

RICE BOWLS IN THE DIGGINGS: CHINESE MINERS NEAR GRANITE, OREGON

Priscilla Wegars
Asian American Comparative Collection
Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of Anthropology
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83844-1111

ABSTRACT

On July 4th 1862 a prospecting party discovered gold on Granite Creek in northeastern Oregon. By 1867 Chinese individuals and companies began to purchase or lease mining claims in the vicinity; they worked there until at least 1891. Their legacy, a 60-acre site comprised of hand-stacked rock tailings, is known as the "Chinese Walls" or the Ah Hee Diggings. It is on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest about 50 miles from Baker City. Between 1985 and 1993 University of Idaho researchers established that an adjacent terrace served as a "mess hall" for the Chinese miners. Evidence for such use included pieces of four large Chinese cooking woks, cooking oil cans with embossed Chinese characters, and numerous fragments of "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls. Because only a few people, probably the cooks, actually resided on the terrace, the 1994 field season concentrated on finding where the Chinese miners had lived.

Introduction

Most of the earliest Chinese arrivals into Oregon came up from California about 1852 following placer gold discoveries that year in southern Oregon's Jackson and Josephine counties (Corbett and Corbett 1977:73, 81; Edson 1974:9). At first, they worked for Euroamerican miners, usually digging ditches or moving boulders, since they were not yet allowed to own or lease claims obtained from Caucasians. As had happened in California, when the placer mines began to be exhausted, the Euroamerican miners sold or leased their unwanted claims to the Chinese, and moved on, hoping to strike it rich elsewhere.

Placer mining began in northeastern Oregon by late 1861. As thousands of people thronged into the newly-discovered mining regions, they found that there was not enough room for all of them. Some left to prospect elsewhere in the vicinity, resulting in gold discoveries throughout the Blue Mountains, and on July 4th 1862, A. G. Tabor found gold on Granite Creek, downstream from the present community of Granite (Tabor 1988:23). The town of Independence soon formed at the site of the original discovery. Several years later, it relocated upstream. When the inhabitants applied for a post office, they were surprised to learn that Oregon already had a town called Independence. To get a post office in their community, they would have to have a different name. Predictably, then as now, progress won out over tradition, and the community became Granite, after the adjacent creek. The citizens did not relinquish their Independence lightly, however; usage of the original name lasted for some time after the official change.

Today, Granite no longer has a post office, a telephone, or even electricity; the closest such amenities are at Sumpter, 15 miles away. A small general store supplies the summer residents, visitors, and archaeologists with groceries, gas, restaurant meals, flush toilets, and beer—all the necessities of life. Today, one would never suspect that the population of Granite

and vicinity once totaled 448 people, more than 80% of whom were Chinese (U. S. Census 1870:1-12).

That was in 1870, and most, of course, were miners. One mile north of Granite, some 60 acres of hand-stacked rock tailings comprise the archaeological feature known as the "Chinese Walls," or the Ah Hee Diggings (OR-GR-16), an impressive monument to the industry of the Chinese immigrants who mined in this area between the late 1860s and the early 1890s. Although many sites in the West have mining debris that has been arranged in similar ways, sometimes also called "Chinese Walls," people from other ethnic groups could and did stack waste rock in this way. As Jeffrey LaLande has pointed out, "the presence of 'Chinese walls' should not be taken as *prima facie* cultural evidence of Asian miners...only the presence of diagnostic Chinese artifacts or primary historical documentation should be accepted as definite evidence of Asian mining activity at a particular site" (LaLande 1985:45-46). For the Granite "Chinese Walls" an abundance of artifacts and primary historical documentation, as well as oral historical accounts, clearly demonstrate that, in this case, there can be no doubt that these "Chinese Walls" were built by Chinese people.

Site Description

The "Chinese Walls"/Ah Hee Diggings site is adjacent to Granite Creek on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Grant County, Oregon. It is one mile north of Granite on the west side of Section 34, mainly east of Forest Service Road 73 about a mile north of the hamlet of Granite. Today, Road 73 follows the west side of Granite Creek, serving as the dividing line between the Umatilla National Forest on the west and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest on the east. From the Ah Hee Diggings, Granite Creek flows south through Granite, then turns west, eventually emptying into the North Fork of

the John Day River. Boulder and Bull Run creeks, north and south of Granite, feed into Granite Creek.

