

Events and Exhibits:

Ethnographic Observations of the Market Street
Chinatown Archaeology Project

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Archaeology is fascinating to people when it is communicated to them in plain language.”

William H. Marquardt

The research in this thesis collects and analyzes ethnographic data about events and exhibits that contain artifacts from San Jose, California’s Market Street Chinatown that burned down in 1887. Increasing research is being done involving public archaeology, which in this context encompasses the way in which the public interacts with public archaeology programs events in which archaeology is presented to the public. It is realized that such programs are important to public understanding of and value placed upon archaeology.

I am most interested in the role of authority and the creation of knowledge within public and urban archaeology in relation to the story of Chinese immigrants in the Santa Clara Valley in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I undertook ethnographic research at three distinct contexts in San Jose in order to examine these questions. One of these contexts is public archaeology events. These are run by the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (MSCAP) and held at History Park and the Peralta Adobe in San Jose, both run by History San José. Research was also done at the Chinese American Historical Museum with the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project in History Park, and included both general visitors and school children from one of three school programs that visit the museum through History San Jose’s

Education Department. Lastly, ethnographic work was done at the “City Beneath the City” museum exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.

Such ethnographic research has never been done before in the ten years of the MSCAP, run by Professor Barbara L. Voss at Stanford University. It is under her guidance that I have undertaken this research project. In the interest of community-based research, I have also involved MSCAP community partners at various stages of the research process. These research partners include History San José, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, Environmental Science Associates, and Rene Yung, developer of the “City Beneath the City” exhibit.

I am interested in the reasons that visitors engage with specific public archaeology events, programs, and situations. I examine their expectations and what they hope to learn. In addition to answering research questions about public archaeology and the role of authority, I analyze the existing state of the programs in place with the MSCAP and suggest areas for improvement and future directions. Following are brief summaries of each section in this thesis.

Chapter 2: Background Information

This section examines the history of the Market Street Chinatown in San Jose, California. I examine why some Chinese initially immigrated to California and the prejudices they faced on the local, state and national levels. Especially in San Jose, discrimination led to many difficulties for Chinese immigrants, including the destruction of the Market Street Chinatown in 1887 as a result of an arson fire. As the Chinese resettled in new Chinatowns and eventually dispersed into the local non-Chinese community, little attention was given to the site of the former Market Street Chinatown until construction for the current Fairmont Hotel began at the site in the 1980s.

The current Market Street Chinatown collection consists of artifacts excavated during this construction. These artifacts were stored in a warehouse until the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project was formed in 2002 at Stanford University with the community partners formerly mentioned. Previous research on the collection is briefly covered.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This section covers previous research that has been done before within the realm of public archaeology. I examine different ways of thinking about the interactions between the public and archaeology, especially looking at public archaeology in Annapolis, Maryland. I next consider the ways in which museums construct knowledge (including John Falk and Lynn Dierking's interactive experience model of learning), knowledge as commodity, and the representation of archaeology within museums. I examine how affect theory and structures of feeling can be applied to displays and use of archaeological material. Lastly, I examine Nick Merriman's deficit and multi-perspective models of engaging the public in archaeology, how the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project relates to current research and how it builds on this research to ask questions in a new context of public archaeology programs concerning Chinese immigration in San Jose, California.

Chapter 4: Project Description

This section expands on the actual research project, and includes an introduction to the project and site descriptions. I discuss my preparation for the research project including classes, training, and reading, as well as how I became involved in the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (originating in collections work). In addition to my research questions, the

goals of my research project are discussed, mainly that I want my research to be directly applicable to the MSCAP and community partners, immediately relevant to the public, and closely involve community partners through community-based research.

Site descriptions are provided for each field site where I engaged in ethnographic observations. Both the history and a current description of the Chinese American Historical Museum are given. The museum, located at History Park, is a replica of the Ng Shing Gung (Temple of the Five Gods) building that once stood in the Heinlenville Chinatown in San Jose, California near Sixth and Taylor Streets. The temple was demolished in 1949, but parts of it were saved and then incorporated into the Chinese American Historical Museum when it was built by the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project in 1991. The museum has two floors; the first floor includes a timeline and cases with various artifacts and objects (including a case on the Market Street Chinatown) while the second floor contains the original alter with a brief oral description of its history and elements. I observed both school children participating in the “Coming to America: The Immigration Experience” school program run by History San José that visits the museum and general visitors.

The “City Beneath the City” exhibit by Rene Yung at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is covered. The gallery space and exhibit content is discussed, as well as the Zero1 art festival and First Friday events that the ICA participates in with other local stores, businesses, and artists. The gallery itself includes fourteen pedestals with words from the MSCAP printed on the side. The majority of the objects (excluding small or fragile ones) are not enclosed in glass vitrines. There is an observation post (a chair on a slightly raised pedestal) and a shelf with a community binder for visitors to write down their reflections on the exhibit.

Lastly, public archaeology events, held by the MSCAP and aimed at children age four to ten years old, are put on six times each academic year on the weekends. They are held at either History Park or the Peralta Adobe (both run by History San José and located in San Jose, California). At the beginning of the program, children receive an archaeology passport with four or five stations. Each station includes a description and a place for a sticker upon completion of the station. The stations include excavation, screening, artifact identification, reconstruction, and a visit to the Chinese American Historical Museum (when the event is held at History Park).

Chapter 5: Methods

This section covers the ethnographic methods I used to perform my research, which included both qualitative and quantitative data. I conducted participant observations and short informal interviews. In undertaking participant observations, I interacted with the public in a normal capacity – at the public archaeology events I acted as a student volunteer, at the Chinese American Historical Museum I acted as an interpreter, and at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art I sat at the observation post.

I recorded patterns in the way people interacted with the exhibit or event, basic demographic information, and unusual occurrences. Sample interview questions can be found in this section.

Chapter 6: Analysis

This section focuses on the results of my research, both divided by field site and looking at overall trends. The Chinese American Historical Museum analysis is split into school programs and general visitors. I examine the rhetoric and activities used by the school programs,

especially within the Chinese American Historical Museum, both across docents and specifically concerning the case with Market Street Chinatown artifacts.

In observations regarding general visitors, I look at basic demographic information, the amount of time spent at the museum, what visitors are drawn to, and what they learn. Special consideration is placed on how the Market Street Chinatown is represented in comparison to other San Jose Chinatowns and how visitors interact specifically with the case containing Market Street Chinatown artifacts.

Regarding the “City Beneath the City” exhibit, I analyze demographic information as well as patterns in how visitors interact with the objects. This includes different levels of engagement based on object presentation, the potential understanding of a subtle image that the curator tried to create, the use of an artifact map, and visitor suggestions for improvement.

Concerning public archaeology events, I examine demographic information as well as the most popular stations. I also analyze the rhetoric that student volunteers use when talking to children and adults, the role of age and parents in interpretation of materials, and how the background of children influences the way they engage with the artifacts.

Chapter 7: Future Directions

This section focuses on ways in which I hope my research can be further applied and used, both in conjunction with community partners and within the discipline of public archaeology in general. I give suggestions for each field site based on my analysis as well as feasibility centered on time and resource restraints. I move into ways in which my research has already begun to be disseminated to a wider audience outside of the MSCAP and further plans for publishing my findings.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

This section looks at overall research findings. I found that the more removed that artifacts are from the public (if they are behind glass and not the main the focus of the event or exhibit), the less engaged visitors will be, thus spending less time looking at and discussing the artifacts. This can be seen through a comparison of the three field sites: the Chinese American Historical Museum, the “City Beneath the City” exhibit, and public archaeology events. The ways in which this research can be applied to both community partners and more broadly within public archaeology is discussed. This includes understanding patterns in how the public engages with archaeology events and exhibits. Research can help create and improve public archaeology programs, thus educating the public and increasing awareness about specific sites and time periods. In this way, the relationship between the public and archaeology can improve and flourish.

