	9	2.3%					9	2.09%
Feature 6	26	6.5%			1	3.2%	27	6.28%
Features 7 & 7A	100	25.1%			17	54.8%	117	27.21%
Feature 9	43	10.8%					43	10.00%
Feature 10	44	11.0%			2	6.5%	46	10.70%
Feature 11	13	3.3%					13	3.02%
Feature 14	13	3.3%					13	3.02%
Feature 17	23	5.8%					23	5.35%
Unknown	14	3.5%					14	3.26%
TOTAL	399	100.0%			31	100.0%	430	100.00%

Table 6.5. Distribution of opium-related artifacts across the Riverside Chinatown site. Based on data compiled from Wylie and Higgins (1987:327-329).

Wylie and Higgins conclude the Feature 7 (and Feature 7A by association), which has the larger quantities of opium-related artifacts, was “a major opium den” (1987:356). Features 0, 2, 6, and 10 were also identified as related to opium dens because of relatively high quantities of opium artifacts and in particular, more expensive opium pipe bowls made of stoneware rather than earthenware; Feature 9 was excluded as an opium den because it lacked any expensive bowls. I argue that a more likely possibility is that opium-related products were part of the inventory stock of Riverside Chinatown’s

merchant stores. For example, Feature 2, a basement dating to the period 1885-1893, likely was storage for Chinese goods because of the high number of Asian tablewares that appear to have collapsed on top of each because they had been sitting on shelves (Mueller Jr. 1987). Wylie and Higgins themselves point out that prepared opium and opium paraphernalia were important products sold in Chinese stores as evidenced by inventory records in the Kwong Tai Wo Company store (1987:360).



Figure 6.6. Opium pipe bowl sherds from the San Bernardino Chinatown. The first three on the left are from Privy 1056 (1880s-c.1900) and the photo on the right is from Privy 1058 (1900-c.1910).

Costello et al. (2004) were interested in examining the distribution of opium across San Bernardino Chinatown and noted that they were found in all three privies, which is an indication that opium was a widespread social activity. Bryn Williams (2003) drew the same conclusion when examining the distribution of opium pipe tops at the Market Street Chinatown in San Jose. While Costello et al.'s analysis focused on the privies, drains, and sheet refuse, my analysis includes artifacts from the cooking structures as well. The table below shows that opium-related artifacts were found throughout the San Bernardino Chinatown, which supports the earlier assessment that opium was a social drug smoked at various locations. Costello et al. (2004) also noted that there is an increase in the relative number of opium-related artifacts over time as

Privy 1035 (c.1910-1940s) has the highest percentage out of all three chronologically discrete privies. While earlier researchers dismissed this increase as being slight, the fact that Chinatown was in decline during this period and residents were relying on operating backroom lotteries to survive provides important context for this archaeological finding. In addition, opium became illegal in the U.S. beginning in 1915 with the passage of the Harrison Narcotics Act. George Wong, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1914, notes that in an oral history that his father's former vegetable garden partner became an opium dealer and had smuggled opium in from Mexico to sell in Los Angeles (Chace 1990). Evidence from Riverside Chinatown also supports this as most of the opium paraphernalia from that site comes from Features 7 and 7A, which largely dates to the early twentieth century.

San Bernardino Chinatown								
	Opium Pipe <i>MNI</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	Opium Tin <i>MNI</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	Opium Lamp <i>MNI</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cooking Structures*	2	4.3%	2	8.0%		0.0%	4	4.8%
Drains/Sheet Refuse**	15	32.6%	13	52.0%	5	38.5%	33	39.3%
Privy 1035	13	28.3%	5	20.0%	4	30.8%	22	26.2%
Privy 1056	8	17.4%	2	8.0%	2	15.4%	12	14.3%
Privy 1058	8	17.4%	3	12.0%	2	15.4%	13	15.5%
TOTAL	46	100.0%	25	100.0%	13	100.0%	84	100.0%
*Includes Roasting Ovens 1001 and 1036; Cooking Feature 1033								
** Includes Drains 1002, 1031, and 1060; Sheet Refuse 1057								

Table 6.6. Distribution of opium-related artifacts across the San Bernardino Chinatown site.

No definitively identified opium-related artifacts were found in Wo Hing. The oral history interviews I conducted, however, did indicate that opium usage occurred in the home village. Family stories passed down state that Wong Sam's father who lived in Gom Benn was an opium addict and it is possible that he picked up this habit from his time abroad (Huang 2018). Shook Hing Lau grew up in Wo Hing village as a young girl

in the 1930s and recalled an unemployed man in Wo Hing village who was an opium addict (Lau 2020). The absence of ceramic pipe bowls, brass tins, and glass lamps at Wo Hing appear to indicate that opium smoking was not as commonly used as a social drug as it had been at Chinese diasporic sites.

## **Conclusion**

As I have shown in this chapter, transnational comparative analyses of material culture provide important insights into how diasporic communities and home villages influenced each other, but also how starkly different life in Chinatown was for Chinese migrants. My analysis of Asian tablewares from Wo Hing village and the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns show overlap in the types of ceramic patterns purchased, but Chinese migrants appear to have had differing aesthetic preferences. In the home village, they strongly favored Double Happiness patterned rice bowls, but these are rarely found in contemporaneous archaeological deposits in the U.S. The presence of very small quantities of Double Happiness at Riverside Chinatown when it was widely unavailable in other diasporic communities, indicates that the Double Happiness pattern was aesthetically or symbolically important to Chinese migrants. Comparative analyses of ceramics have also provided insight into changes in material practices. Pecked marks were found on 32 vessels in the home village, but none were identified on any ceramic sherds in the Inland Empire Chinatowns. Pecked marks on vessels in the home village have a strong association with large feasting meals during festivals; it is possible that the lack of pecked marks in the two Chinatowns is an indication that large communal feasts did not take place.

My research also shows that Chinese-manufactured goods in Chinatown were not always used in the same way as they would have been in the home village. For example, opium in diasporic communities not only indicate usage of opium as a social drug, but also provides evidence of the importance of selling the drug to earn a living. Similarly, Chinese sewing baskets with individual decorative components are manufactured in Guangzhou, China and most were probably sold in merchant stores as goods to Euroamericans. The small population of Chinese women, however, also could have purchased and used these sewing baskets as sewing provided income to them. In addition, sewing baskets were likely gifted to local residents and this was a strategy that the Chinese used to maintain good relations with the mostly white communities of San Bernardino and Riverside. Chinatown residents, however, never escaped structural racism as evidenced by the frequency of unwarranted vice raids on Chinatown. Many of the “opium raids” were excuses to harass Chinese residents and based on stereotypes that Chinese migrants were deviant opium addicts who lured white residents into opium dens. Opium-related artifacts from the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns, however, indicate that opium was used as a social drug or medicine as they were found spread across many archaeological features.

Overall, I have shown that comparative analyses provide important information on how daily life in the diasporic site and homeland was similar and different. The shared material practices between the Chinatown communities and Wo Hing village reveal that Chinese migrants in the U.S. might have wanted to create a sense of home through the use of familiar ceramic patterns such as Double Happiness. The differences in material practices highlight the fact that Chinese migrants in diasporic communities, especially



merchants, adapted the goods that they sold, such as glass bangles and opium in the early twentieth century, to continue to earn money for their families in China. Previously, Chinese merchants had relied on selling foodstuffs and goods to Chinese laborers, but that population dwindled in the 1920s. These insights would not been possible without transnational comparative analyses of archaeological assemblages from Wo Hing village and the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns.

## Chapter 7

### A Comparative Analysis of the Built Environment

#### Introduction

The Riverside Chinatown, San Bernardino Chinatown, and Wo Hing village were each established and maintained by Chinese migrants, which makes it possible to conduct comparative analyses of the built environment to track the transpacific circulations of ideas and beliefs. The Riverside Chinatown is particularly ideal for comparing with Wo Hing, a new village built in 1902, because migrants owned the entire Riverside Chinatown and rebuilt the community from the ground up after the 1893 fire. My comparative analysis of the built environment of the diasporic communities and home village focuses on buildings, shrines, and temples to examine differences and similarities in community layout, vernacular architectural styles, and religious practices.

I examined a range of sources of data on both sides of the Pacific—standing architecture, historic photographs of buildings, newspaper accounts, and oral histories—all of which indicates that Chinese migrants spent considerable time and money building their ideal homes in Wo Hing village (see Chapter 8). In Riverside Chinatown, however, migrants commissioned the construction of buildings that matched local vernacular architecture rather than the home village. I argue that this can be attributed to the structural racism that Chinese migrants faced in the U.S. There is evidence, however, that Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatown residents maintained lineage ties and village traditions in the U.S. because they also constructed temples and shrines that were similar to those found in the home village area. These findings provide insight into the beliefs

that Chinese migrants valued, but they also illuminate the ways that racism structured their built environments in the U.S., even when they owned the land they lived on.

## **Transnational Comparative Analyses of the Built Environment**

### *Methods*

In analyses of the built environment, I focus on the following components of the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns and Wo Hing village: the spatial layout of each community, architectural styles, earth god shrines, temples, and burial grounds. This transnational investigation of the built environment provides a method for understanding the circulation of cosmological ideas and religious practices across the Pacific Ocean. In examining the built environment of the two Chinatowns, I rely on historic photographs of structures that are no longer extant; these photos do not show all angles of structures but information on building dimensions and materials can be found in historic newspaper accounts and oral history interviews. For Wo Hing village, I photodocumented all extant structures in the village as well as a nearby reconstructed temple, which I use as the primary data for my comparative analysis.

### *Comparative Analysis of Spatial Layout of Communities*

China scholars note that the spatial arrangement of homes, ancestral halls, temples, and burial grounds is often guided by a cosmological belief in *feng shui*, a geomantic practice that is used to determine the favorable placement of structures and burial grounds. Archaeologists have attempted to find the presence of the application of *feng shui* at various Chinese diaspora sites. Many of these studies look for evidence of a

spatial preference for south-facing arrangements because this direction is a core principle of *feng shui*. Fred Mueller Jr. investigated the degree of conformity to *feng shui* principles in Chinatowns across the Western U.S. using Sanborn fire insurance maps and historic descriptions of those communities. Mueller Jr. created a checklist of *feng shui* principles and marked their presence or absence in the Chinatowns and determined that most Chinese American communities, including the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns, were not in alignment with Chinese geomantic principles (Mueller, Jr. 1987). The lack of adherence to this principle is often attributed to the fact that inauspicious arrangements can be mitigated by talismans such as carefully placed mirrors (Sisson 1993). John Molenda, however, rejects the way that archaeologists have applied *feng shui* into their interpretations. He argues that *feng shui* is a complex practice that cannot be easily identified in the archaeological record and should instead be viewed as an ‘emergent aesthetic order’ that is used to manage and manipulate the landscape (Molenda 2015:182). For Molenda, *feng shui* cannot easily be read like text and it is more important to acknowledge the existence of non-Western, non-Cartesian thinking at Chinese diaspora sites.

Research in China on structures built by returning migrants provide important historic context for Chinese migrant beliefs about *feng shui*. Jinhua Tan’s (2013) study of the construction of new villages in China, built by returning Chinese migrants in the 1900s and 1910s, indicates a lack of preference for south-facing villages. Tan attributes this to the fact that only the Northern School of *feng shui* preferred that villages face south; Chinese migrants living in the Pearl River Delta practiced the Southern School of *feng shui*, which did not have a strong directional preference for siting. Tan also found

that in the 1920s, some returning migrants were doing away with *feng shui* practices altogether because it was deemed archaic, an antithesis to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century modernization movement occurring in China (2013:212). This research reveals that Chinese migrants had changing beliefs about *feng shui*.

Between 1902 and 1914, Chinese migrants began establishing Wo Hing as a new village in the Gom Benn village cluster (see Chapter 7). The village faces east towards a human-made pond and has a bamboo grove in a hill behind the village. Wo Hing fits within Tan's classification of a planned village built in the early 1900s by Chinese migrants because houses are the same size and style; this "meticulous demarcation of land parcels" is a characteristic of planned villages that regulated house size, alley lanes, and architectural house style (Tan 2013:204). Horizontal and vertical alley lanes are a uniform width enabling villagers to go move around the village easily. Older villages have a Chinese comb-shaped layout with dead-end alleys. In the Riverside Chinatown, Chinese laundries and vegetable farmers relied on horse and buggy for transportation, which is why a wide thoroughfare between the western and eastern sides of Chinatown was created; in addition, most buildings and horizontal alleys are not uniform in size. The Riverside Chinatown and Wo Hing Village were both designed by Chinese migrants but look different; Chinatown conformed to the need for transporting laundry and Wo Hing conformed to new ideas about modernity.

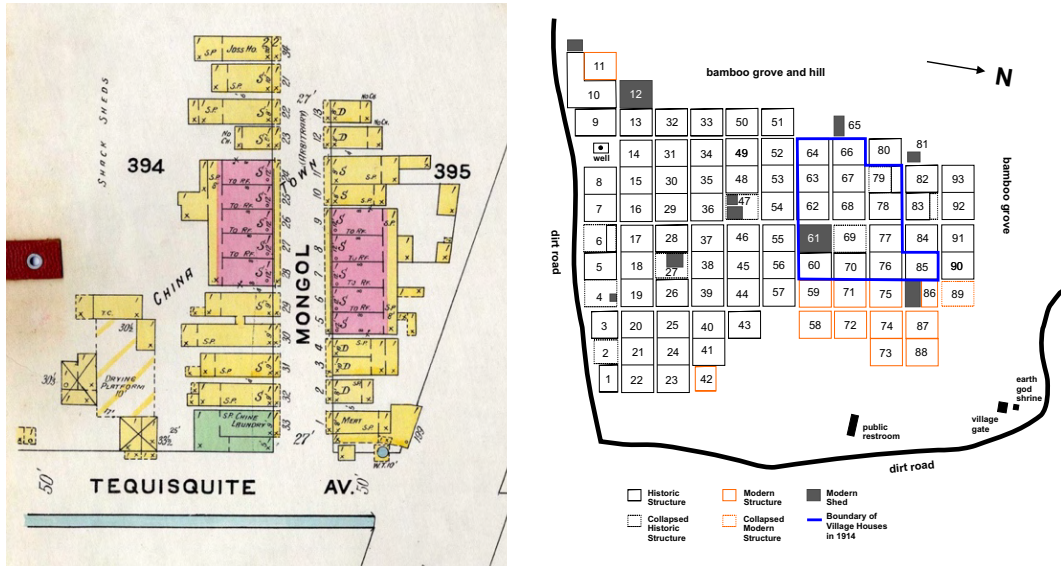


Figure 7.1. Left, Riverside Chinatown layout, 1908 and right, Wo Hing layout, original houses from 1902-1914 are bounded in blue.