The immediate site consists of the following components:

1. The hand-stacked placer mining tailings that give the site its name. They run north to south, and measure some 700 m (2275 ft.) long, with a maximum width of 300 m (975 ft.) at the center. Individual "walls" are each perhaps 4.6 m (15 ft.) wide, and are mostly about 3.1 to 3.7 m (10 to 12 ft.) high (WWNF-BRD:8-35.5-34/3). The site was first recorded in 1981 (Powell 1981).
2. One or more Chinese habitation features actually within the tailings. These features are flat, open areas that contain scattered Chinese and Euroamerican artifacts. Other such locations, forever inaccessible, may well lie under the tailings.
3. A site that served as a "mess hall" for the Chinese miners and as a living area for a few people, probably the cooks. Located on a terrace south and east of the tailings, this site covers an area measuring about 40 by 50 m (130 by 162 ft.). Its three main, excavated, features consist of: (1) sill logs from a dwelling; (2) an outdoor wood floor area, perhaps used as a kitchen; and (3) an eating area, hypothesized from its numerous "Bamboo" pattern ceramic rice bowl fragments.
4. An extensive ditch system. Used for water delivery to the placers below, some 11 ditches, totaling more than 3 miles in length, are located on the terraces east and south-east of the tailings.
5. A Chinese habitation area west of the Ah Hee Diggings. This site is just within Section 34, west of Road 73, on a slope above and across from the Ah Hee Diggings, on the Umatilla National Forest. Visited by the author in 1985, it was first recorded by then-Baker Ranger District Archaeologist Roshanna Stone in 1990 (WWNF-BRD:8-35.5-34/3). Personnel from the Umatilla National Forest also recorded it, in 1991, apparently without knowledge of Stone's prior work (UNF-NFJDRD:8-35.5-34/1).

Several other sites with minor to significant Chinese associations are located nearby. They include a trash scatter partially buried by the east side of Road 73, southwest of the Ah Hee Diggings; several sites in Big Gordon Gulch on the Umatilla National Forest, west of Road 73; a site with Euroamerican and Chinese artifacts on Last Chance Creek; and a Chinese living camp with a dugout in Last Chance Gulch.

Chinese Mining Claims at the Ah Hee Diggings

We do not know when the Chinese first came to Granite, but they were there at least by 1867. Beginning that year, county records show their purchases of mining claims on Granite Creek. Because Granite is within a meandering geographical boundary, it is part of Grant County rather than the more logical Baker County; for example, the nearest post office, in 1870, was in Baker City. Since the county seat was, and is, at Canyon City, then a two-day journey each way, there was often a considerable delay in recording the various transactions.

Some may never even have been recorded at all, explaining why the sequence of ownership is often difficult to trace.

Grant County mining records contain 11 recorded sales of mining claims on Granite Creek to Chinese individuals or companies between June 1867 and July 1872, as well as one lease, in 1878. Because the county seat was so distant, other sales and leases were probably never recorded. Often, the claim descriptions only give their relationship to the other claims forming their boundaries, so we do not know exactly where on Granite Creek they were. However, one sale leaves no doubt that it involved the area now known as the Ah Hee Diggings. On 24 July 1872, Harvey Robbins sold a number of mining claims to Gam Mou How and Company for \$4750 (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:586). One end began:

...at the old saw mill near the Town of Independence and [included]...five miles more or less...and all the tools and floors and other Mining Machinery...also ten claims situated in [Gordon] Gulch...also four Cabins in Granite Creek belonging to said claims, also the Main Ditch leading water from Granite Creek with the water right belonging to said Ditch... (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:586).

This description definitely includes the Ah Hee Diggings area since it extends for five miles along Granite Creek, past Gordon Gulch. Whether this distance was measured from the first or second location of "the Town of Independence" is immaterial; the Ah Hee Diggings site is well within five miles of either.

As mentioned, Euroamericans began mining on Granite Creek in 1862. By 1867 yields were low enough for them to begin selling their claims to the Chinese, who by 1870 numbered 365 in Granite Precinct, over 80 percent of the total population there. All the Chinese were men, and most, 337, were miners. The non-Chinese population, totaling 83, was comprised of 63 men, 7 women, and 13 children (U. S. Census 1870:1-12). It is not possible to tell exactly where all the Chinese resided within the precinct, since residents of the town of Granite were not listed separately. It is also likely that the Chinese were undercounted, particularly in a remote area such as this one.