Chapter 2

Background Information

The Market Street Chinatown and its artifacts have a long and complicated history. Once located in San Jose, California, the Market Street Chinatown originated in an area that was once the Pueblo of San Jose and the site of California's first capital. The Market Street Chinatown developed as more Chinese immigrants arrived in the United States. Initially, Chinese immigrated to California as a result of the Gold Rush. As Americans and European immigrants moved west in droves, the Chinese too were attracted to California by both the promise of riches and a better life (Voss 2008:9). The building of the Transcontinental Railroad from 1865 – 1869, mainly the Western portion, also brought Chinese immigrants to the United States. After the gold fields were depleted and the railroad complete, many Chinese immigrants settled in cities such as San Francisco and San Jose, and worked hard to send money home and bring relatives to California.

There were over 1,000 people that lived in San Jose's Chinatown, as well as many businesses, a temple, and a theater (Voss and Kane 2012: Executive Summary). Chinese immigrants who didn't live within the boundaries of Chinatown still depended heavily on it for material goods, conversation, and the maintenance of a Chinese lifestyle. San Jose contained the third largest overseas Chinese settlement in California during the nineteenth century (Voss et al. 2011: Executive Summary).

Non-Chinese San Jose communities in the late nineteenth century began to be involved in the anti-Chinese movement. In 1869, the city of San Jose declared Chinatown a public nuisance based on claims of unsightliness and loud noise levels (Yu 1991: 28). Soon afterwards, the First Episcopal Methodist Church was burnt down for allowing Chinese into their Sunday school. As the so-called anti-Chinese movement rose, Chinese immigrants faced more racism and discrimination. The Chinese community faced other hardships as well resulting from bias against them. They often encountered discrimination in San Jose; for example, the power of the Workingmen's Party (a strong national anti-Chinese party) intimidated local newspapers and churches and influenced all levels of society (Yu 1991: 15). Local Chinese also faced segregation. Separate 'Oriental' schools were set up for Chinese. Segregation also existed in other aspects of daily life, including churches (with the exception of the First Episcopal Methodist Church). Such measures remained part of California law as late as 1921 (Yu 1991: 12). The anti-Chinese movement in San Jose grew in strength. Local ordinances passed that were applied only to Chinese, such as those against laundries, peddling, fishing, housing, haircutting, and burial customs (Voss 2008:10). Chinese were also forbidden to inter-marry with whites (Yu 1991: 12).

Chinese immigrants faced legal opposition on the national level. They were denied the right to become a citizen, even though African-Americans were now allowed this 'privilege'. They also faced unequal taxes, including the Foreign Miner's Tax and the Alien Poll Tax (\$2.50 per month) in the 1850's. In 1879, the Second Constitutional Convention adopted a four-part anti-Chinese article that made it illegal for corporations and public workers to hire Chinese; to do so constituted a misdemeanor. This legislation was later declared unconstitutional (Yu 1991: 16).

Perhaps the largest obstacle that Chinese immigrants faced was the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed on May 6, 1882. This prohibited Chinese from coming to the United States for ten years; those already in the country were permitted to leave and return only with permits. It also created a national law that no Chinese immigrant could ever be naturalized as a citizen. Furthermore, the Scott Act of 1888 barred the return of all Chinese laborers who went back to China, even those with re-entry permits. The Geary Act of 1892 renewed exclusion for ten more years and required all laborers to obtain certificates of eligibility to be in the United States (Yu 1991: 17).

San Jose's Chinatown moved due to political unrest and racism-based events. Amid such growing resentment and intolerance by much of the non-Chinese population of San Jose, the Market Street Chinatown was burned down in 1887, most likely as a result of arson. The wooden buildings went up in flames and thousands of Chinese lost both their belongings and a cultural sanctuary. The non-Chinese community's response was rather disconcerting. Outwardly, the community pretended that the fire was a negative event; the *San Jose Evening News* praised valiant firefighters that had tried to stop the fire. However, the firefighters had suspiciously low water pressure because the tank had been drained (something that had never happened before) as well as a poor quality of hoses (Yu 1991: 30). The non-Chinese firefighters and the community they came from did not completely mourn the burning of Chinatown.

The Chinese reaction to the Market Street Chinatown arson showed their true resolve as a community. They rallied together and in a few days began to organize two new residential communities: Woolen Mills, largely a company town, and Heinlenville, which grew to house over four thousand people (Voss 2005: 430). These other Chinatown locations continued to provide a community, culture, and sense of belonging during a time of increasing anti-

immigration feelings. The remains of the Market Street Chinatown were simply built over and ignored for many years.

Construction of the current Fairmont Hotel at the corner of Market Street and San Fernando Street was undertaken in the 1980s. Excavations from 1980 – 1983 and 1985 – 1988 revealed what is now the Market Street Chinatown assemblage. Archaeological excavations were carried out during construction, and the artifacts found there constituted what some scholars called, “one of the most significant Chinese overseas assemblages ever recovered in the American West” (Voss et al. 2003:5). Despite this importance, the collection was simply put away in a warehouse for years, inaccessible to both researchers and the public. Although a sense of racism is no longer as prevalent in San Jose, the city is still not fully trying to publicly recognize the hardships that Chinese immigrants faced during the late 1800’s. There is only a small plaque at the modern site; there is little recognition that this site was once so important to the overseas Chinese community living there. In this sense, the city is forgetting an integral part of its past.

In 2002, at the invitation of the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP), the collection was moved to Stanford University and Dr. Barbara L. Voss became Principal Investigator for the newly formed Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (MSCAP). The collection has been worked on by both undergraduate and graduate students over the years, and collections management includes recataloguing of items in a computer database and rehousing the materials in a more sustainable manner. Although much the project’s effort has been devoted to re-cataloging and documenting the artifacts and has recently expanded to include public outreach, student work and research have explored peck-marked vessels, stoneware, grooming practices, dental hygiene, fire ritual, and restaurants. As of August 2012, there were 390 file-

sized boxes of artifacts, stored and worked on at the Stanford Archaeology Center (Voss and Kane 2012: 4-1). Partner organizations include History San José, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, and Environmental Science Associates.

The MSCAP is important for a number of different reasons. It provides a way to learn more about the Chinese immigrants that settled in the San Jose area and correct some of the popular misconceptions about these immigrants. For example, the majority of people think that these communities were made up of working bachelors and that very few families lived in Chinatown. However, artifacts such as children's toys help change this image. Many also think of the communities as insular and keeping mostly to themselves. Although the immigrants in Chinatown were linked together by common language and customs, the presence of European ceramic vessels and American glass bottles show that the Chinese traded with those around them. Additionally, the project has strong research potential for learning more about the daily lives of the Chinese. Research on the collection has recently expanded to include archaeobotany, zooarchaeology, and continued material culture research (Voss and Kane 2012).