### Comparative Analysis of Architectural Styles

Few archaeological or architectural studies have focused on the dwellings of Chinese migrants. Some early Chinese structures in California, such as the Chew Kee store in Fiddletown, were created through the rammed earth method, which resulted in very thick walls (Rohe 2002). Rammed earth, also called mud bricks, involved mixing earth and water and letting it cure; it was a traditional Chinese building method (Batto 2006). Other Chinese communities, such as Los Angeles Chinatown, were mainly comprised of wooden frame structures (Greenwood 1996). Some researchers have noted that architectural elements in Chinese diaspora communities relate to the racism that Chinese migrants faced. For example, Scott Baxter points out that a tall fence topped with barbed wire surrounded the Heinlerville Chinatown in San Jose was likely put up as defense against racial harassment (2008). After the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, a new Chinatown was rebuilt by local Chinese leaders with tourism in mind. Philip Choy argues that the leaders wanted to attract white visitors to Chinatown, which is why many

buildings have pagoda-like structures that met orientalist expectations; the hope was also that tourism would lessen anti-Chinese sentiment (Choy 2012). Architectural changes also took place in the Pearl River Delta region. Building materials changed from rammed earth or clay brick to expensive blue-gray brick in the late nineteenth century (Tan 2013:262). This coincides with the period of time when Chinese transnational migration set off a construction boom in the region because of the remittances that migrants generated (L. Cheng and Liu 1982). These new homes were made of blue-gray brick and decorated in the traditional Lingnan style with Chinese fresco paintings and stucco carvings depicting auspicious symbols (Tan 2013).

Most structures in Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns were built in the late nineteenth century, but previous researchers have not comprehensively examined the architecture of the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns. Was Wo Hing's architecture influenced by this Chinatown, especially because it was built right before the establishment of Wo Hing village? Comparing the Sanborn fire insurance maps and photos of the Riverside Chinatown and San Bernardino Chinatown, there does not seem to be many similarities. Most of the structures in the two Chinatowns are Old West-style wooden frame buildings with gabled roofs and false fronts. The brick structure that housed the merchant stores in Riverside Chinatown is described as a vernacular building and was designed by white architects and built by white contractors (NHRP 1990). The buildings in Wo Hing adhere to the vernacular style of the time. As I detail in Chapter 8, Chinese migrants in Wo Hing village also continually developed their community with the addition of homes. The exterior facades of houses represent the Lingnan style or a fusion of the Lingnan and Western style. Most of these Western architectural elements,

do not incorporate the vernacular style of the brick buildings found in Riverside Chinatown. The western elements on traditional houses include arches above windows. The Western-style ornamentation on 1920s and 1930s mansions such as the one in Wo Hing include arches above windows and may include decorative brackets, protruding balconies, and the use of reinforced concrete to create multi-story houses. There is, however, a brick structure in the village that does look similar to the brick building in Riverside because each bay has a door that faces towards the road with a small window to the right of four of the five doors (labeled Structure 94 in Chapter 8). The door on the fifth bay is located at the end of the building.



Figure 7.2. Left, western brick building in Riverside Chinatown divided into five bays, late 1890s. Right, a building in Wo Hing (Structure 94) divided into five storage units or small houses built in the early twentieth century.

The composition of the Riverside Chinatown changed in the early twentieth century as well. A newspaper article from 1929 reported that seven buildings in the northern and southern ends of Riverside Chinatown were razed by order of the City Council because they were deemed a health menace (Lawton 1987:131). A Sanborn map from 1939 shows that all of the buildings on the eastern side of Chinatown were completely demolished. Between 1909 and 1939, an additional sixth bay was added to



the west brick building in Chinatown. This bay is likely the one depicted in a drawing of a shop layout labeled in Chinese; this drawing is part of the personal records purchased by the Museum of Riverside at George Wong's estate auction and belonged to an unknown Chinese migrant although it was found among the records of Wong Sue—the Chinatown remittance banker who died in the year 1913. This sixth bay was also documented by University of California Riverside (UCR) students before it was demolished; a sketch map shows a store in the front, divided rooms in the middle, and a kitchen in the back. The storefront depicted in the Chinese sketch map is similar, except the middle section is labeled as storage and it indicates a set of stairs that leads to a basement. The UCR students note that a wooden addition was located in the back, which housed a kitchen as well as a toilet. The 1939 Sanborn maps shows the western brick building with the sixth bay and it appears to be the same width as the other bays but the length of the bay is much longer. In a 1959 photograph, the sixth bay is the one with a collapsed corrugated metal awning.



Figure 7.3. Left, front of the western brick building with an additional sixth bay, 1959. Courtesy of the Save Our Chinatown Committee. Right, layout sketch of sixth bay added some time after 1908. From the Wong Sai Chee records held at the Museum of Riverside.

While Wo Hing village grew and expanded with time, the Riverside Chinatown was shrinking. In comparing the Riverside Chinatown to Wo Hing, there does appear to be a similar desire for uniformity. One building in Wo Hing, Structure 94, appears most similar to the Riverside Chinatown structures because of the similar location and configuration of doors and windows. Overall, however, Structure 94 largely conforms to vernacular building styles in Wo Hing rather than Riverside Chinatown buildings because it has a gabled roof and was built of blue-grey brick.

### **Comparative Analysis of Temples**

Chinese temples, often called “joss houses” are one of the most visible material remains of Chinese diaspora communities and relate to the religious beliefs of Chinese migrants. In China, religious practices are drawn from three religions: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Chinese folk religion also includes the veneration of ancestors and worship at the ancestral altar in the home and at the lineage’s ancestral halls (Clart 2012). In the U.S., Chuimei Ho and Bennet Bronson found that most Chinese migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century mainly practiced Daoism. They point out that most extant temples in California are Daoist and even temples with Buddhist deities such as Guanyin were placed on Daoist altars (Ho and Bronson 2016). Chinese American secret societies also had shrines to gods in their lodges; these fraternal halls were often referred to as joss houses or temples even if that was not their only function (Ho and Bronson 2018). Greenwood (2010) found that the Chinese temple in Cambria, California was probably constructed by a Chinese secret society because it was dedicated to Wu, a military reference to Guandi, the god of war and patron of brotherhoods, literature, and

financial matters; Guandi was a god that a Chinese secret society called the Chee Kung Tong favored. Research on temples in Chinese diaspora communities have mainly focused on the architecture details of the structure. For example, Grimwade (2003) notes that Australian Chinese temples share the same basic design of those found in China because of the presence of ancillary halls and external shrines within the temple complex; they diverge in the use materials such as timber and corrugated iron in the place of traditional bricks and tile. Temple architecture has also been used a proxy for the relative wealth of the Chinese migrant community. The elaborate Chinese temple in Coydon, Australia was similar in size, style, and form to other rural Queensland temples, suggesting a sizable and prosperous Chinese population (Grimwade 2003). The temple in Cambria was unusual compared to other extant Chinese temples in California because it was built as a simple one-room structure and Greenwood suggests it might reflect the low-income status of the small Chinese population.

The Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns each had a temple. The temple in San Bernardino was linked to the goddess of mercy, Guanyin, and the one in Riverside was linked to the god of war, Guandi. The first Guanyin temple in San Bernardino was built at some point in the 1880s by Wong Nim (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1944) but moved to the southwest corner of Third and Mountain View streets in 1890 (*Daily Courier* 1890:3; Costello et al. 2004:6.33). The Guanyin temple occupied a footprint of 18 by 20 feet and was an addition to a main building also owned by Wong Nim (Costello et al. 2004:6.53). The only photograph of the temple interior indicates that it contained only enough room for only one person to worship at a time. This is similar to the Chinese temple in Weaverville, which took up a larger footprint but worship occurred in a small

room intended for one individual to enter at a time (Ho and Bronson 2016). The only known photo of the temple's exterior from 1899 shows a white picket fence surrounding a structure (Costello et al. 2004:6.52). Archaeological investigation of the temple footing indicate it was made of red brick and mortar (Costello et al. 2004:B1). Wong Nim hired a temple caretaker named Mah Wing who was robbed and murdered in the temple in 1911; Costello et al. (2004) has an extensive discussion of this homicide. The Chee Kung Tong in Riverside had an altar to the Guandi, the God of War, on their second floor. There is a photo of the building exterior taken by George Wong around 1920 and the Museum of Riverside has in their collection what they believe is the original Guandi altar.

There is no equivalent to the Chee Kung Tong in the Tung Hau or Wo Hing village area, but an organization called the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandihui) did exist in Southern China and was particularly active between the early eighteenth and late nineteenth century. Although it has mainly been portrayed as a political organization focused on the overthrow of Manchu rule, research by Dian Murray indicates that the Tiandihui began as a loose network of mutual aid associations established by impoverished men; branches of Tiandihui were often established outside of home villages by men who went to new places to work and formed multi-surname brotherhoods for protection, assistance, and to participate in vendettas and robberies (Murray 1993). In the early nineteenth century, Tiandihui brotherhoods began to form among marginalized members of settled communities in the Pearl River Delta; these members became involved in the traffic of opium, lineage feuding, and banditry (Kim 2009). In the mid-nineteenth century, the Tiandihui became most well-known for their involvement in organized revolts. Batto notes that in July 1854, some Tiandihui members in Kaiping

County, aided by 1,000 secret society members from the nearby county of Heshan, seized Kaiping's capital as part of the Red Turban Rebellion (1854-1856) (2006:6). These rebellions are often cited by scholars as a major factor for overseas migration. Secret societies remained important to Chinese migrants as the Chee Kung Tong in North America and other Chinese diaspora communities traced their origins to the Tiandihui. In China and the U.S., secret societies employed Chinese popular religion to strengthen their sworn brotherhoods by worshipping Guandi and performing secret initiation rites (R. G. Lee 2017). In Riverside, the Chee Kung Tong appears to have been focused on mutual aid rather than violence. For example, the secret society paid for the funeral of member Chin Quong Wee (Lawton 1959). There appears to have been a breakdown of the sworn brotherhood in Riverside by the late 1920s. George Wong recalls asking for money from the Chee Kung Tong to provide social welfare for the small population of elderly men residing in the Riverside Chinatown, but the person in charge decided to use the money to fund the restoration of the Chee Kung Tong building in Shanghai (Chace 1990).



Figure 7.4. Left, inside of the Guanyin Temple in San Bernardino, Chinatown, 1944. Courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society. Right, inside the restored Guanyin Temple in Tung Hau village across from Wo Hing village.

My research in China indicates a lineage connection to the Guanyin temple in San Bernardino. Wo Hing is a village that belongs to the Yinlong lineage that began in Tung Hau village. A small Guanyin temple stands between two ancestral halls in Tung Hau village: one dedicated to the lineage founder for people in this area with the surname Wong and a slightly smaller one dedicated to his descendant. The three structures were restored in the 1862 and reconstructed in 2013 (R. Z. Huang 2013). The Guanyin temple and two ancestral halls are located in the village that Wong Nim grew up in. Clearly, this temple had more significant meaning for Wong Nim and other Chinese residents in the San Bernardino Valley with the surname Wong because of this direct connection to their lineage. This likely also explains why newspapers reported that people from all over Southern California came to San Bernardino to worship at this small temple (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1944).

Comparing the two Guanyin temples, both were small and clearly designed for individual worship. The fact that Guanyin temple in China was always small negates a previously held assumption that small temples indicated that Chinese migrants had a low socioeconomic status. The Guanyin temple in Tung Hau is made of blue-gray brick and granite while the Guanyin temple in San Bernardino was probably made of red brick. In addition, temples in Chinese diasporic communities have been connected to secret societies, but not to lineages. A transnational comparative analysis of temples has shown how religion was used to maintain lineage ties abroad. The Guanyin temple physically brought people from all over Southern California to San Bernardino facilitating the spread of information, news, and business relationships.



Figure 7.5. Partial exterior view of the Guanyin Temple building (far left) surrounded with white fence in San Bernardino, Chinatown, 1899. Courtesy of the San Bernardino County Museum. Exterior of the Guanyin Temple in Tung Hau village, 2019.

### Comparative Analysis of Earth God Shrines

Jinhua Tan notes that shrines were an important part of everyday life in the Pearl River Delta. These were so important that shrines to various gods were built into the architecture of houses so that the household could worship the door god, earth god, kitchen god, and sky god (Tan 2013b). The most important place in the house, however, was the ancestral altar where veneration of the ancestors takes place. Outside the house, a village also had an outdoor shrine dedicated to the earth god (Tan 2007). The earth god was important in agricultural communities in China because this god is connected to the soil; this explains why village earth god shrines face farm fields. An outdoor shrine dedicated to the earth god was present in both the Riverside Chinatown and in Wo Hing village.

In 1983, Julie Duncan—the granddaughter of San Bernardino merchant Wong Sam—photographed the village earth god shrine in Wo Hing. The shrine in the photo appears to be a slightly different shrine than the current one in the village. The earth god shrine in the photograph dates to no earlier than 1902 when the village was first established. An upright tablet on the shrine has Chinese characters that read “社稷之

神,”which translates to “god of the earth and grains.” A collection of offerings, including special rocks, can be seen placed next to the tablet. The base material of the shrine matches the blue-gray bricks that houses in the village are made of while the altar with two arms made of granite. Adjacent to the shrine, visible on the right, is a small burner for burning paper offerings.

The earth god shrine in Riverside Chinatown was not documented on any Sanborn fire insurance maps, but a photograph of it was taken by George Wong around 1920 (Anderson and Lawton 1987). George Wong states that when he was in high school the shrine was dynamited and destroyed in 1921 by a group of three or four white teenagers at two o’clock in the morning (Chace 1990:24). According to George, the shrine was built of red brick with granite on top and was built to protect the residents of Riverside Chinatown. The Riverside Chinatown shrine also has a tablet, which researchers believe read “祖德之利” which translates to “Ancestors’ virtues confers benefits” (Anderson and Lawton 1987). The photograph of the tablet, however, is blurry and it is possible that the tablet originally read “god of the earth and grains.” This shrine is similar to the one in Wo Hing because adjacent to it is a burner to the left side for burning paper offerings although it is barely visible in the photo. The similarity in the style of the two shrines indicates how important it was to maintain the ability to make sacrificial offerings to the earth god. George Wong stated that the shrine was built to protect Chinese migrants from natural disasters such as floods, but it was also important because many migrants in the Riverside Chinese community made their living on farming and selling vegetables. The exact location of the shrine is unknown, but it likely faced towards the Chinese vegetable gardens which were located southeast of Riverside Chinatown along the Santa Ana River.





Figure 7.6. Earth God Shrine in Riverside Chinatown, c.1920. Photo by George Wong, courtesy of the Museum of Riverside. Earth God Shrine in Wo Hing Village 1983. Photo by Julie Duncan.