We suspect that Chinese miners actually began working on Granite Creek before 1867, as employees of Euroamerican miners. Euroamerican-owned employment agencies advertised in northeastern Oregon newspapers stating that they could supply Chinese workers singly or in groups, for all types of occupations, including cooks, miners, and ditch diggers. Other advertisements show that Chinese labor contractors provided similar services. Any Chinese miners who had worked for Euroamericans on Granite Creek would no doubt have had the best opportunity to buy those mining claims that the Caucasians decided to sell. By selling to Chinese they knew, the Euroamericans could be more confident of receiving the specified installment payments on time.

Following the first sale, in June 1867, Caucasians and Chinese owned and worked claims on Granite Creek simulta-

neously. In the 1940s, Granite native and placer miner James Waucop Tabor, son of the A. G. Tabor who discovered gold there in 1862, compiled his reminiscences, which one of his daughters later published. He recalled that Caucasians in the Granite district employed "quite a number" of Chinese because they were "cheaper than white labor;" most of them were "very good workers" and were "good to get along with" because they "pa[id] attention to their own affairs" (Tabor 1988:45).

By the time Harvey Robbins decided to sell out, in 1872, most of the Granite Creek claims were owned and/or worked by Chinese miners. Robbins himself, with five miles of claims, surely had to employ Chinese laborers to work them, or at least dig the ditches. When it became time for him to sell, it would be logical for the purchasers to be his former Chinese employees.

We know that the Granite area continued to have a considerable Chinese presence for another 20 years. Of the nine Chinese merchants listed in the 1870 census, at least one must have owned his business, since Grant County records show that a Chinese-owned store there was sold to another Chinese man in 1875. On 27 July the Henry Ching Yet Company sold a store in the town of Independence for \$140 to Lee Sing (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:724). The business was located "on the upper part of the Main Street opposite Tabors Hotel." The purchase included the "Store and buildings and lot" measuring 50 ft. wide by 75 ft. deep (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:724). The bill of sale was signed "Henry" followed by three Chinese characters (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:724).

By 1880, Granite Precinct's population was less than half of what it was in 1870. Still, of the 206 people counted, 132, or 64 percent, were Chinese, and now included one woman, who was a house servant. All the Chinese men were miners except for one storekeeper and two cooks (U. S. Census 1880:15-16). Again, the town of Granite was not counted separately. James Tabor's reminiscences named several of Granite's Chinese residents, including both Lee Yet and Hong Gee, two whose names appear in the 1880 census. Tabor's poem, "In Memory of Old Pioneers," contains the lines:

Quong Wing Chung ran a chiney [sic] shop,
also Le Yet and Hong Gee which handled hop (Tabor
1988:85).

Although only Hong Gee is listed as a storekeeper, miner Lee Yet might also have run a store at some time. The "hop" referred to was opium; this narcotic, prepared for smoking, could be legally imported into the United States until early 1909. Its use among the Chinese at the time was mostly on social occasions, and can be compared with today's use of the presently-legal drugs tobacco and alcohol. Namely, legality and availability do not equate either with universal use or, when used occasionally, with addiction. Opium was also used medicinally.

Besides shopping at the Chinese-owned stores that were in Granite by at least 1870, the Chinese in the Granite area purchased goods at establishments owned by Euroamericans.

Store ledgers and a saloon ledger dating between 1890 and 1910 still survive from Granite businesses and were consulted through the courtesy of their present owners. These documents showed no apparent differences between the prices charged to Chinese and those charged to non-Chinese customers, and both Chinese and Euroamericans received credit. A high school student, apprenticed to the Forest Archaeologist through the Apprenticeships in Science and Engineering Program, sampled the entries in the ledgers and prepared a statistical analysis comparing purchases made by Chinese persons with those by Euroamericans (Schultz 1993). She found that the average amount spent by the Chinese (23 in her sample) per trip was \$1.89, while the Euroamericans (60) spent \$5.25 per store visit (Schultz 1993:15, 52). Both groups shopped during all four seasons, meaning that some of the Chinese remained during the winter when mining was not possible due to weather conditions. For example, an incomplete ledger dating from 2 October 1890 through 23 June 1891 lists some 125 transactions involving Chinese persons, a number of whom appear many times (Granite Store Day Book 1890-1891). Some large-quantity purchases apparently were for large groups, but whether it was a Chinese cook buying for a Caucasian or Chinese crew cannot be determined without more study of the documents. Other purchases were apparently for specific uses; for example, 96 1/2 pounds of nails could only have been used for construction purposes, perhaps in building flumes, sluice boxes, and/or buildings (Granite Store Day Book 1890-1891:309). The top five items purchased by the Chinese were, in descending order, tobacco, rice, sugar, tea, and salmon, while the Euroamerican list was tobacco, flour, sugar, baking powder, and boots (Schultz 1993:15, 52).