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Previous Public Archaeology Research

Public archaeology already has a strong research foundation. It can help bridge the gap between the past and modern people. Archaeology is important in community engagement because it “enables the public to confront the actual material evidence of the past” and “produces credible accounts of what happened in the past” (Little 2002: 20). Parker Potter further comments on the role of archaeology, saying that “ethnography [is used] to determine how a community uses its past, [and] archaeology to illuminate what is hidden or mystified by the community’s manipulation of the past” (Potter 1994: 34). Barbara Little explains that, “contact with authentic things of the past can spark in the general public an empathy with the past that enhances reflection on the meaning of history and on the connections between now and then” (Little 2002:21).

Teresa Moyer discusses the relationship between archaeology and museums, especially the representation of Chinese immigrants in American museums. She says that various history museums have “begun asking the difficult questions, particularly about sensitive topics like the role of ‘otherness’ and ethnicity in American society” (Moyer 2007: 265). This can be seen through exhibits containing Market Street Chinatown artifacts, such as the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. Patricia Nelson Limerick, an environmental historian, has “researched the history of Chinese immigrant railroad workers in environmental change and California’s economic development. She notes that often the role of Chinese is characterized as

‘contributing’ to the overall story, despite the major role they actually played” (Moyer 2007: 265). It is images such as this that some of the MSCAP research and exhibits are trying to change – they tell a story of real people who lived locally and had a major impact on the development of the area.

Moyer talks more specifically about history museums and the image of Chinese immigrants and uses the Museum of Chinese in the Americas in Manhattan’s Chinatown as an example. She claims that “history museums offer a ‘safe space’ for groups to confront historical injustices, as in the racism against Asians in California in the nineteenth century.” (Moyer 2007: 265) Specifically, the Museum of Chinese in the Americas “reclaims, interprets, and explores the Chinese American cultural experiences. Exhibits ... address issues such as the reception of Asian immigrants by the United States, culture clash, maintenance and disassembly of traditional familial structures, and the relationship of Chinatown to other neighborhoods ... [Tchen 1992]” (Moyer 2007: 265-6). This shows that history museums have started to deal with the troublesome history of Chinese immigration in the United States. Moyer also says that, “museums rarely use their archaeology to teach approaches relevant in contemporary society, but research from the aforementioned [tracking] studies can help designers and archaeologists understand which elements encourage people to consider the past in a different light” (Moyer 2007: 269). My research on the public interpretation of the Market Street Chinatown contributes an understanding of how people perceive the plight of Chinese immigrants in California.

One of the first major full-scale, long-term studies of public archaeology was conducted in Annapolis, Maryland. Potter’s book *Public Archaeology in Annapolis: A Critical Approach to History in Maryland’s Ancient City* (1994) is concerned with the use of contemporary social context in the formulation of research questions for archaeology in Annapolis and the creation of

a public interpretive program. He claims that “the circumstances under which knowledge is produced exerts an influence on the shape and substance of the knowledge created” and that “there is no neutral or value-free knowledge; intentionally or not, all knowledge serves – or can serve – certain particular interests at the expense of other particular or general interests” (Potter 1994:2). Moyer further comments on the Annapolis project, saying that “anthropological studies of visitors to Annapolis demonstrated the distance between what archaeologists want nonarchaeologists to glean from their interpretation and what they actually do” (Moyer 2007: 275). This relationship between curator and visitor in the museum setting will be discussed later.

The Ludlow Collective writes about the archaeology of the Colorado Coal Field War and the different public archaeology measures that have been undertaken there. They wonder if archaeology speaks to working class people, or if it more commonly speak to professionals, the people who have the time and money to go to museums. How can we truly bring archaeology to the public (everyone who is not a professional archaeologist)? (The Ludlow Collective 2001).

The connection between archaeology and history is also important to consider, as they can both refute and support each other. David Dymond discusses the nature and definition of archaeological and historical evidence, the methods and principles used by both sides, the inevitable overlapping which occurs, and examples of coordination. He calls for the use of total archaeology, which encompasses the most far-reaching and curative of all kinds of coordination, encourages the widest-possible definition of archaeology and necessitates the use of a great range of documents. He comments that “the archaeologist is concerned with things, ranging from small objects to the total physical environment” (Dymond 1974:16). It is the importance of these things that an archaeologist seeks to present to the public.

Overall, more recent research and theoretical thinking has started to take place within the realm of public archaeology. These ways of thinking are important as a basis for understanding public archaeology and the ways in which research can be used.

How Museums Construct Knowledge

It is important to understand the ways in which museums construct knowledge. Various factors influence learning and can be seen in different types of learning models.

John Falk and Lynn Dierking advocate for the interactive experience model of learning within museums, which encompasses the personal context, the social context, and the physical context. The personal context includes what people bring into their own museum experience: the “degrees of experience in and knowledge of the content and design of museums; [and the] visitor's interests, motivations, and concerns” (Falk and Dierking 1992:2). These factors mold how a visitor interacts with the museum – what they like and how they spend their time. The social context deals with the environment that is created by others around a specific visitor – the types and amounts of other visitors as well as interactions with museum staff. The physical context includes the museum itself and the space within it as well as the artifacts or art objects displayed in the galleries. Falk and Dierking explain that, “whatever the visitor does attend to is filtered through the personal context, mediated by the social context, and embedded within the physical context.” (Falk and Dierking 1992:4) The experience that a museum visitor has is constantly changing as these difference influences change around him or her.

Additionally, Falk and Dierking claim that typically “visitor responses to the question, “Why did you come here today?” can be grouped in three broad categories: 1) social-recreational reasons; 2) educational reasons; and 3) reverential reasons” (Falk and Dierking 1992:14). It

remains to be seen if these are the only categories that visitors can be separated into. They also warn that “generalizations about the profile of museum visitors - whether generalizations of age, sex, education or any other characteristic - can be misleading” (Falk and Dierking 1992:23). This is something to be conscious of when analyzing data, although summaries of data and information regarding the profile of visitors can obviously be helpful in analyzing visitor experiences.

In their later book *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (2000), Falk and Dierking refine the contexts of learning within the three contexts of personal, sociocultural, and physical. Most importantly, to the definition of physical context they include reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum. This is especially important to consider when working with children, who may have learned more about the subject of an exhibit or event at school or at home. Additionally they may have follow up activities outside of the museum.

Falk and Dierking also emphasize the freedom that comes with learning from a museum. Learning such as this “tends to be non-linear, is personally motivated, and involves considerable choice on the part of the learner as to what to learn, as well as where and when to participate in reading (Falk and Dierking 2000: xii). Thus, each visitor makes the museum experience unique and personalized to themselves.

Eileen Hooper-Greenhill offers another approach to the way in which museums construct knowledge, aspects of which are particularly relevant to my research. She explains that, “knowledge is now well understood as the commodity that museums offer” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:2). However, this knowledge is constantly changing based on social context, the objects themselves, and how the “elements are transformed” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:196). Knowledge

may also change based on where the objects are presented; she claims that, "...the meaning of the object would have radically changed as it moved from one institution to the next. The way in which the object would have been both understood and enjoyed would have shifted" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:194). This is especially important to my own project as the artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (MSCAP) are displayed and used in a variety of settings, including various exhibits and events.

Hooper-Greenhill further elaborates that, "the basic structures of knowledge of the modern episteme are totality and experience [...] knowing and knowledge have become three-dimensional, all-involving, and all-encompassing. The main themes of knowledge are people, their histories, their lives and their relationships" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:198). My research seeks to explore this knowledge, how it is created by both museum curators and the public, and how the knowledge affects different parties.