### **Comparative Analysis of Cemeteries**

The materiality of cemeteries includes grave markers, identification bricks, omega-shaped tombstones, grave goods, funerary burners, memorial shrines, and ceramics related to food or liquor offerings. Abraham and Wegars (2003) examined Chinese cemeteries in the U.S. and Australia and concluded that there was a shared set of burial practices and rituals in the Chinese diaspora. Chung and Wegars (2005) state that a common funerary practice was to have a clan or fraternal association agent arrange a burial through a subscription fee; in China, burial arrangements were made by family members. Another death practice in the Chinese diaspora involved exhuming bodies after a number of years for reburial in China. Elizabeth Sinn (2013) detailed the practice of bone repatriation as part of many other strong transnational institutions that connected California to Hong Kong to China starting from the Gold Rush. Marlon Hom's (2002) research on an overseas Chinese cemetery in Xinhui County also shows that Chinese living abroad had a strong system for bone exhumation because many skeletal remains

appear to have been successfully shipped back to China. Only a small number of bodies remained unclaimed by family members in China and Hom found that many of the unclaimed were women; grave markers indicate that many were unmarried, and it is possible that these women had been sold into prostitution and subsequently shunned by family in death. Abraham and Wegars found, however, that not all burials in Chinese cemeteries in North America or Australasia were exhumed indicating “a greater degree of assimilation, a lack of connection with family back home, or insufficient funds to purchase the death insurance” (2005:154-155). My research indicates two reasons why reburial was not practiced: one is that the buried individual had family members in the U.S. to care for the grave marker, which is not necessarily a sign of assimilation, and another is that white employers sometimes paid for burials and did not agree with the practice of exhumation and reburial.

The majority of the Chinese who passed away in the San Bernardino Valley between the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century were buried in the Pioneer Memorial Cemetery in San Bernardino, Mountain View Cemetery in San Bernardino, and Olivewood Cemetery in Riverside. My search for Chinese grave markers at the Pioneer Cemetery revealed that Chinese at this burial ground were scattered indicating that Chinese burials were not intentionally segregated; most burials, however, are concentrated in particular areas (see table below). Some of the interred were intentionally placed together; for example, Robert and Lucy Bettner buried their cook Ah Yum in the Olivewood Cemetery and the Malloch family paid for the burial of their house servant Jim, who was buried him next to his friend Ah Yum (Raven 1987). Cemeteries, however, do not represent all Chinese deaths as cemetery records indicate that some burials were

exhumed for reburial in China. Those who were interred after 1938 remain unexhumed because bone repatriation stopped during the Second-Sino Japanese War and never resumed after the end of the war because diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. ceased in 1949.

<b>City</b>	<b>Cemetery Name</b>	<b>Location of most Chinese graves</b>
San Bernardino, CA	Pioneer Memorial Cemetery	Block 1 and Block 12
San Bernardino, CA	Mountain View Cemetery	Cedar A and Lawn D
Riverside, CA	Olivewood Memorial Park	Section C and Section E

Table 7.1. Location of historic Chinese grave markers in Riverside and San Bernardino cemeteries.

In China, ancestors were buried in hills close to the village. In the 1910s, U.S. immigration officers began asking Chinese emigrants about the names of burial sites of family members as an interrogation question. For example, Riverside vegetable gardener Wong Shoon Jung stated his parents are buried on a little hill called Hong Mee Yun (Wong Shoon Jung interview 1915). In San Bernardino merchant Wong Sam's interview, he stated that his parents were buried half a mile southwest of his village in a burial ground called Lou Dong Ai (Wong Sam interview 1920). Another Riverside vegetable gardener, Wong Ben Jew, stated that his parents were buried in the hills behind his village; he visited these graves with food offerings with his son Wong Ho Lung (George Wong) when he last returned home, which indicates the importance of returning home to perform the rituals (N. 16 Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). These historic burial grounds are difficult to study materially because some were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (Hom 2002). Visiting the ancestors in the cemetery was clearly an important ritual of ancestor veneration for returning migrants and my research on Chinese grave

markers in the San Bernardino Valley indicates that those left behind were not likely abandoned by family or Chinese associations, particularly since other researchers have shown that bone repatriation was a particularly strong and long-lasting transnational institution.

## **Conclusion**

In examining the layout and architecture of the Riverside Chinatown, it appears that racism rather than strict adherence to geomantic principles played a role in shaping the architectural style of buildings, the materials used, and employment of white contractors to construct buildings. My research also indicates that many of the continuities in everyday practices relate to religion. Two examples that illustrate this point are the presence of the Earth God shrine and the Guan Yin temple in both the home villages and diasporic sites. The Guan Yin temple had special significance for Wongs of the Yinlong lineage as it was the main deity that they worshipped in the home village; the temple's presence in San Bernardino likely strengthened lineage ties. The Guandi altar in Riverside Chinatown's Chee Kung Tong hall, on the other hand, served to create and maintain social bonds between men from different lineages; fraternal brotherhoods were present in the Pearl River Delta starting in the late nineteenth century. Lastly, research in China and Hong Kong indicate that funerary practices in the Chinese diaspora were strongly shaped by transnational institutions that specialized in bone repatriation, which challenges arguments that archaeologists have made that those who were not exhumed if they had died abroad had weak social ties within their diasporic community or the home village.

The built environment appears to have been influenced by the need for Chinese migrants to negotiate anti-Chinese racism at the individual level by maintaining good relations with white residents through gift-giving and at the community level by constructing buildings that conformed to local architectural styles and community layouts. Chinese migrants clearly brought many important Chinese religious traditions to the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns, but they also used religion to maintain social bonds that they could draw upon if they needed mutual aid. Burial practices provide evidence that transnational institutions such as bone repatriation also structured much of the lives of Chinese migrants. Clearly, differences and similarities in the material culture from the home village and diasporic site raise important questions about continuity and change in the transnational lives of Chinese migrants—questions that cannot be answered by looking at only one side of the Pacific.

## Chapter 8

### Transforming the Home Village

#### Introduction

In 2007, David Pierson from the *Los Angeles Times* reported that remittances from the U.S. to home villages in Taishan County were waning and used Wo Hing village as an example of how people in China were losing touch with relatives abroad. In the story, Pierson (2007) learned that overseas migrants had built Wo Hing in 1902 and that over the years, villagers had emigrated to cities in California such as Los Angeles and Stockton. What brought me to conduct research Wo Hing, however, was the connection between this village and late nineteenth and early twentieth century migrants who worked in the Inland Empire cities of Riverside and San Bernardino. The preliminary research I conducted in Wo Hing in summer 2017 indicates that the village was not established all at once because houses such as the multi-story mansion in the back of the village did not appear in the region until the 1920s and 1930s (Ng 2020). The continuous development of Wo Hing makes it ideal for investigating the impact of transnationalism on the home village.

Using immigration records, genealogical information, and oral histories collected in China and the U.S., I investigate how Wo Hing was established as a new settlement in the Gom Benn village cluster and provide information on the backgrounds of those who chose to make this village their new home. As discussed in a previous chapter, villagers in Wo Hing all share the surname Wong and descend from several sublineages that established the first villages in Gom Benn in 1411-1424 AD; what remains unclear, however, are the kinship relationships and business ties that village residents had with

one another. The fact that Wo Hing was continuously being settled also makes it possible to investigate how migration transformed the home village over time by examining diagnostic architectural features such as house type and exterior house ornamentation. In this chapter, I show that over a thirty-five year period of time (1902-1937), Wo Hing village began as a typical late Qing “overseas Chinese planned village” with houses that were similar in style and size to one another, but over time migrant homeowners began to adopt diverse architectural features and ornamentation that would set their house apart from others. The ornamentation that was adopted was inspired by local vernacular architecture that increasingly incorporated both Western and Chinese decorative elements as well as both local and foreign building materials.

### **Research Context**

A growing body of research exists on the built environment and architecture of emigrant villages in Guangdong Province. Jonathan Hammond studied the layout of villages in Taishan and noted several recurring components: bamboo groves behind a village, threshing floors, banyan trees, shrines, and a pond in front of the village (1990). He argued that village houses were built to maximize ecological resources; for example, houses were built close together to provide more space for rice fields while large undeveloped areas were also needed to serve as threshing floors for rice (Hammond 1995). One important omission in Hammond’s functionalist analyses are that they do not take into account how overseas migration might have impacted the built environment of villages. Architectural historian Selia Tan seeks to understand how migrants from Kaiping County influenced vernacular architecture in the home villages by studying the

architectural styles and ornamentation of houses and *diaolou* built with remittances sent from abroad (2007, 2013a, 2013b). Tan's research documents changes from Lingnan style villages in the nineteenth century to new villages built by overseas migrants that featured wider alleys and multi-story houses made of reinforced concrete; she also records the transition from traditional three-bay two-corridor houses to *lu* (廬) mansions, which saw an increase in the mixing of Chinese and Western-style architectural ornamentation. Denis Byrne uses a transnational approach to study remittance-built houses as heritage; he notes that affective ties helped create a heritage corridor that continuously tied Chinese migrants in Australia to Zhongshan County and resulted in new school and home construction in the home village (2016a, 2016b). For Byrne, the affective ties were an important part of Chinese migration and he argues that remittance-built structures in the home village should also be acknowledged as part of Chinese Australian migrant heritage (2020).

This chapter builds upon this research but breaks new ground by investigating the relationship between transnationalism and village formation. My first set of research questions focuses on how the village expanded over time; although the village was established in 1902 and is mostly comprised of one-story three-bay two-corridor houses, other house types were also built. Which houses in Wo Hing were built first and which were added later? I am able to approximate construction dates by examining house types, immigration records, and Chinese calendar dates written on fresco paintings. My second set of research questions are focused on the village residents: Were all new villagers migrants who had lived abroad? Did villagers move to Wo Hing from other villages in Gom Benn or from elsewhere? Were villagers closely related to one another? If



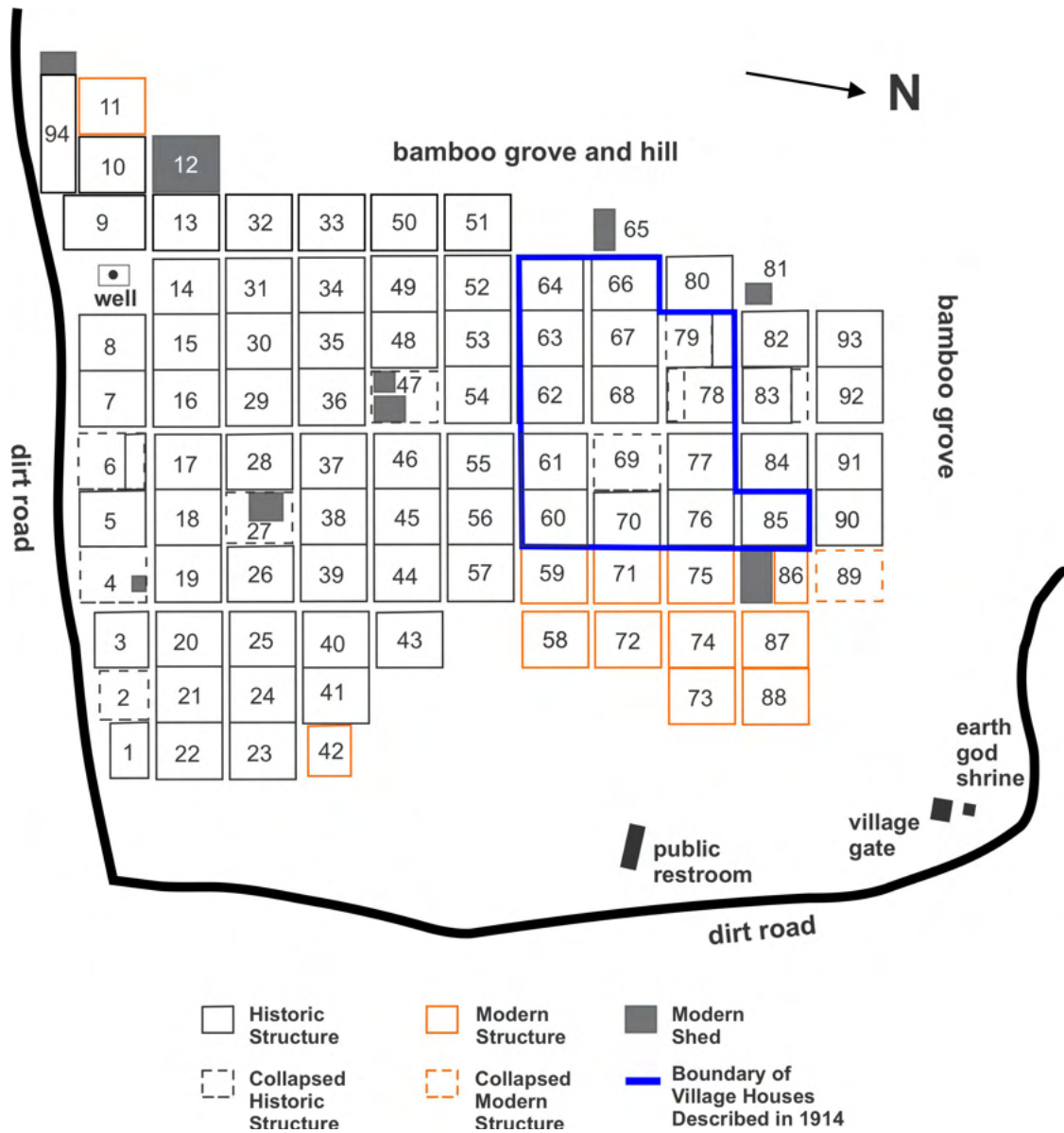
homeowners did work abroad, what were their occupations and what cities did they live in? My third set of research questions seeks to understand how migration had an impact on village architecture. Did houses become larger or include more Western-style elements over time? Did homeowners try to use architecture to set themselves apart from others? These questions illuminate the lives of transnational migrants at home and the lives of family members who are often left out of migration narratives.

### **Village Formation Analysis**

Wo Hing village is currently comprised of over ninety standing structures and is well-preserved because the majority of historic buildings retain much of their early twentieth century characteristics (Map 8.1). Most of the buildings are dwellings, but Structure 9 serves as the village community hall and Structure 94 is a rectangular building with five locked doors used for storage by various families (see Chapter 7 for more on this structure); villagers informed me that Structures 1 to 3 are houses that were shortened when the dirt road was widened. In 2007, forty villagers lived in the village (Pierson 2007). During my fieldwork, thirteen households remained and I noticed that most current residents lived in newer houses in the northeast portion of Wo Hing.

The Chinese Exclusion Files held at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) provide valuable information about the original size of Wo Hing village and its growth over time. For example, when fourteen-year old Wong Ho Lung landed in San Francisco in 1914, he stated that his village Wo Hing was comprised of fifteen houses total (Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). He also named the residents and noted which column and row their house was located in. Present-day villagers were able to point out Wong Ho Lung's family house to me, which allowed me to determine the

boundary of the fifteen houses described in 1914; the boundary is marked in the map below.