There is no evidence in the ledgers to show that Granite's Euroamerican stores stocked items specifically for purchase by Chinese customers, although invoices from the same time period show things that were probably intended for them. For example, "10 M[a]ts No. 1 China Rice" was surely one such item, while "4 Sx. [sacks] Island Rice" were most likely intended more for Euroamerican customers (Granite Store Invoices 1891-1892).

On a number of occasions, the name Ah Hee appears in the store ledgers (Granite Store Day Book 1890-1891:221, 224, 270, 277, 334, 362); one purchase was a washboard in January 1891 and eye medicine in June of that year (Granite Store Account Book 1890-1891:163). This man is particularly important because of his probable connection with the Ah Hee Diggings site. In his reminiscences, James Tabor mentioned the "Chinese Walls," although not by that name. He stated: "One of the most notable sites of Chinese mining is known as the Ah Hee Diggings and is a short distance north of Granite. Rows of hand-piled rocks remain" (Tabor 1988:45).

That statement is confirmed by an April 1891 newspaper account. The "Granite Grains" column of the *Grant County News* reported that "the Ah Hee Placer Mining company, near Granite, takes the lead, and was the first to start up work for the season" (*Grant County News* 13[5]:3, 23 April 1891).

Although no sale or lease was found to or from any person or company by that name, an 1896 sale of mining property from Maggie McCann to the Grant Gold Mining Company included the "Ah Hee reservoir on Granite Creek" as well as ditches both filling into and emptying from this reservoir (Grant County Deeds 1888-1898:381). The detailed description in the deed has helped in relocating the Ah Hee Reservoir, which is north of the Ah Hee Diggings.

The 1900 census listed a total of 245 people in the town of Granite, just 13 of whom were Chinese, all men (U. S. Census 1900). Only two were independent placer miners, while the rest were working for wages. One was a cook at the sawmill, others were miners or cooks for the lode mines, and several cooked or did laundry at the hotel (U. S. Census 1900:42A, 44A-B, 45B, 48A). Although the store ledgers were examined through 1910, Chinese names did not appear after 1903. Their leaving the area is corroborated by the 1910 Granite census; it contained no Chinese names.

The Archaeological Investigations

Following logging activity in the vicinity during the early 1980s, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest personnel noticed and recorded a Chinese site on a small terrace above the tailings, to the south. By 1985 they had become aware of illegal excavation activity there, so requested that archaeologists from the University of Idaho's Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of Anthropology evaluate the site and suggest ways to mitigate the damage to it. Because removal of surface artifacts would make the site less visually attractive to vandals, all surface artifacts were flagged, mapped, and then collected, and two 1 x 1 m test units were excavated that summer. In 1990 the surrounding ditch system was surveyed and mapped. By 1991 many more artifacts had eroded out of the ground or were exposed by pothunters, so the flagging, mapping, and surface collection procedures were repeated.

These limited examinations of the terrace site led to the conclusion that the site's main function was as a "mess hall" for the Chinese miners working on the nearby Granite Creek placer claims. Pieces of large woks; rectangular, asymmetrically-seamed cans with the Chinese characters for a brand of cooking oil; and fragments of "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls provide evidence for such use. Small quantities of other domestic artifacts indicated that only a few people also lived at the site; had a large Chinese work force lived there, unlikely considering the small size of the habitation site, we would have recovered artifacts in far greater quantities. Therefore, only a few people, probably the cooks, actually lived on this terrace; the miners apparently lived elsewhere. A trail to the terrace leads up from the tailings, making mealtime access easy and convenient. It would have made economic sense for the Chinese claim owners to furnish their laborers' food, as well as a Chinese cook to prepare it, thus ensuring that the workers did not lose time from work fixing their own meals, and that they were fed well enough to perform the strenuous labor expected of them.

During 1992 and 1993 the terrace site served as the location for Passport In Time excavation projects lasting three weeks each. Together, these involved nearly 90 volunteers and some 750 visitors. The archaeological investigations during these two field seasons were designed to furnish details of the Chinese miners' daily lives that were not apparent from the documents.