Sam Smiles and Stephanie Moser's book *Envisioning the Past: Archaeology and the Image* (2005) raises points that are particularly useful when considering the representation of archaeology, especially within the art world as in the "City Beneath the City" exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. They explain that the "intended audience [of an object] will ...determine the limits of what it once meant and what it may mean now (Smiles and Moser 2005:1). They claim that a wide gulf exists between art-historians and archaeologists in terms of representation of objects and meaning. They elaborate that "archaeological imagery is a coded system: it is both symbol and communication... because an unmediated representation can never be achieved it behooves us to examine the cultural circumstances, epistemic context, and semiotic register" (Smiles and Moser 2005:5). The symbol and communication aspect of museums can be seen in features of exhibits and events; this dichotomy is essential to

understanding the creation of knowledge regarding archaeological artifacts within museums. Smiles and Moser agree, saying that “our perception of an object is guided by our pre-existing thoughts about it; it satisfies the criteria of what we think it should be, rather than what it is” (Smiles and Moser 2005:8). These pre-formed assumptions of what an object should be are crucial to understanding the ways in which museum visitors interact with and understand objects, both individually and within their broader social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Moyer furthers the discussion on the representation of archaeology within the museum setting, saying that “the typical label-and-tell approach of archaeological exhibits does not inspire dialogue and critical thinking...many archaeological exhibits contain information important for archaeologists, but it is not necessarily accessible or meaningful to a layperson. ...Such exhibits perpetuate the opacity of professional archaeology” (Moyer 2007: 269). Commenting on the relationship between the past and present in representation, she claims that “findings around the nation [show] that while historians and curators see time as a continuum, the general public lacks the sense of connections between long-past and recent history” (Moyer 2007: 270). This disconnection is important to understanding the way in which the public perceives the past and how an exhibit may affect how they see their role within history. Additionally, exhibits can become “learning environments with opportunities for self-directed learning, addressing visitors’ emotions and minds, [which is] a contemporary trend in museums’ communication to their audience” (Moyer 2007: 272). This movement towards incorporating other ways of learning has changed the way in which museums construct knowledge and how the public interprets it.

Affect Theory and Structures of Feeling

Raymond Williams developed the affect theory and structures of feeling, which can be applied to the visitor experience of displays with archaeological material. He talks about the close relationship of the social and personal, saying that “if the social is the fixed and explicit – the known relationships, institutions, formations, positions – all that is present and moving, all that escapes or seems of escape from the fixed and the explicit and the known, is grasped and defined as the personal” (Williams 1977: 128). It is at the intersection of the social and personal that interesting reactions take place. This theory thus provides a lens through which to examine the relationship of visitors and museum exhibits and events. Williams also claims that “there is frequent tension between the received interpretation and practical experience” (Williams 1977: 130). This relates to the tension and disconnect that may occur between the story that curators are trying to tell and the actual way in which visitors interpret a set of artifacts.

Williams’ theories can be applied to the meaning that is placed upon the artifacts by different visitors and their interpretations because his theories are “concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable)...” (Williams 1977: 132). Thus the relationship that visitors have with interpretation changes throughout history depending on the past and circumstances; surely the interpretation of Chinese American artifacts changes as more information is learned and disseminated.

Deficit and Multi-perspective Models of Engaging the Public in Archaeology

Studying the ways in which visitors interact with the MSCAP collection in different contexts is important to understanding the ways in which the public is able to access the

collection. Nick Merriman claims that within archaeology, “the public interest is served not so much in the present, but more in a vaguely defined future time called ‘posterity’ when the resources, or the records of them, may be consulted. In such a future-oriented strategy, the public itself... is only served indirectly” (Merriman 2004: 3). The MSCAP serves to correct this current problem within the discipline by making the collection and its research findings more immediately accessible to the public. Although a wide range of people, including children, are interested in archaeology, the research and results within archaeology are not always readily available to the public. Findings are often either only published in obscure literature or journals, use academic jargon that makes it difficult for the general public to understand the significance of the work, or not published at all. Through public archaeology events and exhibitions the MSCAP is involved in, research can be brought more quickly and meaningfully to the public.

My research is also important in examining the local knowledge of Chinese and Chinese-American history in San Jose. The Ludlow Collective notes that, “our excavations become a form of memory” (The Ludlow Collective 2001:103); this is especially applicable to the MSCAP. It is through the work of the MSCAP that the general public can become aware of the significance of Chinese influence in the area. It is essential to involve the Chinese community in the telling of their own history. Thus, through the archaeological record and research this significant part of San Jose’s past can continue to be recognized.

It is crucial to consider why archaeology is important to the public and vice versa. Nick Merriman’s discussion of the deficit and multi-perspective models of engaging the public in archaeology provides a useful lens with which to examine this question. He defines the deficit model as, “see[ing] the public as needing education in the correct way to appreciate archaeology, and the role of public archaeology is building confidence in the professional work of

archaeologists” (Merriman 2004:6); however, in the multi-perspective model, “the purpose of engaging the public with archaeology is to encourage self-realization, to enrich people’s lives and stimulate reflection and creativity” (Merriman 2004:7).

The problem with the deficit model of public archaeology is that it places the entire situational authority on archaeologists without taking into account the knowledge and opinions the public can provide. However, the multi-perspective model does not place enough emphasis on the specialist knowledge of archaeologists, nor does it recognize the different contexts in which people approach archaeology. Through a combination of these approaches and more research about the public’s attitude towards and interaction with archaeology, the relationships between the public and archaeology can be better understood.

Gemma Tully also discusses public archaeology, saying that it should try to “diversify the voices involved in the interpretation of the past” and that the “intriguing aspect of community archaeology is its diverse application” (Tully 2007:155). The MSCAP seeks to increase this diversity of people and organizations involved in the interpretation of public archaeology by including various community partners. Tully further explains that the “lack of an explicit methodology is due to the diverse range of contexts in which community archaeology is practised” (Tully 2007:155). This can be seen in the MSCAP, which combines urban archaeology, overseas Chinese archaeology, past archaeological records, and past and current research.

Stephanie Moyer further comments on the relationship between archaeology and the public. She claims that “archaeologists do have the responsibility of being productive agents in contemporary society by working with the public” and that “archaeology can humanize the past to motivate people to engage with the present and not take hard-won rights for granted” (Moyer

2007: 276). Archaeology can help bridge the gap between the academic side of the discipline and the way in which it is applicable to the public and their interests. She also says that “museums in general need to do a better job of drawing on their archaeological resources – be they artifacts or people – to own up to their responsibility as facilitators in this discussion” (Moyer 2007: 276). Museums can ultimately help archaeology in its quest to be more applicable, thus beginning conversations about the past and the present.

Chapter 4

Project Description

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

Overall, my project seeks to collect and analyze ethnographic observations about public interactions with artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project. I undertook ethnographic research at three distinct contexts in San Jose, California in order to examine these questions. These contexts included public archaeology events, discussed in more detail later. These are run by the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (MSCAP) and held at History Park and the Peralta Adobe in San Jose, both run by History San José. Research was also done at the Chinese American Historical Museum in History Park, and included both general visitors and school children from one of three school programs that visit the museum through History San Jose's Education Department. Lastly, ethnographic work was done at the "City Beneath the City" museum exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.