Map 8.1. Location of all structures recorded in Wo Hing village in 2019 with an outline of the boundary of the fifteen houses described in 1914.

Within the boundary, I identified twelve houses that have retained much of their original architectural integrity and three that have not; Structure 69, 78, and 79 are partially or completely collapsed. Based on the twelve intact houses, it is clear that

original planning regulations dictated that dwellings had to be in the three-bay two-corridor style. In terms of size, all houses are 9.8m wide, 11.4m long, and 6.0m tall (from the ground to the gabled roof). While the immigration records only discuss these fifteen houses, my examination of the fresco paintings indicate that at least one house was built outside of the boundary prior to 1914 because of a 1908 date written on a painting; the house is labeled Structure 18 and I will discuss this finding further in my analysis of the frescoes.

In the following sections, I will provide biographical sketches for the four transnational migrants who moved between Wo Hing and the Inland Empire Chinatowns: Wong Tong (Structure 76) and Wong Sam (Structure 85) of San Bernardino and Wong Shoon Jung (Structure 62) and Wong Ben Jew (Structure 65) of Riverside. As indicated on the map, the San Bernardino migrants were neighbors in Wo Hing and so were the Riverside migrants. While the Riverside migrants directly stated in immigration interviews that they lived in Wo Hing village, I was able to identify Wong Sam's house as Structure 85 because his grandchildren shared a photo of the house that their father had lived in and the exact location of the house was pinpointed by current villagers. In addition, the immigration records mention that Wong Chun Yee was the head of the household in 1914 and that is an exact match for Wong Sam's generation name. In Wong Sam's own immigration records he states that Wong Chun Yee is the name he acquired after marriage; these new names are sometimes called "generation names" and are based on a lineage's genealogy poem. The "Chun" character places Wong Sam in the 23<sup>rd</sup> generation. To complicate matters, however, a minority of villagers appear to prefer using "Shew" for the 23<sup>rd</sup> generation name and two examples are Wong Ben Jew and

Wong Shoon Jung whose generation names are Wong Shew Koon and Wong Shew Kay, respectively. A family genealogy narrative published in the Gom Benn Village Society newsletter states Wong Tong's generation name was Wong Sai Lee and this puts in the 22<sup>nd</sup> generation (A. Wong 1980). I identified Wong Tong's house as Structure 76 because immigration documents state that Wong Sai Lee lived in a house just to the left of Wong Chun Yee (Wong Ho Lung interview 1914).

### *Wong Tong*

According to a family genealogy narrative, Wong Tong was one of four brothers to immigrate to America, all of whom stayed for long periods of time in places such as Riverside, San Bernardino, and Stockton (A. Wong 1980). Their father, Wong Han Chal, was the first to emigrate to the U.S. in the latter half of the 1800s but his stay abroad was short. According to genealogical research conducted by descendants of Han Chal, "Little is known of [his] stay in America except that he rushed right back to Gom Benn, having stayed only a year in California" (A. Wong 1980). The genealogist in Gom Benn who assisted in the compilation of the 2013 Yinlong lineage genealogy book informed me that Wong Tong was originally from Nou village (Z. Huang 2019). Another source of information on Wong Tong's life in the U.S. comes from an unusually in-depth newspaper article that covered his death in San Bernardino. He died in the hospital after he was struck by a vehicle driven by Mary E. Ward on December 1927 as he was crossing Third Street at the intersection of Arrowhead Avenue (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1927).



Figure 8.1. Wong Tong’s grave marker in the Mountain View Cemetery, San Bernardino, California. The marker lists his English name, his generation name in Chinese characters, and that his ancestral village is located in Gom Benn, Taishan County.

The newspaper reporter stated that Wong Tong was born in China, age 67 at the time of his death, and had been a merchant in San Bernardino Chinatown for nearly 25 years. He came to San Bernardino from San Francisco in 1903, when he was around 43 years old, and operated a café for many years at 250 Third Street; this address puts his restaurant in the San Bernardino Chinatown. According to former San Bernardino Chinatown resident Bing Sum Wong, the restaurant’s name was Sing Lee Café (GBF 1987). The newspaper article also states that he was survived by his wife and two sons in China as well as a brother named Wong Nun who lived in Stockton, California and would be managing his funeral arrangements. Wong Nun matches the description of Wong Tong’s youngest brother—generation name Wong Sai At—who was a farmer in Stockton (A. Wong 1980). The oldest of Wong Tong’s sons was named Bou Chih, around age 20, and the youngest was named Bou Lan, around age 12 or 13 (Wong Ho Lung interview 1914); family history states that neither immigrated to California. The dates of Wong Tong’s return trips to China are not known because I have yet to locate his immigration files, but he would have had to be present in China when he conceived his two sons.

### *Wong Shoon Jung*

Wong Shoon Jung was born in San Francisco and worked as a vegetable farmer in Riverside. It is unclear when he first arrived in Riverside, but prominent Riverside resident P.T. Evans testified that he thought he had known him since at least 1900 (Pliny T. Evans interview 1915). In 1918, Wong Shoon Jung filled out a World War I draft registration and stated that he was self-employed at the Wing Wah Company (also spelled Wing Wo Co.) garden in West Riverside; his mailing address was listed as 171 Brockton Ave., which was located in Riverside Chinatown (Riverside Draft Board 2 1918a). The son of P.T. Evans, Bill Evans, recalled that locals referred to Wong Shoon Jung as “Big Charlie” because of his stature (Lawton 1987b:307); his draft registration card indicated that he was 5’10” and 170 lbs.

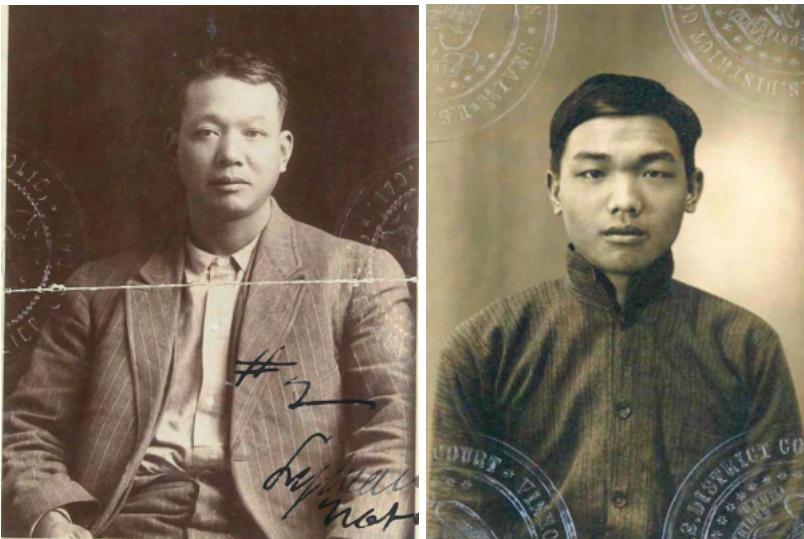


Figure 8.2. Photos of Wong Shoon Jung and son Wong Quen Luck, c.1914. Courtesy of National Archives in San Bruno.

In immigration documents housed at the National Archives, Wong Shoon Jung reported that he was born in 1873 in the upstairs floor of a building in San Francisco’s Chinatown on the corner of Dupont (now Grant) and Sacramento Street (Wong Shoon

Jung interview 1915). He went to China for the first time around 1880 when he was seven years old and returned to California at age fifteen in 1888 (Wong Shoon Jung interview 1914). According to granddaughter Shook Hing Lau, her grandfather and his five brothers were originally from Gom Hong village (Lau 2020). Wong Shoon Jung made his second trip to China in November 1897 and returned to California in September 1899; on this trip he married his wife Lee Shee and soon after his son Quen Luck was born (Wong Shoon Jung interview 1915). His third trip to China was in December 1906 and he returned to the U.S. in 1909; his daughter Ah Ngon was born during this return visit (Wong Shoon Jung interview 1914). Wong Shoon Jung made his fourth trip to China in 1925 only to come back to the U.S. in 1927 (Wong Ho Lung interview 1934). He returned to China in the same year and it was his fifth and final trip to China; according to family history, he never returned to the U.S. and passed away in Wo Hing village in 1944 (Lau 2020).

Wong Quen Luck, generation name Wong Lai Fong, immigrated to the U.S. via Hong Kong in May 1915 at the age of fifteen. When he landed in San Francisco, he was detained at Angel Island Immigration Station and underwent an interview to establish his status as the son of a native son; this status made him exempt from the Chinese Exclusion Act. Quen Luck attended school from 1916-1917 when he joined his father in Riverside (Wong Quen Luck interview 1932). As a young adult, he worked as a vegetable peddler and farmer and made several return trips home. His first return trip to China was in 1921 and his second return trip was between 1926 and 1930. In 1932, he applied for a return certificate to make another trip to China and stated that he was a farm laborer who had

been living in Los Angeles since 1930. Although he claimed to have three sons, family histories reveal that he had one son and two daughters (Lau 2020; A. Wong 2020b).



Figure 8.3. Photo of Wong Quen Luck before departing for China, 1920. Courtesy of National Archives in Riverside.

### *Wong Ben Jew*

Wong Ben Jew, generation name Wong Shew Koon, was a vegetable farmer in Riverside. He was born in 1873 at 338 Commercial St. in San Francisco's Chinatown, which meant that he also had birthright citizenship (Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). Immigration documents indicate that Wong Ben Jew's father Wong Po Sai lived in America but died in China around 1895; his mother passed away in the home village in 1907 (Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). According to Wong Ben Jew's World War I draft registration card that he stood at 5' tall and weighed 120 lbs., his occupation was listed as farmer at the Quong Sing Co. (also spelled Kong Sing Co.) garden in West Riverside, and his mailing address is 171 Brockton Avenue in Riverside Chinatown (Riverside Draft Board 2 1918b). In addition to farming, he was a vegetable peddler and was known as



“Little Joe” to locals in Riverside (Lawton 1987b:306). A Riverside resident named Frank A. Gardner testified that he had known Wong Ben Jew for 15 years, indicating that he had lived in Riverside since at least 1899 (Frank A. Gardner interview 1914).

In 1914, Wong Ben Jew petitioned for his fourteen-year old son Wong Ho Lung to immigrate to the U.S. and recounted his transpacific crossings to immigration inspectors (Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). Wong Ben Jew’s first trip to China was with his mother in 1881 at the age of eight; he stayed in China for about eight years. He returned to the U.S. via Hong Kong in 1889 but was denied admission when he landed; he was eventually released on habeas corpus because he was able to prove that he had been born in San Francisco. Wong Ben Jew’s second trip to China was in September 1898 and he returned to the U.S. in May 1900; it was during this trip that he married his wife Lee Shee and conceived two sons, Wong Ho Lung and Wong Ho Yook. His fourth trip to China was in 1909 and he returned in 1910; during this visit, his daughter Ping was conceived. Wong Ben Jew must have made at least one more trip to China because in 1927, Wong Ho Lung received a letter from home stating that two twin brothers had been born; their names were Wong Wing Jing and Wong Wing Teung (Wong Ho Lung 1934). At some point after the birth of the twins, he returned to the U.S. because in January 1929 he died in a hospital in Riverside (Wong Ho Lung interview 1934).



Figure 8.4. Photo of Wong Ben Jew and son Wong Ho Lung, 1914. Courtesy of National Archives in San Bruno.

Wong Ho Lung was the only child of Wong Ben Jew and Lee Shee to have immigrated to America. He stated to immigration officials that he was born in a village called Gom Hong and did not move to Wo Hing village up until close to the time he left for the U.S. in 1914 (Wong Ho Lung interview 1934). In China, Wong Ho Lung attended the Chiujo (*Chaozuo*) school with Wong Quen Luck, who was similar in age (Wong Ben Jew interview 1915). In a 1968 oral history interview, Wong Ho Lung recalled that when he immigrated to Riverside, he attended the Grant School and lived with the Herrick family as a house servant; during this time, he acquired the English name George and was known by that name from then on (Chace 1990). George also informed the interviewer that when he was a teenager, he had occasionally lived and worked with his father on his vegetable garden in West Riverside.

### *Wong Sam*

Wong Sam was a merchant in the Gee Chung Store in San Bernardino, California. During an immigration interview, he stated that he was born in China around the year

1870 and came to the U.S. at around age 11 or 12 with some cousins (Wong Sam interview 1913). After landing in San Francisco, he reportedly moved to Riverside and Los Angeles and other places, living with relatives. I interviewed five Wong Sam's surviving grandchildren for this project and according to family history, Wong Sam was adopted by a couple living in Gom Benn and actually came to the U.S. via Mexico sometime after 1890 (L. Huang 2018). Wong Sam also stated in immigration documents that his father had never been in the U.S., but family stories reveal that his adoptive father had worked on a railroad in California and later went to Hawaii where he became an opium addict (Linda Huang Family Tree 2018). It is known, however, that his uncle Wong Hand (generation name Wong To Sai) was a cook in Redlands, California in the 1890s and helped establish the Gee Chung store where Wong Sam and another nephew would work in (see Chapter 4).



Figure 8.5. Certificate of identity for Wong Sam, 1915. Courtesy of Janlee Wong.

In immigration interviews, Wong Sam consistently stated that he became a merchant of the Gee Chung Store on 245 Third St., San Bernardino, CA in the year 1894. Based on immigration records, oral histories, and genealogy documents, we know that his business partners included his uncle Wong Hand and cousin Wong Tong Din. Wong Sam made three return trips to his home village after establishing himself as a merchant. He

departed San Francisco on February 1901 and returned from China in September 1901; during this trip he married Lee Shee from Chai Boy village and received the generation name Wong Chun Yee. Lee Shee's full name was See Yung Lee; "Lee" was her surname and "Shee" roughly translates to woman. Immigration files collected by Wong Sam's grandchildren indicate that their grandfather returned to China for a second time and he stayed from 1904 to 1905; during this trip he conceived his first son Wong Gan Poy, who was born on September 2, 1905 (J. Wong 2021). In August 1913, Wong Sam applied for a merchant's return certificate and went to China; during this trip to China, he conceived his second son Wong Gan Voy. Months before, however, he was caught hauling produce from a garden that his store had a share in and the local immigration inspector recommended that his merchant return certificate be denied because the hauling work made him a laborer (Wong Sam interview 1913). This decision was eventually overturned because a new white witness testified that he had not seen him laboring over the past few months and Wong Sam was able to depart for China in the same year. While in China in 1914, he moved his family to a new village called Wo Hing (Wong Sam interview 1922). Wong Sam's granddaughter confirmed that he originally lived in Sun Ha village (Cheung 2019)

In July 1915, Wong Sam returned to San Bernardino from China and never made another return trip to his home village. Six years later, however, he petitioned his sixteen-year old son Poy to join him in San Bernardino; Poy was successfully admitted to the U.S. as the minor son of a merchant in 1921 (J. Wong 2021). Voy, his second son, grew up in Wo Hing village and did not immigrate to the U.S. until February 23, 1937 at age twenty-four as a "paper son" under the name Wong Gow Doy (J. Wong 2016). It is likely

that he had to purchase a fraudulent identity to immigrate because he was over the age of twenty-one and therefore ineligible to immigrate as the minor son of a merchant. A year after Voy's arrival in San Bernardino Chinatown, Wong Sam died and his body was interred at the Mountain View Cemetery in San Bernardino (*San Bernardino County Sun* 1938).