In discussing the individual features, it is helpful to remember that they were not completely excavated, so the evaluations of them are based only on the evidence that was actually recovered. In addition, we do not know how much of the site was subjected to illegal collection and excavation activity, although we suspect it was substantial. For example, the 1993 field notes record a visitor's statement that he was one of the tree planters at the site in 1980, after it was logged, and that they were "picking up stuff all over the place." Even one of the Passport In Time volunteers returned some artifacts she had once collected there. Some holes were left by metal-detector users and others were filled in. Two joining glass fragments, one sun-colored amethyst and the other clear, indicate how site interpretation was compromised by illicit delvings for "treasure;" the amethyst fragment was recovered from a level below the clear one.

Feature 2

Feature 2 has been interpreted as a rectangular structure with only burned sill logs remaining. Not enough charcoal, burned wood, or clay chinking is left to indicate that a complete log cabin burned down; however, the abundant cut nails suggest there was once a structure here, whose superstructure, whether of canvas, logs, and/or planks, was removed for use elsewhere prior to the fire that destroyed what remained. Milled lumber, window glass, cut nails, corrugated and sheet metal, and clay chinking provide other clues to the cabin's construction materials.

Although the first definite Chinese purchase of mining claims at the Ah Hee Diggings site was in 1872, Chinese miners may have worked there for Caucasians for several years previously. Since the 1872 sale involved "all the tools and flooms and other Mining Machinery" as well as "four Cabins in Granite Creek," we know that the Chinese obtained some living quarters, although we do not know exactly where those were located. It is thus probable that Euroamerican miners constructed the building, and Chinese miners later used it. However, the disturbance and mixing of artifacts meant we had no layer of exclusively Euroamerican objects to use as evidence for a previous occupation.

Feature 13

Because the charred wood in Feature 13 does not vary more than 1.5 cm in level over its entire surface, we presume it is from a floor rather than from a collapsed wall or roof. As with Feature 2, there is not enough burned wood present to suggest that an entire wooden structure burned down. However, the amount of clay chinking found in and around Feature 13 indi-

cates that the superstructure may have been logs. Similar chinking is visible between the logs of an early log cabin in Granite. In addition, the abundant cut nails are an indication of a previous building in this location. We hoped this was the area where meals were prepared, but there is presently limited evidence to justify that theory. A large spoon, for cooking or serving, came from Feature 13, but so did a horseshoe and a shovel handle. While pieces of four different Chinese cooking woks, and cans with the Chinese characters for cooking oil, were found in other areas of the site, there were none here. The cooking area theory is supported by a photograph taken of an outdoor Chinese kitchen in California. There, the cook stands on a wooden floor, and cupboards and utensils have been nailed to adjacent trees (Wegars 1995:134).

Feature 14

Feature 14 apparently represents the area where the Chinese miners ate their meals, with each man having an individual rice bowl. Here, as on many other mining sites, these were in the "Bamboo" pattern; this feature produced more than 150 such sherds. Other table ceramic fragments, some from this feature and others from elsewhere on the site, included celadon or "Winter Green" tea cups and a rice bowl, and a "Four Flowers" pattern rice bowl, serving bowl, spoon, and sauce dish.

The 1994 Surveys

Because we believe that the Chinese miners who ate on the terrace lived elsewhere, the 1994 Passport In Time project concentrated on finding their habitation sites. After receiving training in Chinese and Euroamerican artifact recognition and site survey techniques, the 23 volunteers then walked transects over the 60 acres of tailings which had been divided into 14, 100-meter-square inventory units, mapping and recording artifacts.

Artifacts remaining from earlier mining included a hand-made wood and metal grate with cut nails, and a sluice box. A few Chinese ceramics were also found, as were metal containers for opium and other goods. One flat, open area within the tailings yielded the remains of a white porcelain teapot as well as numerous rectangular cans, some with asymmetrical seams. These cans typically measure 10.4 x 15.5 cm and are 7.0 cm tall, with a rectangular lid that was soldered onto the can. They probably once contained tea or bean paste. The lack of evidence for structures suggests that the area was the late-nineteenth century equivalent of a "break room."