Preparation

I had previous experience with the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project before undertaking this thesis research. I have worked with the Market Street Chinatown collection since the spring of 2011 when I started as an undergraduate student researcher for the collection. I continued working with the collection as cataloguer during the fall of 2011 as part of Professor Barbara L. Voss' undergraduate class on public archaeology. I also participated in MSCAP public archaeology events through the class. I gained a broader knowledge of Chinese history in

the San Jose area through a writing class I took during the spring of 2011. This class required students to create an audio walking tour of a particular aspect of San Jose, California; I produced mine on the prejudice and problems nineteenth-century Chinese immigrants faced in San Jose. I was thus familiar with various aspects of the project before working on my thesis, including the history of the collection and era which it came from, the different types of materials found within the collection, the classification methods of various types of artifacts, and how to properly store the objects. I also had experience in the public archaeology events that the MSCAP puts on through past participation, and was familiar with the setting and process of the event.

As an undergraduate, I had not yet done ethnographic work such as this, so it was necessary for me to prepare in order to be properly ready to undertake my work. I enrolled in a pre-field research seminar that taught various ethnographic and research methods, including participant observation, interviewing, surveys, sampling procedures, life histories, and the use of documentary materials. I participated in Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for my research project as well.

I wanted to ensure a solid background in the necessary subjects required to properly understand and undertake my research. I took a directed reading under Dr. Voss during the spring of 2012, prior to my undertaking my research in the late spring and summer of the same year, on public archaeology and museum visitor interactions in order to better understand these topics. At this time, I also met with community partners, including staff at History San José and the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. I wanted to ensure that my project would be able to help them as well as further my own research.

How I Became Involved in the MSCAP

I first became involved in the MSCAP during the spring quarter of 2011 while cataloging artifacts as a student researcher. During the following fall quarter, Professor Barbara L. Voss offered a class on public archaeology for the first time, which I enrolled in. In addition to traditional lectures, readings, and papers, this class also included two service components. First, students were responsible for cataloguing artifacts every week, for a total of 27 hours for the quarter. Second, students participated in two public archaeology events held during the quarter. The class was a success during the first quarter and is currently offered in Autumn, Winter and Spring quarters; an advanced Public Archaeology class is also offered Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarters for students that wish to continue working on the project in different or expanded capacities.

It was through this class that I became very involved in the MSCAP. I was interested in continuing my work with the project for a number of different reasons. Public archaeology was exciting to me because it dealt with similar themes and issues as can be found in museum studies, which I plan to study during graduate school. I had taken a course on museums and collections at Stanford, and thus had exposure to some of the issues and viewpoints associated with collections and museum displays. Additionally, through my work as a student researcher, the public archaeology class, and a related course “Searching for San Jose” in which I developed an audio walking tour of downtown San Jose focused on the experiences of 19th century Chinese immigrants, I had become invested in the story of the struggles Chinese immigrants in the San Jose region faced. I was interested in discovering and learning more about how the modern community deals with this history and their own struggles.

All of these reasons added up to wanting to work on the project in further capacity, most likely through an honors thesis, but I had trouble deciding what I wanted to focus on. In sitting down to talk with Professor Voss, I learned that plans were in place that led to my thesis as it now is. For example, the “City Beneath the City” exhibit was on display during spring quarter and the summer of 2012, which is traditionally when students (including myself) do honors research. This exhibit was new, unusual in that it displayed archaeological artifacts in a contemporary art setting, and added an exciting dimension to the field sites I would be working at. I chose the three contexts to work with because they all deal with the artifacts and the history of the Market Street Chinatown in different ways, thus reaching out to audiences in different ways. I was also interested in the power relations within archaeological interpretation – how the public and ‘authorities’ work together and against each other in interpreting archaeological material.

Goals

My research on the public archaeology aspect of the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project is important to the project and community partners. Public outreach events started fairly recently during the spring quarter of 2011, and the “City Beneath the City” exhibit was on display during part of 2012. The rise of new, public aspects of the project was important in bringing the project’s work to the local community that it affected. However, research hadn’t yet been conducted on these public outreach programs, and thus project personnel did not know how the public reacted to these events, what they learned or took away from them, and other aspects of the visitor experience. Additional research questions such as the expectations and

background of visitors and the role of authority within public archaeology at large also remained to be explored.

Besides answering these research questions about the project's public outreach programs, I also wanted to make the exhibits and events immediately relevant to the public. By this I mean that I wanted the public to benefit from my research; I did not want to simply write a paper that would sit on a shelf and not be useful to the public. My goal was to get the general public interested in archaeology as well as their local history - Chinese immigrants played a significant role in the development of San Jose, and I wanted to ensure that their story would not be forgotten. The story of Chinese immigrants isn't often in the spotlight in San Jose. Indeed, even at the current Fairmont Hotel, site of this once great Chinatown, there is only a small plaque memorializing the history of local Chinese immigrants. This forgotten story needs to be told, and common misperceptions about the history and role of Chinese immigrants in the Santa Clara Valley need to be adjusted.

An important aspect of this goal was to involve community partners through community-based research for the duration of my project, from initial planning to dissemination. My community partners included History San José, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP), and the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. I consulted with members from these organizations when developing my research plan and questions, as I wanted to further their own research interests along with my own and know more about what they were interested in with regards to their own public programs. For example, Rene Yung was interested in the order in which visitors went through the "City Beneath the City" exhibit, and the CHCP was interested in how visitors responded to the timeline in the Chinese American Historical Museum.

I also conducted meetings after my summer research in order to go over initial findings and update them on other aspects of my work. Ultimately I want my research to be directly applicable to these community partner organizations. I will share my final results and thesis with them so that they are able to best utilize any appropriate information and incorporate it into any existing or future programming as they see fit.

Overall, I think it is very important to closely work with community partners, especially in this research. The Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project already had long-standing relationships in place when I decided to do my research, and I wanted to both take advantage of and benefit these relationships. Additionally, it is through the community partners as well as the MSCAP that the public will be introduced to and learn more about archaeology and how it pertains to local history.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Chinese American Historical Museum

The Chinese American Historical Museum, located on History Park grounds in Kelly Park, is a replica of the Ng Shing Gung (Temple of the Five Gods) building. This was a joss house, and functioned “not only as a house of worship, but also as a meeting space, Chinese school, storehouse, and temporary lodging” in San Jose’s Heinlenville Chinatown on Taylor and North 6th Street (Lum 2007: 126). This Chinatown was inhabited from 1887 to the 1930s, at which time Chinese immigrants and their descendants faced less prejudice and incorporated into mainstream society. This, combined with the bankruptcy of the Heinlen family, led to the gradual desertion of Heinlenville until only the Ng Shing Gung temple remained. The building

was demolished in 1949, but thankfully “some far-thinking community members made the effort to store away the altar and some of the furnishings of the temple” (Lum 2007: 126). The altar was dismantled in 1949 and stored under the bleachers of a local stadium; it was later rediscovered.

The Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP) was created in 1987, one hundred years after the Market Street Chinatown fire. This group was organized “to replicate Heinlenville’s temple and restore its altar, thus creating a museum to document the legacy of the pioneering Chinese immigrants to the area. The CHCP arose from a “broad community effort that involved people from various walks of life” (Lum 2007: 126). This led to the creation of the Chinese American Historical Museum, as well as festivals, events, and a curriculum on Chinese American history and culture that was distributed in local school districts. In 1991, the CHCP donated the replica Ng Shing Gung museum to the City of San Jose.