### *Summary of Demographic Information*

Below is a table summarizing the background information I gathered on each of the four migrants described in the previous section.

<b>Name in the U.S.</b>	<b>Generation Name</b>	<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>Ancestral Village</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>U.S. City of Residence</b>	<b>Immigration Status</b>	<b>Primary Occupation</b>	<b>Secondary Occupation</b>
Wong Tong	Wong Sai Lee 黄世理	1860	Nou (Nao) Village	Nou (Nao) Village	San Bernardino	Exempt (Merchant)	Merchant	Restaurant Owner
Wong Sam 黄三	Wong Chun Yee 黄傅裕	1870	Sun Ha (Xin Xia) Village	Adopted	San Bernardino	Exempt (Merchant)	Merchant	Farmer
Wong Ben Jew 黄炳照	Wong Shew Koon	1873	Gom Hong (Gan Tang) Village	San Francisco	Riverside	Exempt (U.S.-born)	Farmer	Vegetable Peddler
Wong Shoon Jung 黄純長	Wong Shew Kay 黄韶祺	1873	Gom Hong (Gan Tang) Village	San Francisco	Riverside	Exempt (U.S.-born)	Farmer	Vegetable Peddler

Table 8.1. Demographic information on four transnational migrants living in Wo Hing.

The table shows that all came from different villages located in Gom Benn, which means that migration to Wo Hing did not originate in one specific village. I located the family trees for Wong Tong, Wong Sam, and Wong Shoon Jung in the Yinlong genealogy book and the records indicate that none of them shared any common relatives such as a father, grandfather, or great-grandfather (Huang 2013). Internal migration, therefore, was not dependent upon close familial ties. Additionally, the genealogy book notes that Wong Sam's cousin Wong Tong Din moved to a village in Sam Se, which is

located a few miles from the Gom Benn village cluster (Huang 2013:411). What the four migrants did have in common, however, was that they had each lived in an Inland Empire Chinatown when they moved to Wo Hing. Occupation does not appear to have played a role in what type of people moved to Wo Hing; two residents were merchants while the other two were farmers. While farmers were part of the laboring class, this seems to have been the preferred occupation for the two U.S.-born residents. The second most important commonality among the known residents of Wo Hing is that they were all part of an immigration exempt class, which meant that the Chinese Exclusion Act did not apply to them and they could move back and forth between China and California. In the next section, I describe the household configurations for these transnational migrants and their families.

### **Home Life in Wo Hing Village**

The family configuration of Chinese transnational migrants has been described as a “split-household” wherein men go overseas to earn wages and live apart from their wives, children, and parents (Hsu 2000a; Nakano Glenn 1983). In effect, this creates two households: the residence that the father lives in while laboring abroad and the home village where the rest of his family lives. Historian Wendy Rouse Jorae argues that this description is not entirely accurate because it assumes that Chinese families did not exist in communities abroad (2009:2). While Jorae’s critique is aimed at dispelling the myth that Chinatowns were strictly bachelor communities, the split-household does describe the household situation of many transnational migrants, but only at certain times of their lives. My research indicates that the following household configurations were common

for transnational migrants with families: 1) the entire family abroad, 2) the split-household, and 3) the entire family in the home village. It is important to note that these configurations could change any time depending on the social and political conditions in the ancestral homeland and the diasporic site. Below, I provide examples of each type of household using the families of the migrants I discussed earlier.

Wong Shoon Jung and Wong Ben Jew were two transnational migrants that illustrate Jorae's point that Chinese American families were present in the period between 1850 and 1920. Wong Ben Jew testified in an immigration interview that his China-born mother, Lee Shee, had immigrated to the U.S. at one point because she gave birth to him in San Francisco Chinatown. It is not known if Wong Shoon Jung's mother, Louie Shee, immigrated to the U.S. or if she was born in America, but she was living in San Francisco Chinatown when she gave birth to him. Wong Ben Jew and Wong Shoon Jung would have been part of a small but important cohort of Chinese children who lived with their parents in late nineteenth century San Francisco Chinatown (Jorae 2009). Both, however, would leave this Chinese community as children when their parents decided that they needed to take them to China where they ultimately spent the rest of their childhood. Wong Shoon Jung sailed to China at age 7 with his father and mother while Wong Ben Jew left for China in 1881 with only his mother (Wong Ben Jew interview 1915). While it is unclear what motivated their parents to take them to China, the time of their departure coincides with growing anti-Chinese sentiment in the U.S. that ultimately led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. It is also important to note that U.S.-born daughters also made similar trips to China. One example is Lee Sin Hi, who was Wong Ben Jew's wife; according to her son George, she was one of three Chinese girls

born in San Francisco Chinatown in 1879 and at some point had made a trip to China before marrying her husband in his home village (Chace 1990).

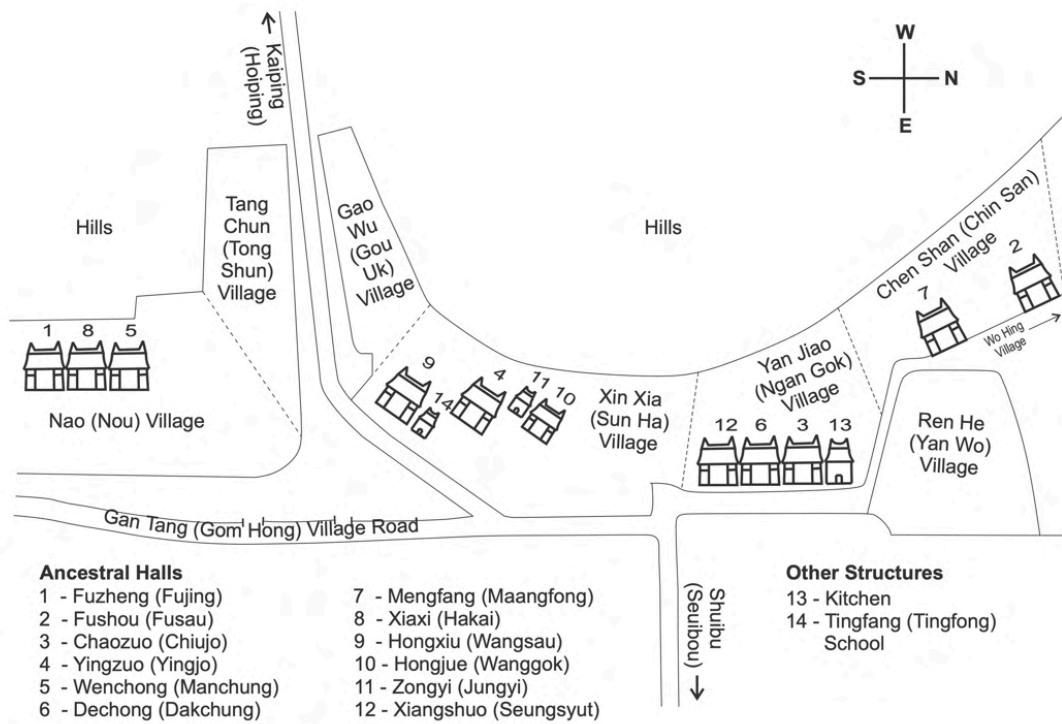
The second configuration—the split-household—is often described as a situation where the adult male head of the household goes abroad to labor while leaving his family in the village. In this arrangement, the wife’s role in the split-household is to take care of all child-rearing duties while the husband’s role is to earn money and send remittances to his family (Nakano Glenn 1983). My research, however, adds complexity to the traditional split-household narrative because some minor sons immigrated to join their fathers overseas. While the wives and the minor children of merchants and American-born Chinese, age 21 years old and under, were exempt from the Chinese Exclusion law, it was typically minor sons who took the opportunity to immigrate. The immigration of minor sons did not change the family’s status as a split-household, but it did shift some of the child-rearing responsibilities to the father abroad. Several of the Chinese Exclusion Files I examined show that a number of Inland Empire Chinese, particularly merchants, did try to bring to bring their sons to America with varying degrees of success. Wong Shoon Jung, Wong Ben Jew, and Wong Sam all successfully brought one teenage son to join them in America.

A third common family arrangement was one in which the entire family resided in the home village; this was complementary to the split-household configuration and applied to most transnational migrant families. As my research indicates, migrants returned to the home village every few years and spent up to two or three years with their families depending on the terms of the migrants’ return certificate. During these visits they would get married, conceive children, and visit the graves of deceased parents and



ancestors. These household configurations help contextualize the huge investment that transnational migrants put into constructing new homes in China.

Although transnational migrants financed life in the home village with remittances, the residents who spent the most time in Wo Hing were the wives and children of transnational migrants. For children, their life revolved around home and school. Ancestral halls often doubled as schools for the education of boys and included learning classical Chinese texts as well as Confucian principles such as filial piety (Liu 2005). In immigration interviews, George, Quen Luck, and Poy each stated that they attended school at the Chew Daw (*Chaozuo*) ancestral hall, which was located in Ngan Gok village. They began to attend the school at age seven and slept at the ancestral hall when they reached the age of twelve years; they would return home to eat meals with their family members. This arrangement, however, was flexible; when Wong Ben Jew returned to the home village, he had George sleep at home instead, presumably so that they could spend more time together (Wong Ben Jew interview 1915). Village girls were educated as well and appear to have had their own separate schools. In an immigration interview, Wong Ping Kan of Gom Hong village stated that his seventeen-year old daughter Gim Tew has been attending a girls' school in Wo Hing village for two years (Wong Ping Kan interview 1915). Historian Renqiu Yu (1983) notes that after the 1911 Chinese Revolution, the Taishan County government became increasingly involved in educational reform and encouraged villages to set aside lineage-owned land to construct privately funded schools so that more young people could be educated.



Map 8.2. Distribution of previously extant ancestral halls in Gom Benn, adapted from Huang and Huang (2014). Not to scale.

Immigration records also shed light on how the wives of migrants fulfilled their Confucian duty to care for the household while their husbands were abroad. Wives were often charged with managing remittance money. For example, Wong Ben Jew noted that he agreed to give Wong Shoon Jung's wife money if she asked for it; she ended up making several requests that totaled \$100, which her husband repaid when he returned to Riverside (Wong Ben Jew interview 1914). Wong Shoon Jung also used Wong Ben Jew to deliver a letter to his wife; letter-writing was reciprocal as his wife sent news to him in Riverside, including a letter stating that his father Wong Gee Sai passed away in the home village. Mothers and sisters also communicated with overseas relatives through letter-writing. George recounted in an oral history interview that he exchanged letters with his mother and sister regularly; this was their only direct communication because he never made any return visits to China (Chace 1990). In addition to keeping their relatives apprised of news in the village, another role that some village women had was managing property. Wong Shoon Jung, for example, owned two acres in three lots of land for growing rice, which he bought during his 1906 to 1909 trip back to China. He stated in an immigration interview that he rented his land to Wong Show Gong of Gom Benn but did not know much about it because his wife managed the rent for him (Wong Shoon Jung interview 1915).

Life, however, could also be challenging for village women. The majority of wives who lived in Wo Hing in 1914 had bound feet (see Table 8.2) and one of these women was Wong Sam's wife, See Yung. See Yung's activities in her eighties, when she lived with her son Voy and grandchildren in the U.S., provide a glimpse into what life

was like for woman with bound feet. Although she exchanged few words with her grandchildren in their Riverside home, she passed the time by creating elaborate paper cuts in the shape of flowers, butterflies, coins, and auspicious Chinese characters; she was also adept at sewing and re-hemmed clothes for her grandchildren (L. Huang 2018). See Yung also appears to have resented the long years of separation from her husband Wong Sam because decades after her husband's death, she cursed her "bad husband" who only made two return visits and never returned to China after those trips (J. Wong 2016).



Figure 8.6. Photo of See Yung Lee in the U.S. and an example of her papercut artwork in her Riverside home, circa 1970s. Courtesy of Julie Duncan and Linda Huang.

See Yung's grandchildren also state, however, that their grandmother was an oppressive force in their mother Fay Hing Lee's life. Fay Hing married Voy Wong in Wo Hing, but he went abroad shortly afterward and both had to endure a separation of ten years because of the Sino-Japanese War. Later in life, she would recount to her children that she lived for years in subservience to her sister-in-law and mother-in-law because each of their husbands was in San Bernardino Chinatown working at the Gee Chung

Store. As the youngest daughter-in-law, Fay Hing had to gather fuel for cooking, prepare each meal, and wash everyone's feet; an indication that she resented this treatment in Wo Hing is that when See Yung immigrated to the U.S. and came to live with her family, she refused to cook for or even speak to her mother-in-law (J. Wong 2016). In this particular case, a prolonged period of the split-household configuration intensified hierarchies that normally might have been moderated by the presence of Fay Hing's husband. In the next section, I contextualize home construction through four periods of time: the end of the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese Revolution, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the Chinese civil war between the Kuomintang and Communist Party.

#### *The End of the Qing Dynasty (1902-1911)*

Wo Hing was established in 1902, during the waning years of the Qing Dynasty. In this time period, the residents were still the imperial subjects of Manchu rulers as such, boys and men had to wear their hair in long queues. Although it was a Manchu edict that signaled subjugation, it became a regular part of dress over the generations. Girls were subjected to the practice of footbinding, which made the feet smaller and was viewed as a sign of beauty. This process, however, was extremely painful and involved breaking bones at a young age and resulted in a cloistered life that did not involve manual labor (Yung 1995).

Most of the new houses built in the Four Counties region during the late Qing period were three-bay two-corridor houses (Tan 2013a). The outer bays each housed one family and was comprised of a bedroom and a separate room for the kitchen. The middle bay was shared living room space; against one wall would be an elevated ancestral altar

to honor deceased parents and on the opposite side would be a *tianguan* shrine, a religious altar to the sky god. Above the sky god shrine was a rectangular *tianjing* or skylight on the ceiling. Up to two families could live in the house and a common arrangement was for a married man and his family to live on one side and his parents to live on the other side (Tan 2013a:268).