One informant described an apparatus that the Chinese constructed to assist in moving rocks. About 1960 or 1961 a local resident and miner observed, up towards the north end of the tailings, an area where the Chinese reportedly had had a platform about 5 ft. square, to support a vertical, round pole about 15 ft. tall; the pole had an arm for a block and tackle or a pulley to pick up pallets of rock and move them so they could be put down on top of the pile (Hankins 1994). We were unable to identify any remains of this device. Perhaps it was

moved, or parts of it were diverted to other uses. It could also have been impacted by more recent mining activities. Despite the site's eligibility for National Register nomination, parts of it are still under threat from current mining operations. For example, past claim owners bulldozed sections of the "Walls" to create access to the eastern portions of the tailings. Although that area has now been withdrawn from mining, the southern end of the site, including the "mess hall" terrace, is still in danger of destruction.

The crews next conducted an intensive, comprehensive survey of Granite Creek and several other drainages in the vicinity. They found two new Chinese sites nearby. At another site, already recorded, they documented a Chinese component that was not previously recognized.

Results of Research, Excavation, and Analysis

The Chinese artifacts found here in 1985 and 1991 through 1994 are relatively few in total numbers when compared with those from other excavated Chinese mining sites in the West, such as Pierce, Idaho and Warren, Idaho. Despite the low totals, however, the assemblage is still impressive, mainly because it is completely representative of all the activities that we associate with Chinese inhabitants of mining sites in the West.

The Chinese sought shelter, probably in a cabin that was already there when they occupied the site. Logs, milled lumber, window glass, cut nails, corrugated and sheet metal, and clay chinking provide some clues to the materials of their dwelling. Various tools, such as files, a hammer head, a saw blade, and a screwdriver blade, may have been involved in its construction. A porcelain doorknob, two doorknob roses, and lock and latch parts were some components of its door hardware. The Chinese occupants may have made some repairs to their dwelling, reusing opium can metal around wood to form a door or window frame.

Household furnishings were represented by cast iron stove parts, mirror glass, a drawer pull, tacks, lantern tops, a lamp chimney top, a bucket, and a fragment of wax candle. Similar purchases found in the store ledgers included candles, a washboard, and coal oil. For heating, there was probably a stove rather than a fireplace, since we found remains of the former but not the latter.

Horses were also present on the site at some time, indicated by horseshoes, horseshoe nails, horse harness hardware, and two spurs. We cannot rule out Chinese use or even ownership of these animals; a Chinese man in Pierce, Idaho once rented a horse, saddle, harness, and spur from a Euroamerican storekeeper there, and Chinese men in Baker City and John Day are known to have owned race horses.

Various other activities took place at or near the site, including gardening, black smithing, hunting, and mining. The presence of a cooking oil can modified with holes punched in the base may indicate either a garden or bean-sprout growing; some fence staples and fragments of fencing may suggest a garden. Blacksmithing may have produced the glassy slag

found in one area of the site, as well as some of the homemade metal objects. Hunting is indicated by spent cartridges, a bullet, and a percussion cap, while mining-related artifacts, such as shovels, pickaxes and parts of them, and possible rocker parts, would indicate mining activities even without the overwhelming evidence provided by the "Chinese Walls" themselves. Related items, recorded as store purchases by Chinese in the Granite area, were large quantities of nails, perhaps for flume construction; rope; jack knives; and black powder.

To work, the Chinese miners needed suitable clothing, and often adopted western-style garments, particularly hobnailed rubber boots. The store ledgers show that the local Chinese bought boots, socks, shirts, overalls, suspenders, undershirts, and drawers; some of the clothing purchased may be represented through the buckles, buttons, rivets, and fabric found at the site.

One interesting feature of the terrace site was the well-worn trail on the north side that leads up to it from the tailings. This trail undoubtedly provided the miners with easy access to and from their meals, the main purpose of the terrace. For this activity, the Chinese miners needed food, cooking and serving implements, and tablewares and eating utensils. Many related items, both Chinese and Euroamerican, were found at the "Chinese Walls" terrace site. Brown-glazed stoneware utilitarian ceramic vessel fragments once contained the soy sauce that was shipped from China and sold in Chinese stores in the United States, probably even in Granite. Other brown-glazed stoneware vessel sherds, and a piece of an earthenware lid, came from preserved vegetables, and a fragment from a Euroamerican crock indicates food storage as well. Rectangular metal containers that once held tea or bean paste, were similarly imported and sold. Animal bones are evidence that meat was eaten, at least occasionally; it included pork, beef, mutton, and venison. The store ledgers show that local Chinese residents purchased other food items such as tea, coffee, beans, rice, crackers, raisins, sugar, honey, ham, bacon, flour, potatoes, oysters, fresh and canned fruit, canned salmon, and vinegar. While remains of these perishable items would not be found on a site, the cans and bottles that contained them would attest to their presence. Some items, such as potatoes or flour, came in sacks or bags, and rice came in mats; this packaging would not survive archaeologically.