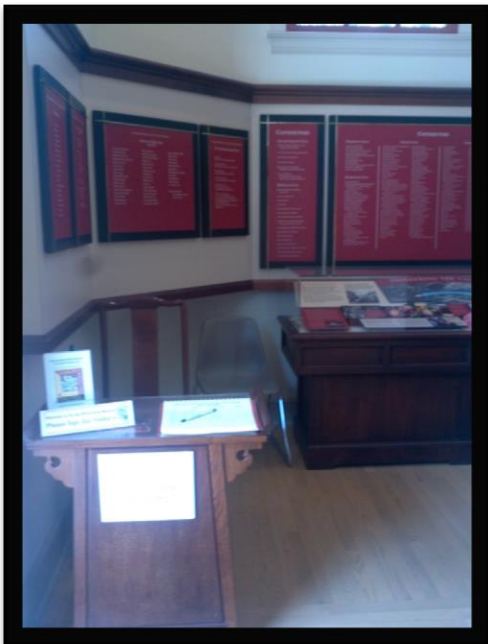


Figure 1: Welcome table in the Chinese American Historical Museum

The exterior of the Chinese American Historical Museum is composed of brick and has various signs with Chinese characters on them, including once that says Ng Shing Gung. There is a balcony on the second floor (inaccessible to visitors), and large red double doors on the first floor lead to the interior of the museum. Just inside the door are a small table, two chairs for CHCP interpreters, and a sign-in sheet for guests asking where they are from (see Figure 1). The number of people that enter are tracked by the interpreters. The first floor of the Chinese American Historical Museum holds the majority of

artifacts, which tell the story of Chinese immigrants and local Chinese-Americans from around the 1840s to present day. A main component of the first floor is a timeline, which is divided into three different sections: San Jose, United States, and China. This allows for comparison of the events and attitudes affecting Chinese Americans that were taking place around the world. There is a display case about the Market Street Chinatown. Included in this case are ceramics (brown overglaze ceramics, a celadon bowl, plate, and teacup and four seasons bowls and plates, a toothbrush, glass bottles, and other artifacts. There are also displays cases on other San Jose Chinatowns, traditional opera costumes, a lion head, games, and festivals.

The second floor houses a couple of display cases, but the main focus is the altar. There are benches to sit down on and a button that visitors can press to listen to an audio description of the altar elements. There are five gods represented in the altar, including *Kwan Yin*: Goddess of Mercy, *Choi Sun*: God of Wealth; *Chen Huan*: God of Canton City; *Kwan Gung*: God of War and Justice; and *Tien Hou*: Queen of Heaven (“The Chinese Historical and Cultural Project”).

An important audience of the Chinese American Historical Museum is the school groups that use the museum. Three school programs run by History San Jose come through the museum: “Coming to America: The Immigration Experience” with fourth and fifth graders, “People at Work in the 1890s” with third graders, and “Child’s Life” with second graders. I only observed the “Coming to America” program as the others are held outside of my research period. Group size is generally about twenty to thirty children along with their teacher and parent chaperones.

San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art

The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is an art gallery located in downtown San Jose on South First Street, and was founded in 1980. Admission is free, and various programs and events are held in conjunction with the exhibits on display. The neighborhood includes other museums, stores, and a small park.

The gallery that held the “City Beneath the City” exhibit is half of the overall gallery space at the Institute of Contemporary Art. When visitors walk in from the front of the gallery there are three introductory panels that tell the story of the Market Street Chinatown fire and an artist’s statement by Rene Yung, the artistic director of the exhibit. On the wall are exhibit brochures and an artifact map (see Appendix).

The exhibit contains fourteen pedestals with different words printed on the sides, which have been taken from the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project. The majority of the artifacts are not enclosed behind glass; only the most delicate and fragile pieces (e.g. the leather shoes, small artifacts) are enclosed in Plexiglas. The artifacts are set up to tell a particular story; Rene Yung, the artist, wanted to create the sense of entering a house. Thus, when entering from the front of the gallery, one first encounters exterior building materials (windowpane glass, bricks, soil samples and burned wood fragments) and then a doorknob signifying an entrance to a house. Next a pair of leather shoes, resting on a low pedestal close to the floor, reflects the Chinese custom of taking off one’s shoes when entering a household. The remaining artifacts form groups, including small objects, daily objects, and food remains and containers. Particularly striking in a far corner is a round table with place settings, including cup, dishes, and plates. A shelf holds rice bowls, and speakers underneath repeat, *sic tzo fan mei*, “have you eaten rice yet?”. (See Figure 2). This Southern Chinese greetings is often used among older

generations, and “speaks to how having food is an indicator for well-being.” (‘About the Installation’).



Figure 2: Shelf with rice bowls and speakers, "City Beneath the City" exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art

Within the gallery sits a white wooden chair on a small wooden pedestal; it is labeled ‘Observation Post’. Collaboration with the artist in developing my research plan led to talks about transparency and the desire to incorporate my research into the design of the exhibit. These discussions manifested themselves in this chair, in which I sat when

performing my participant observations and informal interviews.

There was also a community storybook on a ledge near the observation post. Here, visitors could record their reaction to the exhibit as well as basic information about themselves (where they live, age, race, and gender). There were also two open ended questions: “Is there an object or group of objects in this installation that captured your imagination? Which object(s), and why?” and “Please share a story that viewing the installation made you think of – it can be about the objects, a memory, and experience, a place, people...or a story that you heard from someone...” Over thirty people chose to write in this storybook, and answers ranged from a few words and personal experiences to drawings and stories.

The ICA participates in a city-wide program called First Fridays. Occurring on the first Friday of every month, this downtown San Jose (SoFa – South First) event includes galleries and restaurants that stay open late, a street market, and bands. The art galleries are open from 10am to 10pm on these days. At the ICA, patrons are encouraged to donate a dollar, for which they

receive a sticker that says, “Give a buck about art”. The number of visitors greatly increased during these events.

This exhibit as well as the ICA overall was part of a large art festival called ZERO1. This year’s theme was Seeking Silicon Valley, and many museums and local artists participated. Although the festival lasted from September 12, 2012 through December 8, 2012, the “City Beneath the City” exhibit closed on September 16, 2012 so it was only involved in the ZERO1 art festival for five days. Even so, the event brought more people and attention to the event.

Public Archaeology Events

The public archaeology events of the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project take place at History Park and the Peralta Adobe, both owned and operated by History San José and located in San Jose, California. The programs are held on the weekend, with the event open to the public for four hours from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The event is designed for children from age four to ten. At History Park, these activities are most often located next to the Chinese American Historical Museum. An introduction table (added during Winter Quarter of the 2011-2012 school year) provides a focused center for both children and the adults accompanying them. Children receive an archaeology passport (see Appendix) when they begin the activities, which guides them through the stations. For each station on the passport, there is a description and a place for a star sticker. There are five different stations – excavation, screening, artifact identification, reconstruction, and a historical station within the Chinese American Historical Museum when the event is held at History Park. When children have completed all of the activities, they return to the welcome table to receive their gold junior archaeologist seal. Brochures on the project are available for accompanying adults, as well as signs saying which

languages interpreters speak. Children are encouraged to go to the stations in any order that they want to; I have labelled them here as first, second, etc. in the traditional order of the archaeological process for ease of understanding.

The first station is the excavation station. This station consists of two large boxes filled with sand (see Figure 3). Each box represents a trash pit into which different people and

businesses have thrown away their

trash. Each box is divided into quadrants with string, which are designed to reflect the respective trash of two households, a restaurant, and a butcher shop.