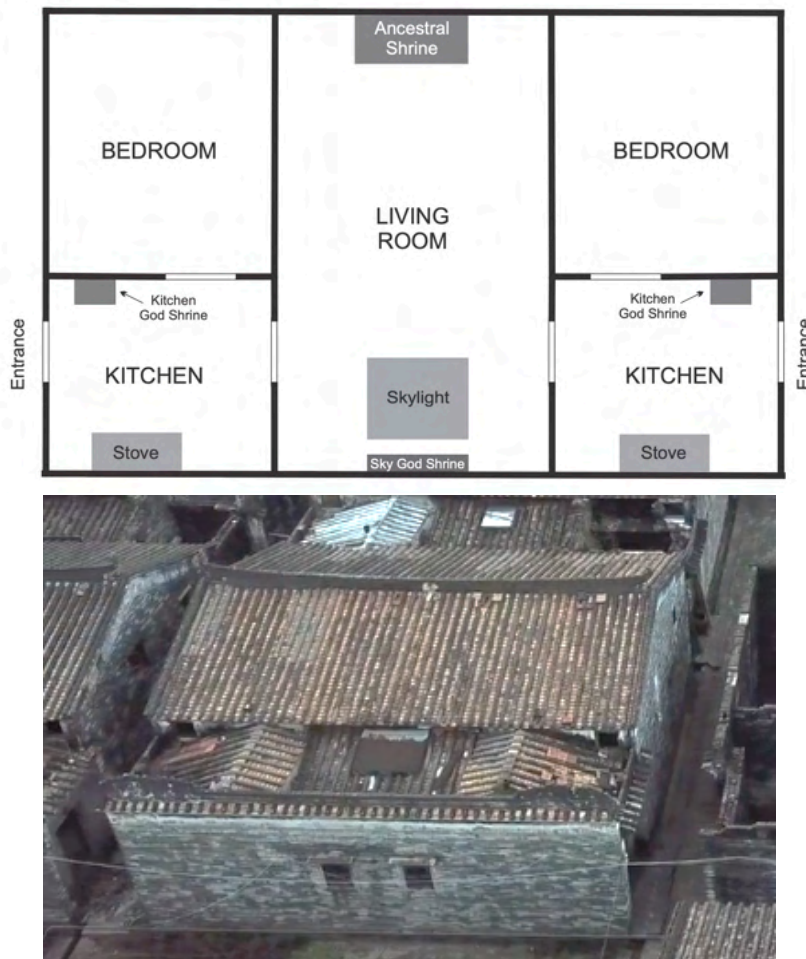


Figure 8.7. Above, three-bay two-corridor house floor plan (Tan 2013b). Below, the exterior of Wong Ben Jew's three-bay two-corridor house in Wo Hing.

As stated in an earlier section, villages were encouraged to build schools in the early twentieth century. Madeline Hsu attributes this construction frenzy to the establishment of *qiaokan* magazines that were created in 1909 by Taishan school

principals and were circulated among migrants in the Chinese diaspora; these magazines included local news that migrants were eager to read about as well as appeals for donations to construct schools to educate village youth (Hsu 2004). Tan also notes that political leader Sun Yat-Sen went abroad to various Chinatowns in North America to fundraise for his revolution and encouraged Chinese migrants to donate money to their hometowns to build “community facilities such as shrines, hospitals and libraries” (2013b:51). Thus, the period leading up to Dr. Sun’s successful revolution in 1911 involved transnational migrants donating money for political change as well as the construction of individual homes and community-oriented projects.

*Post-Revolution Prosperity (1912-c.1937)*

Immigration documents indicate that Wo Hing remained a small village in the first twelve years of its life; returning migrants state that there were only fifteen houses in Wo Hing in the year 1914 (Wong Ho Lung 1914; Wong Shoon Jung interview 1915). Based on this information, it is clear that the village, which has 77 historic structures, was not established all at once. As my preliminary research indicates, Wo Hing has a layout that matches Tan’s typology of what was locally known as an “overseas Chinese village,” which date to the 1900s and 1910s (2013:203). In these villages, the layout is a road grid with horizontal and vertical alleys that cross each other at regular intervals; previously, villages had a Chinese comb-shaped layout with few horizontal lanes that cut across the entire village. According to Tan, planned villages from this period were regulated with respect to house style, dwelling size, and the widths of alleys; home buyers had to adhere to those rules. There are no surviving records of Wo Hing’s regulations, but they were

typically decided by the leaders of a lineage, many of whom were migrants living abroad. As stated in a previous chapter, one characteristic of a lineage is the corporate ownership of property and it was the lineage who purchased the land for these planned villages.

Immigration documents indicate that the four transnational migrants I discussed earlier occupied four of the fifteen houses present in 1914; Wong Shoon Jung owned the house I have labeled Structure 62, Wong Ben Jew owned Structure 68, Wong Tong owned Structure 76, and Wong Sam owned Structure 85. Each of these men were already married and had a least one child when they moved to Wo Hing. Information about Wo Hing from 1914 is available because this is the year that the minor sons of transnational migrants living in the village began immigrating to America; Quen Luck, Ho Lung, and Gan Poy were between the ages of 14 to 16 when they each traveled to Hong Kong to take a ship to join their fathers in America.

After eight to ten years in the U.S. attending local schools and possibly also working, two of these three sons returned to the home village to marry. Wong Quen Luck married in his home village in 1921 and had a son in 1922. Wong Gan Poy made a return visit to China as an adult for the same reason; according to his petition for naturalization from 1947, he wed Soo Hing Lee on April 29, 1929 in the home village (J. Wong 2021). Like their fathers, they each married a woman with the surname Lee, which was likely an arranged marriage. Arranged marriages often occurred locally and many Lee villages are located near Gom Benn (J. Wong 2016). As a married man, Wong Quen Luck returned to Riverside in 1922, but made two more return trips home in the early 1930s. Wong Gan Poy returned to San Bernardino soon after he married in China, but made a return trip to his home village five years later and stayed for one year.



In the 1920s, the fathers of these men also continued to move back and forth between the U.S. and China. As a result, immigration records for Wong Ben Jew, Wong Shoon Jung, and Wong Sam reveal bits of information about their wives. As shown in Table 8.2, all of their wives had bound feet but at least two wives had their feet unbound later on. In 1925, Wong Ben Jew stated that his wife Lee Shee “had bound feet when I returned in 1910; she now has unbound feet” (Wong Ben Jew interview 1925). Wong Shoon Jung’s wife also had bound feet, but in 1926 it was reported that they were “now unbound” (Wong Quen Luck interview 1926). Wong Sam’s wife Lee See Yung from Chai Boy village had bound feet, but we know from her grandchildren that her feet were still bound when she immigrated to the U.S. in 1962 at age 81 (J. Wong 2016). It is unclear what prompted some women to have their feet unbound, but historian Judy Yung (1999) notes that after the 1911 Revolution, footbinding was banned and some women in China and in San Francisco chose to have their feet unbound as a sign of political support; this process, however, could be just as painful as footbinding. It is also possible that the women unbound their feet so that could be more mobile.

In the late 1920s, some of the patriarchs in Wo Hing’s founding families began to pass away. Wong Tong died in 1927 in San Bernardino while Wong Ben Jew passed away in 1929 in Riverside. For Chinese migrants, however, the ideal scenario late in life would have involved retirement, returning to China as wealthy individuals, and dying in the home village; Michael Williams (Williams 2018) describes this aspiration as “returning home with glory.” Wong Shoon Jung appears to have been the only one to have fulfilled that desire. His last return trip to China was in 1927 whereupon he began to build his second house in Wo Hing, a three-story mansion; the former village chief

helped identify the historic mansion as belonging to Wong Shew Kay (Wong Shoon Jung's generation name) and this was confirmed by in an interview I conducted with granddaughter Shook Hing Lau (2020). Multi-story houses, often called *lu* mansions, were possible because of the availability of imported reinforced steel and concrete in the Four Counties region, which came through the nearby port of Hong Kong (Tan 2013a). Mansions such as Wong Shoon Jung's had Western-style arches above the windows as well as balconies, which did not become trendy until the 1920s and 1930s. The Chinese characters above the eastern entrance of the mansion read 麟祥書室 from left to right and references learning; according to architectural historian Jinhua Tan, these words reflected the ideals of the owner and one of Wong Shoon Jung's desires must have been for his descendants to be educated (Tan 2020).



Figure 8.8. The eastern side (left) and flat reinforced concrete roof (right) of Wong Shoon Jung's three-story house built in the late 1920s or 1930s.

Other houses in Wo Hing that deviate slightly from traditional house style are three houses in that sit in a row in the back of Wo Hing village, which I have labeled Structure 13, Structure 32, and Structure 33. These are three-bay two-corridor style

houses with a gabled roof, but the roofs of the two bays are raised higher. These structures appear taller than the houses in front of them, but this only because they are at a slightly higher elevation; all three houses are the same length, width, and height as other three-bay two-corridor houses. Structure 13 has a fresco painting with a 1937 date and its two raised bays are each enclosed with a gable roof. Structure 33 has a fresco painting with a 1937 date and the house in between, Structure 32, a house owned by Wong Chun San, is built in the same style as the other two and was also likely constructed in the 1930s. Fresco paintings were part of home construction, so they are accurate indicators of the year that the home was built. The flat roof on the side bays of Structure 32 and 33 are made possible because of the use of reinforced steel and concrete (Tan 2013b).



Figure 8.9. Aerial view of three homes in Wo Hing village built in the 1930s.

The former village chief informed me that the house in the middle belonged to Wong Chun San (Q. Huang 2019). Wong Chun San was the owner of the Sam Sing Meat Market in Los Angeles and is credited with bringing people to the U.S. through the paper son method in the 1930s, including Wong Tong's grandson Wing Gow Wong and Wong Sam's youngest son Voy Wong (A. Wong 1980; J. Wong 2016). Below, I compare Wong Chun San's house to a traditional three-bay two-corridor house in the same row to illustrate the similarities and differences.



Figure 8.10. North side (left) and east side (right) of Wong Chun San's home built in the 1930s.



Figure 8.11. North side (left) and east side (right) of Structure 51, a traditional three-bay two-corridor home.

In comparing the two houses, the houses are similar in many ways: Western-style arches above windows, gabled roof, fresco paintings, and walls made of blue-grey *qing* brick. The eastern walls of the houses, however, are very different. The traditional house has no windows at all, is lower in height, and has the traditional geometric *bogu* ornamentation on the roof, which is typical of houses that sit in the first row. Wong Chun San's eastern wall has six windows, does not have *bogu* decorations, and contains a piece of granite embedded in the front corners to prevent damage to the house. Structure 51 is most similar to its neighbor Structure 50 and Wong Sam's house (Structure 85), which dates to 1914, because all three houses also have a granite relief carving of a *fu* (福) character above its doors; these are typically painted on in other houses. Structure 51 and 85 also have arches above windows, a characteristic shared by all three 1930s houses. One element that is unique to Wong Sam's house are granite relief carvings of a couplet on his two doorways. In comparison, all other houses in Wo Hing have painted their

couplets on their door. When Wong Sam's house is compared to other three-bay two-corridor houses, it has more unique architectural elements total than any other house.



Figure 8.12. Left, profile of Wong Sam's first house; right, close-up of one doorway showing granite relief of couplets.

There are also a few houses in Wo Hing that have the same profile as a three-bay two-corridor style house, but only have one or two bays built; the unconstructed bay is outlined with a wall. Five houses are built in this style: Structure 3, Structure 10, Structure 90, Structure 91, and Structure 92. According to Jinhua Tan, the unbuilt bays were parcels of land that belonged to another immediate male relative such as son or brother (Tan 2020). Oral histories with descendants support this conclusion. Structure 90 belonged to Wong Sam and was just across the lane from his first house, Structure 85. According to family history, this house was where his wife See Yung lived while the daughters-in-law occupied the three-bay two-corridor house (Duncan 2018). In fact, it shares many of the features of the original house such as arches above windows, a granite *fu* character, and granite couplets. The shared architectural features and location next to original implies that these courtyard houses functioned as annexes. Wong Shoon Jung's

granddaughter informed me that Structures 91 and 92, located in the same row as the mansion, belonged to her family; they were likely built around the same time and used as servants' quarters (Lau 2020). These examples indicate that transnational migrants heavily invested in property and maintained traditional patrilineal inheritance rights.



Figure 8.13. *Left*, profile of Wong Sam's second house. *Right*, view of Structure 92, a house that Wong Shoon Jung's servants lived in.

Structure 10, located on the southern side of the village, has one bay, and appears to be a school rather than a residence. A sign on the gate on the southern end of the structure reads, 教厚書室 from left to right, which indicates that it functioned as a school. According to my personal communication with Tan (2020), this structure probably served as a private school for a small group of male students from the same branch in the lineage, and their families had pooled money together to hire a scholar to serve as their teacher. The Western-style arches above the windows indicate that the earliest this structure was built was 1920. The existence of the school indicates that some Wo Hing residents were still dedicated to the idea that their children would go on to

prepare for exams to enter into government bureaucracy because that is what these types of schools were traditionally designed for (Yu 1983).



Figure 8.14. *Left*, northeast view of Structure 10, a school, and *right*, a view of the school's southern gate.

In addition to new houses such as the ones described above, thousands of fortified towers called *diaolou* were built in Taishan villages between the years 1912 and 1926 (Cheng and Liu 1982). Banditry continued to be a problem in the Four Counties region during in this era and returning migrants or their family members were popular kidnapping targets who were held hostage for ransom (Batto 2006). While there are no *diaolou* in Wo Hing, houses share some of the defensive features of these towers, such as the iron bars and shutters on the windows; these can be seen on the 1930s house.



Structure	Head of Household	Wives and Children	House Type	Year Built	Frescoes	Carved Granite	Window Arches
60	Wong Chot Sai	Wife has bound feet; son Wong Chee, age 11 or 12	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
61	Wong Daw Sai	Wife has bound feet; has several children	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
62	Wong Shoon Jung	Wife, Lee Shee, has bound feet; son Wong Quen Luck is age 16 and daughter Wong Ngon is age 6	Traditional	1906-1909, probably	Present	Absent	Absent
63	Wong Gon Leung	Wife has natural feet; no children	Traditional	1902-1914	--	Absent	Absent
64	Wong Wing Yow	Wife has natural feet; has several children	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
66	Wong Sai Oon	Wife has bound feet; has son and daughter	Traditional	1910	Present	Absent	Absent
67	Wong Shung Sai	Wife has bound feet; son Wong Foon, about age 16 and daughter	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
68	Wong Ben Jew	Wife, Lee Sin Hi, has bound feet; oldest son Wong Ho Lung age 14,, youngest son Wong Ho Yook age 13, and daughter Wong Ping age 4	Traditional	1909-1910, probably	Present	Absent	Absent
69	Wong Sai You	Wife has bound feet; son Din is age 12, daughter Wong Gin is age 17, daughter Wong Kim is about 11, and a third daughter who is a little girl	--	1902-1914	--	--	--
70	Wong Seung Hen	Wife has bound feet; Wong Ho Lung states he has about five children	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
76	Wong Tong	Wife has bound feet; son Wong Bou Chi about age 20 and son Wong Bou Lan age 12 or 13	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
77	Wong Sai Bong	Wife has bound feet; son Wong Mon, about age 6 or 7	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
78	Wong Ngoon Guey	Wife has natural feet; no children in 1909	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
79	Wong Dun Tham	Wife has bound feet; son Wong Nom age 10	Traditional	1902-1914	Present	Absent	Absent
85	Wong Sam	Wife, Lee See Yung, has bound feet; son Wong Poy age 10	Traditional	1914	Present	Present	Present

Sources: Wong Ho Lung interview (1914) and dates on fresco paintings

-- : Unable to determine

Table 8.2. Names and location of villagers in Wo Hing, 1914.