Pieces of four large iron woks, Euroamerican lard cans, and cans with the Chinese characters for cooking oil, showed that they cooked food on the site. A large iron spoon was one implement used to cook and/or serve the meals, and some twisted wire with a loop end might have been from a utensil handle. Related store purchases included lard, matches, and a kettle. Each Chinese miner ate from an individual rice bowl, usually in the "Bamboo" pattern. These may have been handled roughly, since the excavators found numerous fragments of them, mostly in one area, Feature 14. Other table ceramic sherds were from "Winter Green" (celadon) tea cups and a rice bowl, and from a "Four Flowers" pattern rice bowl, serving bowl, spoon, and sauce dish. Because so few were found, there may not have been many to begin with, and the cooks may have reserved them for their own use. Although the men

would have had tea with their meals, no tea cup fragments were found in association with the numerous "Bamboo" pattern rice bowl sherds, which suggests that the miners may have used metal cups rather than ceramic ones. Pieces from Euroamerican plates and a cup may also have substituted if Chinese tablewares were not available or were in short supply.

The Chinese at the site were somewhat health-conscious. This is inferred from the two Chinese medicine bottle bases, the pieces of Dr. Henley's Wild Grape Root IXL Bitters bottles, and the fragment of a tongue scraper. Soap could be bought at the store, and Ah Hee obtained "eye water" there. The several Chinese coins might have been used medicinally, either by rubbing on one's body or by drinking water in which they had been boiled.

The people who lived at the site had time for some leisure activities, such as drinking, smoking, and gambling. During whatever leisure time was available to them, which was perhaps one day a week, they indulged in alcoholic beverages. These included both an imported Chinese type that was poured into "Winter Green" liquor cups from brown-glazed stoneware containers, and a Roth and Company product, in brown glass bottles. Opium smoking paraphernalia included pieces of opium cans, fragments of opium pipe bowls, the glass base from an opium lamp, a bottle fragment cut for an opium lamp cover, a homemade opium lamp wick holder, and an opium "needle" for extracting opium from the can and placing it on the pipe bowl for smoking. Artifacts related to gambling included part of a Chinese domino, a white glass gaming piece, and possibly also the Chinese coins. Other indulgences available to them were the treats such as candy and ginger snaps, and smoking products such as plug tobacco and pipes, that they purchased at the Granite stores.

As we look at the items that were actually excavated from the terrace site, we must also be alert to ones that were once there but were not found in archaeological contexts. For example, it is possible that some still remain in unexcavated portions of the site. Also, the fragments of "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls lead us to wonder what happened to the chopsticks that the men would have used for eating. None were found, but because they were made of wood, any that broke and were discarded probably would not have survived for us to find them. Those that did not break would have been taken away when their owners left, as would other durable goods such as opium pipe stems and firearms.

Discussion

Researchers have long been interested in questions involving the extent to which the Chinese acculturated and/or assimilated into the host society (Staski 1993:127-130). These are intriguing problems that we have been able to study for the Granite "Chinese Walls" site. We know, for example, that the Chinese were purchasing Euroamerican goods at Granite stores during the 1890s, but we can only speculate whether that was because they preferred such items to the Chinese equivalents, or whether Chinese goods were too difficult to obtain at that time. As Roberta Greenwood points out, we must be careful

not to mistake temporary accommodations for behavioral transformations (1993:390-391).

Peter Schulz has referred, intriguingly, to San Francisco Bay's Chinese shrimp camps as "ethnic villages." That concept would have made sense for the Granite area as well. In 1870, with a population more than 80 percent Chinese, there were a number of Chinese support services in place. That year, 11 Chinese were gaming house operators or employees, and 9 were merchants; butcher, doctor, and tailor were three other occupations that were represented (U. S. Census 1870:1-12). Additional services, not apparent from the census, may also have been available.

For example, by October 1889 a Chinese shoemaker was at work in Granite. Called the "China boot maker," he was one of "the only two gentlemen in town who represent their business with signs over their doors, telling the passerby where they can be found" (*Grant County News*, 11[29]:3, 10 October 1889).