The artifacts placed in the household sections include ceramic teacups and shards, a leather shoe, a soy sauce pot,

marbles and gaming pieces. The



Figure 3: Excavation station at public archaeology event. Reprinted courtesy of the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project.

restaurant sections contain a large number of kitchen ceramics, and the butcher section holds only animal bones. Although some period pieces were purchased to enhance the learning experience, the majority of the items are original artifacts from Feature 0 of the Market Street Chinatown collection (meaning that they were found on the surface or in other areas in which there was little or no research value). Children are given an optional worksheet (see Appendix) which contains an area to draw the objects they found in each quadrant; if they complete a drawing they receive an extra star sticker for the excavation page of their passport.

The second station is screening. Here, two screens are set up with a tub of dirt underneath. Scoops of this dirt containing small artifacts are placed on top of the screen. The children then gently push the dirt through the screen, wearing gloves if they want to in order to protect their hands, to reveal the artifacts that are left on top of the screen. The station teaches the importance of screening in finding small artifacts which would otherwise be missed. Artifacts used at this station include ceramic fragments, buttons, coins, and marbles.

The third station is artifact identification. Here the children choose their own object (including a complete soy sauce jar, an animal bone, and porcelain fragments) from a tray to identify. They fill out an identification sheet (see Appendix), which includes what they think the object is, what it is made out of, the decoration, weight, rim size if applicable, length, where it would be used, and a space for a drawing for which they can receive an extra star. This station has evolved over use as students from the public archaeology class have developed new worksheets that are better suited to different age ranges.

The fourth station is artifact reconstruction. Here, children use painter's tape to put together a number of different objects that have been broken. There is a wide variety of artifacts to work with, from simple to more complex. These include tiles with painted pictures, a decorated plate, a cup, and various other artifacts.

The fifth station, included only when the event is held at History Park, requires the children to go into the Ng Shing Gung Chinese Museum and see if they can find an object that reminds them of the artifacts that they were previously working with. There is currently a worksheet used at this station (see Appendix), but this had not yet been created when I did my research.

As previously mentioned, these public archaeology events started in the spring of 2011, and have expanded to being held twice a quarter. They are staffed by student volunteers, both those taking the public archaeology class and others who want to help. A conversational approach is used, meaning that interactions are seen as a conversation, not a lecture – those running the event can learn from the public, just as the public can learn from those running the event.

Chapter 5

Methods

My project employed ethnographic methods in order to collect data for visitor interactions. This included both qualitative and quantitative observations. At each event or exhibit, I conducted participant observations and short informal interviews.

By participant observation, I mean that I interacted with the public in a normal way while observing their movements, interactions with others, and other various traits; this varied according to the situation. At the public archaeology events I acted as a normal student volunteer and interacted heavily with others – I helped children at each station, asked them questions, talked to parents and answered questions they had. At the “City Beneath the City” exhibit I was separate from those visiting the gallery because I was seated in the chair at the observation post. However, some members of the public chose to talk to me when I was in this position, described in more detail in Chapter 6. At the Chinese American Historical Museum, I sat at the front desk, often with a member of the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project who acted as a docent. I welcomed guests, asked them to sign the guest book, gave a brief history of the museum and the CHCP, and talked about artifact highlights on both the first and second floors. When shadowing the school groups that visited the Chinese American Historical Museum, I simply walked alongside the children or watched them as they toured the museums.

When performing participant observations at the events and exhibits, I looked at a variety of traits that I felt would reveal the information and patterns I needed. For example, questions I was interested in at the public archaeology events included:

Which station do people start out at?

Do visitors go to all the stations?

Which station do visitors spend the most time at?

Which station do the children seem to enjoy most?

Which station do the children seem most engaged with?

Where do the parents intervene?

In what ways do people talk about archaeology?

How have people been trained to talk about archaeology?

How does the interaction between interpreters change the interaction with artifacts?

Physical considerations: What are people doing? Mannerisms? Postures?

Does the relationship with the objects change?

Importantly, I also tried to be aware of absences - who was not there and what was not being said. I felt that questions such as these might lead to more interesting and varied observations that could reveal unexpected patterns or answers.

I conducted short, informal interviews with those who were willing to talk to me. Each interview took roughly four to five minutes. I asked questions such as:

Where are you from?

Have you been here before?

Why did you come?

What were you expecting?

What was your favorite part?

What did you learn?

How do you think we can improve this exhibit?

How did you hear about this event/exhibit?

What aren't you getting out of this event/exhibit?

I also recorded interviewees' perceived age, race, and gender.

Overall, I found patterns of behavior at these exhibits that helped me answer my original research questions. However, my research plans changed partway through the research, and I amended my protocol to reflect these inclusions. At first, I planned to only observe those that attended the "City Beneath the City" exhibit and the Chinese American Historical Museum, while normally interacting with those at the public archaeology events. However, I decided that I also wanted to be able to talk to these visitors. I hoped this would allow me to better understand my research questions while posing no additional risk to those with whom I talked. I provided interviewees with an information sheet on my research and recorded their interview answers on a form separate from the rest of my notes.

I also decided to shadow the school groups that visited the Chinese American Historical Museum; my original plan called for simply observing general visitors to the museum. I restricted this to just participant observation and did not include interviews in order to simplify my research protocol.

The last part of my changed plans involved the "City Beneath the City" exhibit. Rene Yung, the artistic director of the exhibit, asked if I would be willing to display my fieldnotes as part of the exhibit, which I consented to. This was carried out through a binder on a shelf that held my notebook containing my fieldnotes as well as copies of the interviews I performed. This was left on display for the duration of the exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (until September 16, 2012).

One aspect of my research that I was especially careful of was the sampling methods I used for selecting which people to observe and interview. Visitors spent different amounts of time at each event or exhibit, went through in different ways, and had other aspects of their experience that differed greatly from each other. Because of this, I could not simply pick every tenth person to walk through or another similar method. At the “City Beneath the City” exhibit and the Chinese American Historical Museum, I observed the first person or group that entered, followed them through the exhibit, and spent as long as needed observing and interviewing them. Once I finished writing up my notes for them, I chose the next group or person that walked through. At the public archaeology events, student volunteers typically change stations each hour; I volunteered as normal and wrote my observations during my free time.

Chapter 6

Analysis

In this section, I describe my research results from each individual field site – the Chinese American Historical Museum, the “City Beneath the City” exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, and the public archaeology events. I analyze demographic information, patterns in visitor interactions, and unusual experiences.

CHINESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Chinese American Historical Museum was an important field site for examining the interpretation of Market Street Chinatown artifacts for a variety of reasons. First, it is the location where the artifacts have been on display for the longest amount of time, ever since the museum was built in 1991. Additionally, visitors include both general visitors to the museum (on both regular park days and during special events) and school children through educational programs run by History San José’s education department. My research finds that different visitors and the structure of their visits affects the interpretation of Market Street Chinatown artifacts and the history that they commemorate.

School Program Description

As previously noted, three of History San José’s educational programs use the Chinese American Historical Museum: “Coming to America: The Immigration Experience” (fourth and fifth graders), “People at Work in the 1890s” (third graders), and “Child’s Life” (second

graders.) I only observed the “Coming to America” program as the others are held at times of the year outside of my research period. I observed two different school groups going through the “Coming to America” program. Group size is generally about twenty to thirty children along with their teacher and parent chaperones.

The school program started at 9:30am, when the children arrived at History Park either by bus or carpool. They then lined up on the porch of the Post Office building where a History San José docent introduced themselves as an immigration officer. The children were asked various questions about their knowledge of and experience with immigration, such as why people came to America, what the journey was like, and if any of them or their parents were immigrants.