*Second Sino-Japanese War (c.1937-1945)*

The Second Sino-Japanese War slowed down many transnational activities. For example, before Wong Sam died in San Bernardino in 1938, he requested that his bones be forwarded to China after the war ceased; bone repatriation was a common practice for Chinese migrants and often occurred one or more years after a body had decomposed (*The San Bernardino County Sun* 1938). His request was never fulfilled because Japan occupied Hong Kong in 1941, which is where the main transnational institutions that facilitated bone repatriation were located (Sinn 2013).

The Japanese invasion of Hong Kong and mainland China, of course, had the largest impact on families living in the home village because they were subject to attacks from Japanese troops and had their communication with family members abroad disrupted. Wong Sam's granddaughter, Mildred Cheung, was a child in Wo Hing during the war and remembers living in fear from being attacked by the Japanese military (Cheung 2019). Sun Woo Lee (nee Wong) remembers that her family stopped receiving remittances from father Quen Luck's at the outbreak of war between Japan and China (A. Wong 2020b). At age 7, she and her sister Shook Hing learned to grow rice and sell refurbished clothes in neighboring counties. During the war, Hsu notes that the war "did not end regular travel between Taishan and the crucial nexus of Hong Kong" until the occupation of Hong Kong in December 1941 (Hsu 2000a:179). This explains how Sun Woo's older brother Wong Fay Hong was able to leave China in 1939 and immigrate to Los Angeles during this turbulent period (Chinese American Citizens Alliance 2019). Although Fay Hong was able to escape war in China, he was soon drafted into the U.S.

army and stationed in France during World War II; in 1946, he was honorably discharged.

*The Chinese Civil War (1946-1949)*

With the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War came a resumption of battles between two political factions in China – the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. It is during this period of time that women began immigrating to the U.S.—mostly the wives of Chinese men living in America. The political uncertainty in China and easing of anti-Chinese immigration laws is what prompted men in America to bring their wives over. My research indicates that two women in Wo Hing village were able to leave during this time period. In 1946, Fay Hing reunited with her husband Voy in China after a ten-year separation; they left for the U.S. together in 1948 and settled in Riverside (J. Wong 2016). Immigration documents indicate that Fay Hing was allowed to come to the U.S. because she was the wife of a U.S. citizen (American Consulate General, Canton, China 1947). In 1947, at age 18, Sun Woo married a Chinese American veteran and immigrated to Los Angeles as a war bride (A. Wong 2020b). The ability for Sun Woo to immigrate reflects the relaxation of restrictive immigration laws that targeted the Chinese. The Chinese Exclusion Act was officially repealed in 1943 because China became an ally of the U.S. during World War II, but the 1927 Immigration Act quota system was still intact; Chinese American G.I.s who had fought in World War II, however, were granted the right to bring women they had married in China over to America through the War Brides Act of 1945 (Lee 2003b:245). Wong Fay Hong also took advantage of this law

when he returned to China in February 1947 to marry and brought his pregnant wife to the U.S. a few months later (Chinese American Citizens Alliance 2019).

The civil war in China ended on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949 when Communist Party leader Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People's Republic of China. The ramifications of this political change were huge because the Communist Party cut off formal relations between the U.S. and China, which would not resume again until 1978 (Chang 2015). The lack of diplomatic relations between these two countries made it difficult for split-households to communicate with each other and migrants no longer had the ability to make return visits to the home village. A small number of villagers in Wo Hing, such as Poy's wife Soo Hing and daughter Mildred, were able to flee to Hong Kong and immigrate to the U.S. in the 1950s, but emigration from Guangdong Province virtually ceased (*The Los Angeles Times* 1962). The year 1949, therefore, marks the end of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese transnationalism.

### **Intra-village Fresco Analysis**

To further investigate how transnational migration changed Wo Hing, I examined changes in Wo Hing's frescoes over time. I photographed all of the surviving historic frescoes in Wo Hing to locate any dates written on the paintings and to document any changes in motifs as houses were continually being built in Wo Hing. Frescoes were traditional *lingnan* style ornamentations applied on vernacular architecture in Guangdong Province and could be found on houses as well as ancestral halls. These painted works of art were located near the lintel and could be found above one or both doors of a house. A professional artisan was hired by the homeowner to create the fresco paintings as well as

other decorative elements such as carved stucco and wooden boards filled with auspicious symbols; a house was not considered complete until all ornamentation was applied to the interior and exterior of a house (Tan 2013b:259).

Houses that have been modified with balconies above the lintel end up destroying frescoes so there is no evidence of a fresco on these structures, but they probably had at least one fresco when they were built. Some frescoes have been damaged by the elements so the images are indecipherable. In my fresco survey, I identified 55 legible frescoes and found only two motifs: 1) *niaoyu huaxiang* or “birdsong and flowers” motif and 2) *shanshui* or “mountains and water landscape” motif; both are considered classic Chinese imagery (Tan 2013b). The first motif comprises 87% of the legible frescoes (n=48) and is a depiction of two birds, sometimes more than two, sitting on a tree branch surrounded by flowers and a rock. The second motif comprises 13% of the legible frescoes (n=7) and consists of scenic mountains and waterways; Chinese buildings and people may also appear in the landscape.



Figure 8.15. Examples of Wo Hing’s two fresco motifs: *Left*, Wong Ben Jew’s “birdsong and flowers” fresco and *right*, Wong Shoon Jung’s “mountains and water landscape” fresco.

Through my analysis of Wo Hing’s frescoes, I was able to date the construction of four houses in addition Wong Sam’s house. The oldest fresco dates to 1908 and is located

on Structure 18, which is a traditional three-bay two-corridor house. This is a surprising find because Structure 18 is located outside of the boundary of houses that were present in Wo Hing in 1914. Therefore, Wo Hing was much larger than what was recorded in immigration documents and was probably comprised of at least two clusters of houses that eventually became one village. The second oldest fresco dates to 1910 and belonged to Wong Sai Oon, whose house was described in 1914 immigration records. The next datable house in Wong Sam's house because he testifies that he moved to Wo Hing village in 1914. All three frescoes from these houses depict the "birdsong and flowers" motif. Two other frescoes have dates on them—one from 1932 and one from 1937; this is how I was able to date the modified three-bay two-corridor houses in the back of the village. These two frescoes, however, depict the "mountains and water landscape" motif. The traditional landscape fresco often includes small gabled village houses, but the 1932 painting has the addition of a rectangular six-story building reminiscent of fortified *diaolou* structures that became a ubiquitous part of the Taishan landscape in the 1920s and 1930s. The inclusion of this structure shows that the homeowner embraced what Tan (2013a) calls an "overseas Chinese culture" that combined both Chinese and Western-style architectural styles; in fact, the homeowner was making his own contribution to this new culture because these frescoes were located on three-bay two-corridor houses with a same mix of Western-style elements such as window arches and artwork containing Chinese symbolism.



Figure 8.16. Structure 18 with “birdsong and flowers” fresco and a close-up of the fresco’s 1908 date.



Figure 8.17. Wong Sai Oon’s (Structure 66) “birdsong and flowers” fresco and close-up of the fresco’s 1910 date.



Figure 8.18. Wong Sam’s “birdsong and flowers” fresco; the house was built in 1914 according to immigration records.



Figure 8.18. Frescoes depicting a “mountains and water landscape” motif. *Above*, close-up of the 1932 fresco and *below*, close-up of the 1937 fresco.

## Conclusion

This chapter illuminates how transnationalism impacted both home village life and architecture by examining the growth and development of a village largely built by migrants. My research indicates that Wo Hing’s original residents came from different villages in the Gom Benn village cluster who were not closely related to one another; four known residents all shared a connection to the Inland Empire region of southern California. The transnational migrants lived in either the Riverside Chinatown or San



Bernardino Chinatown. Another important commonality they had was that they were all second-generation migrants in their families; in fact, two Wo Hing residents were born in San Francisco, but lived as transnational migrants their entire adult lives. The sons of these migrants would eventually immigrate as well and almost all continued the tradition of moving back and forth between Wo Hing and the Inland Empire. This multi-generational experience with immigration points to strong transnational institutions and labor networks in China, Hong Kong, and the U.S., which specifically tied Gom Benn to California from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Another important commonality between migrants in Wo Hing was that they were either merchants or native-born U.S. citizens, which made them exempt from the Chinese Exclusion Law; this allowed them to move back and forth between the U.S. and the home village. Lastly, migrants in Wo Hing chose not to bring their wives to the U.S., which resulted in a split-household arrangement. Migrants wanted their families in China to live comfortably so they constructed new homes in a new village for them; this explains why the majority of households in Wo Hing in 1914 were comprised of married couples with young children as opposed to bachelors or retirees.

My research on the houses themselves indicate that new homes were built over time. Migrants initially built three-bay two-corridor type dwellings that were indistinguishable from one another; even fresco motifs were identical as nearly all houses chose to depict the classic Chinese image of two birds, a rock, and flowers. Over time, however, homeowners incorporated architectural ornamentation that made them stand out and Wong Sam's house in 1914 appears to be a starting point for that change. His house has the added features of Western-style window arches and a Chinese *fu* character that is

carved instead of painted on; these are characteristics that are seen on later houses in Wo Hing that date to the 1930s. Village houses from the 1920s and 1930s also show the use of imported reinforced concrete in addition to brick and timber as building materials; only a few houses in Wo Hing, such as three-story mansion, used these new materials. Instead, migrants with money preferred to show off their wealth with elaborate ornamentation and by building housing annexes rather than constructing elaborate multi-story houses such as *lu* mansions. Overall, homeowners in Wo Hing did appear to be participating in what Selia Tan refers a new “overseas Chinese” vernacular tradition that combined Western-style elements with traditional Chinese ornamentation, but in limited ways. One possible explanation is that by the time *lu* mansions were in vogue in the 1930s, the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns were already in economic decline and migrants could not afford to follow new architectural trends.

This chapter illustrates that research at the site of the home village is necessary to understand the complete lives of Chinese transnational migrants. As I have shown, the migrants associated with the Inland Empire Chinatowns did not always live separately from their families as the split-household was only a part-time household arrangement. By studying the houses that migrants constructed, we gain insight into their desires and aspirations through their choice of dwelling type and architectural ornamentation. The results of my study indicate that migrants continued to invest in their home villages over time as illustrated by the fact that Wong Sam and Wong Shoon Jung built second houses in Wo Hing village. Overall, I have shown that transnationalism does not merely refer to transpacific movements of people but also to the material investments that migrants made

in their effort to reunite the split-household; the materiality of transnationalism, therefore, can be studied by examining how a village is built and developed over time.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

#### **Enduring Transpacific Chinese Communities**

By using transnationalism as the main theoretical foundation, this dissertation illuminates the material consequences of transpacific migration. My examination of the archaeology and built environment of Wo Hing village and the two Inland Empire Chinatowns demonstrates how Chinese migrants created enduring communities on both sides of the Pacific. The San Bernardino Chinatown and Riverside Chinatown were each continuously occupied for six decades, and in those intervening years, Chinese residents persisted in the face of fires, anti-Chinese federal legislation, and anti-Chinese raids. On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, these same residents were able to construct new houses and even establish new communities such as Wo Hing village for their families to live in.

The San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns were demolished by developers, but they have endured in the memory of descendants who have actively documented their family ties to these sites. Arguably, George Wong was the first to preserve the Riverside Chinatown by purchasing the entire site in 1943 after Wong Nim's death. In addition, he gave several interviews to local historian Harry Lawton for a six-part newspaper series on the history of the Chinatown; some of the historic photographs used in these articles were taken by George Wong (Lawton 1959). Art Wong, then a young member of the Gom Benn Village Society, wrote about the historical connections between Gom Benn and Riverside and San Bernardino long before any archaeological excavations of either

Chinatown in the *Voice of Gom Benn* (A. Wong 1980). In 1991, Bing Sum Wong donated the Guanyin statue from the temple owned by Wong Nim to the San Bernardino Historical Society (B. S. Wong 1991). Since then, the statue has been a part of the historical society's small exhibit on the San Bernardino Chinatown. More recently, students Jared Gee, Micah Gee, and Noah Azaret wrote a biography about their grandfather Nam Wong on the Gom Benn Scholarship Fund blog, noting that the first place he landed when he immigrated to the U.S. in 1922 was the Riverside Chinatown where family members were already living (Gee et al. 2020).

Wo Hing village remains physically intact as many of the original structures built by migrants remaining standing. Only a dozen or so families remain in the village, but memories and connections to this village are maintained by those in the diaspora. For example, many descendants of Wo Hing's former residents live in the U.S. and they make periodic visits to the home village, often with their children. While houses may appear abandoned to outsiders, they have not been spiritually neglected, as many descendants will return to participate in veneration rituals at the ancestral altars that remain in the unoccupied dwellings. For example, in 1983, Faye Hing Lee of Riverside, CA visited Wo Hing with three of her five American-born children to see their grandfather Wong Sam's house for the first time (Duncan 2018). In 2020, Shook Hing Lau of New York City went to visit Wo Hing village with her son Chris; Shook Hing's grandfather Wong Shoon Jung—a Riverside vegetable farmer—built several houses in the village in the early twentieth century, including a three-story mansion (Lau 2020).

Preservationists in the U.S. and China have also participated in recording and sharing the stories of Chinese diaspora sites like the Riverside Chinatown and “overseas

Chinese” villages such as Wo Hing. In Taishan County, there has been growing interest by the local government in documenting historic structures connected to the Chinese diaspora; as a result, the three-story mansion in Wo Hing village was one of hundreds of historic structures or features photographed during a 55-day architectural survey of Taishan County (Taishan Cultural Heritage Team 2018). The goal of the survey was to create a master plan for the preservation and use of Taishan County’s historic structures.



Figure 9.1. Descendants visiting Wo Hing village. Left, Wong Sam’s grandchildren and daughter-in-law in front of the ancestral home in Wo Hing village, 1983. Photo courtesy of Julie Duncan. Right, Wong Shoon Jung’s granddaughter Shook Hing Lau visits Wo Hing village, 2020. Photo courtesy of Chris Lau.