An 1891 newspaper item, by mentioning a "white blacksmith," implies that there might also have been a Chinese blacksmith (*Grant County News* 13(14):3, 25 June 1891). In the late 1860s Sam See and Company purchased mining property that included a "Blacksmithshop" (Grant County Mining Records 1866-1881:185-186). Even 20 years later the continuing extensive Chinese mining operations in the area could easily have required a Chinese blacksmith.

The Granite Chinese observed some familiar customs and traditions. In February 1890 they celebrated the Lunar New Year by making "quite a demonstration" (*Grant County News*, 13(14):3, 25 June 1891). James Tabor recalled that their celebrations usually lasted about a month, with firecrackers, "plenty of eats," games, and "Chinese gin;" they also gave the Euroamericans presents and candy (Tabor 1988:45). Occasionally, they "held a Masonic celebration" (Tabor 1988:63). A photograph of Granite taken just after the turn of the century includes an area where the Chinese cemetery was located; presumably the remains were returned to China in accordance with Chinese custom.

Just as today's Granite supplies the modern resident with "all the necessities of life," the Granite of yesteryear fulfilled the same functions for the Chinese who were there in the late nineteenth century. Then as now, those with cravings for the "bright lights" could venture farther afield, to John Day or Baker City. An incentive for making the two-day journey to the county seat at Canyon City was the opportunity to visit the adjacent town of John Day, whose "Chinatown" was the major supply point for Chinese miners in other areas of Grant County. There, from the late 1880s on, the Kam Wah Chung and Company wielded great regional importance and influence. Besides housing an herbal medicine business and a store, it was also a hiring hall, post office, and social center. Today, the Kam Wah Chung and Company building is a museum housing a unique collection of thousands of artifacts reflecting the economic and cultural contributions made by the Chinese of northeastern Oregon.

Baker City, closer to Granite than John Day, also had a "Chinatown," and a Chinese population of nearly 14 percent in 1879. By 1883 the Chinese community had constructed a religious temple at the east end of Auburn Avenue next to the Powder River. Now gone, it had two stories with a balcony in front, and was a combination social and religious center, with social activities on the ground floor, and the temple altar on the second floor.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

The artifact assemblage recovered from the site as a whole, combined with evidence from the store ledgers, indicates that the Chinese occupants retained elements of Chinese culture, such as cooking techniques and eating practices, while adopting Euroamerican clothing and footwear. Both cultures provided them with foods, medicines, and alcoholic beverages. They also had some leisure time for participating in social and recreational activities such as drinking, smoking opium, and playing Chinese gambling games.

From the late 1860s to the early 1890s, Chinese immigrants made successful lives for themselves in the Granite vicinity. Although the Chinese in northeastern Oregon, as elsewhere, faced a great deal of prejudice (Edson 1974:39-52), the placer mining decline was the main contributing factor in their leaving the immediate area. The few who remained turned to occupations other than mining, such as running laundries, restaurants, and other businesses. Some even took up agriculture and ranching, often becoming "sheep herders, cowboys, and cooks;" one Chinese ranch foreman was even known as "Buckaroo Sam" (Edson 1974:73-74).

The Ah Hee Diggings project at Granite began 10 years ago. Over the years it has involved numerous individuals, some from the University of Idaho's Laboratory of Anthropology, others from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and still more from the general public. Their long-term commitment and dedication, together with historical research and archaeological investigation, have combined to bring this portion of the undertaking to a successful conclusion. Besides ongoing site management, further work yet to be accomplished by the Forest Service involves interpretation of the site to the public, particularly through appropriate signage and interpretive trails.

All materials relating to the archaeological investigations at the Ah Hee Diggings between 1985 and 1994 are housed at the Baker Ranger District Office in Baker City, Oregon. These materials include artifacts, faunal remains, and floral samples; field and laboratory forms and field notebooks; maps and plans; photographic materials; and reports, both interim and final. Originals or photocopies of most of the references cited, as well as duplicates of some of the documentation generated by the project, are housed in the Asian American Comparative Collection at the Laboratory of Anthropology, University of Idaho, Moscow.

Notes

Thanks to Michael Sampson for encouraging submission of this paper, which is a version of the one read in his "Work Camps" symposium at the Society for California Archaeology

conference, Eureka, April 1995. Thanks also to Terry Abraham for reading and commenting on a draft of this version. I am grateful to the numerous people who assisted with research, excavation, and analysis; they were all acknowledged individually in the final report.

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