In Southern California, there has also been active preservation efforts with regards to Chinese American historic sites. The Save Our Chinatown Committee (SOCC) is a multiracial coalition formed in 2008 to prevent the archaeological site from being developed (Sagara 2014). The SOCC notes that the eastern half of Riverside Chinatown

remains unexcavated and should be preserved because of its potential to yield more information about the former Chinese community. This organization has its roots in an ad-hoc committee formed in 1984 called Save Riverside's Chinatown, which organized a campaign to fund the historical and archaeological investigations of the Riverside Chinatown site in 1984. The SOCC is currently focused on preserving the archaeological site by advocating that the land be turned into a heritage park (Sagara 2014). One of the goals of this dissertation is to put descendants and preservationists in closer conversation with another to ensure that those most connected to these transpacific communities are centered in the archaeological and architectural narratives of Wo Hing village and two Inland Empire Chinatowns.

### **Towards an Archaeology of Chinese Transnationalism**

While previous scholars have established that Chinese migrants in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century lived transnational lives, this dissertation provides a framework for conducting archaeological research on Chinese transnationalism. Applying the theoretical concept of transnationalism to this study of Wo Hing and the two Inland Empire Chinatowns allow researchers to explore themes related to transpacific circulations that were not examined during archaeological excavations of each Chinatown. As a result, my dissertation research questions focus on understanding the material consequences of transnational migration and the transpacific circulation of goods and ideas on the home village and the Chinatown sites. In this section, I discuss the theories and methods I used to conduct my archaeological research on transnationalism, which includes a study of artifacts and architecture from both the diasporic site and

homeland community. I end with a discussion of the overall findings from the approaches developed in this dissertation to understand the transpacific communities that Chinese migrants established and moved between.

### *Theory*

Transnationalism is the main theoretical concept that informs this dissertation project. My study uses the anthropological concept of transnationalism to understand how migrants maintain ties between their host country and homeland. Anthropologists who coined this term argue that transnationalism is a late twentieth century phenomenon (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc 1995); historian Madeline Hsu, however, showed that Chinese migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century maintained transnational lives. Hsu examined archival documents to understand the transnational magazines and import-export firms that helped migrants maintain ties and move between the U.S. and Taishan County (Hsu 2000a). This project builds on Hsu's research, but ultimately seeks to apprehend the materiality of transnationalism through analyses of artifacts used in everyday life and vernacular dwellings in both the home and host communities. It also heeds recent calls in archaeology that advocate for Chinese diaspora scholars studying Chinese diaspora communities to examine the home village. One example is the Cangdong Village Project in Kaiping County led by archaeologists from Stanford and another is the China-Australia Heritage Corridor Project in Zhongshan County led by cultural heritage scholars from Western Sydney University. My project is



novel, however, because it looks at archaeological assemblages and the built environment in both the home village and the diasporic community.

My dissertation project also engages in recent debates in Asian studies and Asian American studies on the utility of transnationalism as a framework for studying the lives of migrants in the Chinese diaspora. Chinese historian Michael Williams argues that the home village should be the focal point of Chinese diaspora studies rather than the diasporic site because the ultimate goal of Chinese migrants was to return to China with wealth and status. Historians of Chinese American history continue to center the U.S. in studies of Chinese migration. Asian Americanist Erika Lee argues that this is because the nation-state structured the lives of Chinese migrants; for example, Chinese migration was controlled and restricted by anti-Chinese immigration laws in the U.S. My research shows, however, that both transnationalism and racism shaped the everyday lives of Chinese who chose to maintain homes in both the U.S. and China. Acknowledging the embeddedness of transnationalism does not preclude an understanding of how racism impacted Chinese migrants or diminish the importance of the home village in their lives.

### *Methods*

I drew on a variety of courses of data to create site-specific histories on the home village and diasporic communities. These sources helped to contextualize my archaeological interpretations and to frame large historical events. To reconstruct the microhistories of the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns, I used a number of local sources of data, including historic newspaper accounts, oral history interviews with descendants, and information from Chinese Exclusion Act case files. Similarly, my

historic background on the Gom Benn village cluster relied on gathering locally available information such as oral history interviews with villagers, lineage-based genealogy books, and village residential data in the Chinese Exclusion Act case files. Each source of data was biased in its own way, but employing multiple lines of evidence provided a way for me to check one source against another.

I also developed my own methodologies for studying the materiality of transnationalism. My methods for the home village archaeological survey included surface collection from village alleyways as well as trash dumps to cover the whole village. I also conducted a comparative analysis of archaeological assemblages between the diasporic site and home village to illuminate the transpacific circulation of goods. I also conducted a building survey in Wo Hing in order to understand how the built environment developed over time. Diagnostic features on structures, oral histories, and archival documents allowed me to date dwellings and associate them with specific migrants. I also used comparative analyses as a method for examining the built environment of the home village and diasporic communities. This comparative analysis of built environment between the diasporic site and home village helped me to understand the circulation of ideas across the Pacific and to understand how building practices might have been shaped by other forces such as racism.

### *Discussion of Findings*

My research findings indicate that Wo Hing village and two Inland Empire Chinatowns were co-constitutive communities. The archaeological survey of Wo Hing illuminate the material practices that returning migrants brought to the village. For

example, most of the diagnostic medicine bottles and Asian tablewares in the village were clearly made in China, but an amber Owens-Illinois-manufactured medicine bottle and British-made metal spoon indicates the use of American goods in daily life. It is also possible that some Euroamerican products became indigenized in the home village; evidence of this includes a bilingual medicine bottle from the Abietine Medical Company of Oroville, CA and a whiteware sherd with blue decoration that were found at both Wo Hing and Cangdong Village, the only other home village that has been archaeologically investigated. My architectural survey of Wo Hing also provides insight into the co-constitution of this community with the two Inland Empire Chinatowns. The data I collected from historic immigration interviews, oral histories with descendants, and dates on frescoes reveal that buildings in Wo Hing date from the early 1900s to the late 1930s, which indicates that the village was built over time. I found that at least four of the original fifteen houses in the village were constructed by migrants associated with the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns. Over time, some of these original founders built additional houses in the village as they continued to find financial success in their diasporic communities. For example, Wong Sam, a San Bernardino Chinatown merchant, built a second traditional house across from his original dwelling and Wong Shoon Jung, a vegetable farmer in Riverside, already had a traditional house in the village, but later built the most elaborate house in the village, a three-story mansion dating to the late 1920s.

Another research finding is that goods and ideas did circulate between the home village and diasporic communities. My comparative analysis of the archaeological assemblages indicates overlap in Asian porcelain decorative patterns. For Asian

tablewares, the following patterns were found across all three sites: bamboo, four seasons flower, and winter green. This is significant because these three patterns comprise virtually all Asian tablewares at Chinatown sites in the U.S. and at Cangdong Village, there were no Four Seasons ceramics found during archaeological investigations, providing further indication that it was particularly important for Wo Hing villagers to obtain and use this specific pattern. My comparative analysis of the built environment also reveals how Chinese migrants continued material practices from China. In examining the built environment of the home village and diasporic communities, I found overlap in structures, particularly those related to religious beliefs. For example, Chinese residents built an earth god shrine in the Riverside Chinatown and a Guanyin temple in the San Bernardino Chinatown. Rituals were performed at earth god shrines in China in the hopes of gaining a good rice crop and its presence in Riverside Chinatown demonstrates the importance of agriculture to this community, which was partially comprised of Chinese vegetable farmers. The presence of the Guanyin temple in San Bernardino attests to the maintenance of religious beliefs in Buddhist deities, but also to lineage ties formed in China. During my research in the Gom Benn village cluster, I learned about a Guanyin temple across from Wo Hing village, which was maintained by the Yinlong lineage—the lineage that most Wongs in the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns belonged to.

My analyses also illuminate the material practices that were not shared between the home village and diasporic sites. While pecked marks were found on 32 ceramic sherds in Wo Hing village, there were no pecked marks on any of ceramic sherds from the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns. One explanation is that there was no

communal feasting in the Riverside and San Bernardino Chinatowns as there were in the home village. In the home village, pecked marks indicate ownership as each household had the same Chinese character or symbol pecked on each of their bowls; a household would bring their own tablewares to large village gatherings such as festival celebrations and had them returned after the dishes were communally washed. The lack of pecked marks possibly indicates differences in communal practices in the diasporic communities. In my comparative analysis of dwellings at Wo Hing, there is also evidence of difference in the construction of vernacular dwellings between the home village and diasporic communities. The majority of buildings in Wo Hing were traditional three-bay two-corridor houses built of timber and blue-grey brick. The Western-style ornamentation on later village buildings, such as arches above windows and corbels, do not match ornamentation on Chinatown buildings depicted in historic photographs, which show wooden and brick buildings typically found in the nineteenth and early twentieth century American West.

Another finding from my comparative analysis of artifacts and architecture of Wo Hing and the Inland Empire Chinatowns is that everyday life in diasporic communities was structured by racism. As previous scholars have shown, the Chinese in America were a racialized community, which is why interpretations of artifacts from Chinese diaspora archaeological assemblages must include examinations of race and racism. For example, opium pipes were commonly used items in the two Chinatowns as opium smoking was a popular social drug and medicine, but it is important to note that the Chinese were racialized as a group of people that contributed to vice among the white population. As a result, they were subjected to police raids that were ostensibly carried out to root out

opium use in the city, but mainly targeted the Chinese. Newspaper accounts indicate that other crackdowns that targeted the Chinese include deportation raids that were led by immigration officials, often in collusion with local law enforcement. My comparative analysis of the built environment in Wo Hing and the two Chinatowns also reveals how racism impacted Chinese diasporic communities. When Chinese residents of Riverside Chinatown were presented with the opportunity to rebuild after a house fire destroyed most structures that were made of wood, the Chinese leaders chose to build two new brick structures that looked like local buildings made of red brick; they also hired local white contractors to perform this work, which was likely a strategy to ensure they would not be denied a construction permit due to strong anti-Chinese sentiment in the white community.

### **Directions for Future Research**

While this project represents the first archaeological investigation of a home village in Taishan County, Chinese migrants in the U.S. came from hundreds of other Taishanese villages. Like Wo Hing and the Inland Empire Chinatowns, some of these villages also had strong ties to particular towns or regions in the U.S. For example, many early Chinese in the states of Washington and Oregon had the surname Eng (*Wu* 伍) and came from the Ha Ping (*Xiaping* 下坪) village cluster in Sjiu (四九) Town, Taishan County (Chen 1972). Another example are Gin (*Zhen* 甄) villages, which are concentrated near the river port of Xinchang and are located on the county border between Kaiping and Taishan (San Francisco Gin Association 2021). People with the

surname Gin lived in the Tucson Chinatown and comparative analyses could be made with the archaeological assemblage from the site's excavation (Lister and Lister 1989). The combination of reanalyzing legacy collections in the U.S. and collecting new archaeological data in the home village will hopefully lead to stronger engagement with Chinese American descendants, which is much needed in Chinese diaspora archaeology.

Future research should also focus on collecting baseline archaeological data from other counties in other Pearl River Delta such as Zhongshan County. My dissertation project has shown that there are differences and similarities between villages and these data would provide information on life in the home villages that would add to the knowledge of the heterogeneity of the Chinese diaspora. Research in other counties would also be important for comparative analyses with diasporically connected sites in the U.S. For example, California's Sacramento Delta Chinese communities had large Zhongshan populations and one of these communities, Isleton, has undergone archaeological excavation (Fong 2013). Baseline data in Zhongshan would be useful to researchers studying diasporic communities outside of the U.S. Several scholars are currently active in studying the transnational connections between Australia and villages in Zhongshan via the study of remittance-built architecture (Williams 2018; Cheng 2020; Byrne 2020).

Lastly, this dissertation centers on community formation among a group of people with a shared identity, but future research should also examine the transpacific circulations of conflict between various Chinese ethnic and dialect groups. The archaeology of internal conflict is a nascent field where researchers have been able to tackle historical and anthropological questions relating to the lived experience of violence

between non-state groups. Few scholars, however, have investigated internal conflicts that moved across time and space. For example, the materiality of the Hakka-Punti interethnic conflict can be investigated through archaeological excavations of nineteenth-century villages in China where Cantonese- and Hakka-speaking Chinese were involved in internecine battles as well as contemporaneous locales of armed conflict in California's gold fields, to which both groups immigrated. Research questions could include, how did consumption practices change during periods of internal conflict? What weapons-related items or technologies circulated across the Pacific? Moving towards an archaeology of transnationalism allows us to ask new questions about the material lives of transnational migrants.

### **Broader Impacts**

As I have outlined above, this dissertation uses transnationalism as a theory to understand how people created homes and communities in nations that were separated by vast distances. My study uses archaeological methods and the lens of transnationalism to examine the lives of migrants who often did not leave first-hand accounts, such as diaries or memoirs, in either the U.S. or China. My use of Chinese language texts and oral histories, therefore, helps to bridge Chinese American studies and Chinese diaspora archaeology. In Chinese American historical studies, early researchers with Cantonese backgrounds advocated using Chinese language sources to provide a fuller view of Chinese American history. For example, Him Mark Lai (2004) used Chinese publications such as Chinese newspapers to understand transnational Chinese politics in the U.S. while Judy Yung (1999) collected oral histories from working-class immigrants who only



spoke Cantonese to illuminate Chinese women's history. My Taishanese language abilities enabled me to speak to villagers in China and immigrant women in the U.S. who do not have fluency in English; these are groups of people that Chinese diaspora archaeologists in North America rarely interact with. In addition, the oral histories I have collected in Taishanese often filled in a generational gap of understanding for second-generation Chinese American descendants who did not grow up speaking Chinese. The temporal distance from the historical events I study oftentimes helped to fill in silences that were created by long family separations or involvement in the creation of false "paper son" identities constructed during the Chinese Exclusion era.

This study's focus on diasporically connected transpacific communities also contributes to important topics in Asian American scholarship such as family formation. By tracing the lives of individual Chinese migrants who moved between the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns and Wo Hing village, I show how they arranged family configurations that made sense for their transnational lives. Chinese American studies scholars tend to emphasize the loneliness of wives separated from their husbands, but my research shows that having a husband abroad had some caregiving benefits. For example, childrearing responsibilities were taken on by men when sons became teenagers and were asked to immigrate abroad to join their fathers. This finding also upends the long-held idea that families did not exist in Chinese diasporic communities if women and children were absent as Chinese men often lived and worked with their sons; cohabitation with other male relatives or lineage members was also common. My site-specific study of transpacific communities, therefore, forces scholars in Asian American studies to

reconceptualize notions of Chinese parenting, family arrangements, and household configurations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The examples I have outlined show how transnational research and Cantonese language skills are crucial to advancing both Asian American studies and Chinese diaspora archaeology.

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