They were then divided according to gender and taken into a schoolhouse, where they experienced what it would have been like to be a child attending school in the 1800s. Another docent acted as the school teacher, and spoke to the children in another language (such as German or Czech) to emulate the frightening experience of going to school and not being able to understand the teacher, thus relying on gestures and intuition until gaining a better understanding of English. The children were then asked questions that were part of the historical immigration test, including information about American presidents and government structure.

After this, the children were split up into two groups, led by the docents, and visited various buildings in the park, including the Chinese American Historical Museum, Portuguese Museum, Fruit Barn, Bank of Italy, migrant worker shacks, and the Vietnamese museum (where they did an activity outside instead of going inside).

The school groups spent about twenty minutes in the Chinese American Historical Museum, roughly equal to the amount of time spent at the other buildings. Outside the museum,

they were given a brief history of the building, taught to say Ng Shing Gung while looking at the Cantonese sign near the building's front entrance, and were instructed to pay attention to certain aspects of the exhibit inside. This included when the Chinese first came to the United States (answer gained by looking at the timeline) and to find something that looks familiar to them.

Once inside, the children were given a few minutes to look around the first floor. During the field trip, I observed that the majority of the children got very excited and ran around, calling to their friends to come look at a certain case. In the first group I observed, many of the children gathered around the teacher as she went over various parts of the timeline; she was very authoritative and controlling of the children and thus they had a more structured experience in the museum. In contrast, the second teacher walked around and looked at cases, thus allowing the children to look around the museum as they pleased.

After looking at cases and listening to the docent downstairs, the children were brought upstairs, where they listened to the recording that explains the history of the altar and the meanings of the various elements. They learned that the altar is original, that it was carved in Canton, China, and what each of the five gods represents. The docent with the first group I observed also talked about the case on the second floor that contained information about Chinese immigrants that had served in the military, especially referencing one who was given a hero's welcome when he returned to San Jose. This docent also told the children to look at the paintings on the walls, and explained that this is what Chinatown may have looked like. In comparison, the second docent only had the children listen to the altar recording before leaving the building.

School Programs and the Market Street Chinatown

The first group that participated in the “Coming to America” program was a fifth grade class of about thirty five children. Four children had been to History Park before. As previously noted the children are asked if any of themselves or their parents are immigrants. About twenty of the children had immigrant parents from places such as Ireland, Poland, Philippines, Guam, Mexico and Vietnam. The second group was a fourth grade class of about thirty children. Three had been to History Park before, and about eighteen were immigrants or the children of immigrants. The children of immigrants may relate differently to some of the museums, many of which are connected with various immigrant stories. The docents sometimes use this connection to better explain certain situations to children.

The docent with the first school program explicitly talked about the case that contains artifacts and information pertaining to the Market Street Chinatown, although she did not mention specific artifacts. She explained that archaeologists had found these objects when they were building the Fairmont Hotel and that Stanford now has the whole collection. She also mentioned the upcoming public archaeology event that the MSCAP was hosting (at the time it was just over a week away). In this example, children were taught directly about the Market Street Chinatown as well as other information about Chinese immigrants in the area.

However, the docent on the second school program did not mention the Market Street Chinatown at all. The information shared was more general; the children learned about why some Chinese immigrated to San Jose, what Chinese children were taught, and about a typical Chinese opera experience and traditional festivals.

The second docent shared information that is troubling because it contradicts the findings of MSCAP research. The docent told the children that the Chinese who immigrated to the

United States were only men and that they didn't bring their children and families with them.

However, artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown such as children's toys have begun to help disprove this popular stereotype. Despite this research, children are still being taught inaccurate information during school trips.

General visitors

School children's experience in going through the museum as part of a field trip contrasts with visitors that come under normal circumstances and are not guided through the museum. They may come on a day when History Park is normally open or as part of a special event, such as the Spirit of '45 event, which celebrates World War II, or the Antique Autos event, when antique automobiles fill the streets of History Park. Generally, there are many people in the park during these special events, and other attractions may include food trucks, dancing, music, and ceremonies. Attendance increases dramatically on days when events are held. For example, during the Spirit of '45 event, over 165 people came through the museum. Additionally, the majority of the people that come in both during special events or in general are either couples over 40 or young couples with their children. Most noticeably absent are teenagers and young adults, as well as single people. See Table 1 for demographic information of visitors that were interviewed.

Table 1: Age of interviewed visitors to the Chinese American Historical Museum

Age of Visitors	Number of visitors
Under 10	2
10-20	1
20-30	7

30-40	1
40-50	0
50-60	5
60-80	2
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<u>18</u>

Gender	Number of visitors
Female	11
Male	7
<u><i>Total</i></u>	<u>18</u>

Generally, the museum is staffed by one or more members of the CHCP or other organizations (Chinese American Women's Club of Santa Clara County and the Volunteer Council of History San Jose) who act as interpreters. At least one is standing or sitting near a small table inside of the doorway. There is a binder in which visitors can fill out their name and where they are from. The CHCP keeps track of visitor attendance in this way. Brochures are also available about the museum. Additionally, some visitors are given a short speech about the history of the Chinese in the area, the origin of the building, and highlights of the museum. Visitors are often encouraged to ask questions about anything that they see. Thus, general visitors to the Chinese American Historical Museum learn through a combination of structured and unstructured learning.

Overall, visitors generally spend anywhere from ten minutes to an hour inside of the museum. Those that stay longer tend to be those that talk with the docents about specific

artifacts in the museum or about the general history of Chinese immigrants. Those that walk through quickly may do so for a variety of reasons, including lack of time, greater interests in other attractions at the park, or not a lot on interest in the topic.

In the interpreters' introduction speech, the Market Street Chinatown is usually briefly mentioned, mostly about its location and why its people moved to Heinlenville. In comparison, the altar on the second floor is mentioned every time as a highlight that visitors should be sure to see.

The timeline is an especially important part of the museum that the CHCP tries to emphasize to visitors. They are proud of it, and it provides a good opportunity for visitors to learn more about the history of Chinese in the area. The majority of people spend at least a couple of minutes looking at the timeline. This is most likely due to two reasons. First, CHCP interpreters point out the timeline as an important aspect of the museum to the majority of visitors. Additionally, it seems most natural to go towards the timeline upon entering the building. The small welcome table to the left of the entrance makes that side seem more crowded, and the majority of people turned to the right when starting to explore the museum. However, many people simply glance over it or read certain sections; they do not read the whole timeline and thus do not gain all of the knowledge being presented.

General Visitors and Market Street Chinatown

The majority of people spend two minutes or less looking at the case that contains the MSCAP artifacts. Only four out of over twenty people that I observed at this case spent more than two minutes looking at the case. Some pass by and barely glance at the artifacts; others spend less than ten seconds looking over the artifacts. This may be because the case is near the

front of the museum; if people follow the timeline to its end they finish past the case that contains the Market Street Chinatown artifacts.

However, some people that take the time to thoroughly look at the artifacts are very interested in the story. For example, one visitor commented, “Look at this, how interesting” to someone with them when looking at the Market Street Chinatown case.

Visitors learn many things from the Chinese American Historical Museum. The majority of people comment that they didn’t know that there was a Chinatown in San Jose. The altar and the timeline are the favorite part of the museum for over 80% of the visitors. Other favorite parts included the lion head and mah jong tiles. No one listed the case containing the Market Street Chinatown artifacts as their favorite part of the museum. However, two people commented on the role of archaeology in helping to protect and present the story of Chinese immigrants. A local man said that, “You did a great job preserving all this stuff!”

It is useful to examine the way in which the Market Street Chinatown is represented in the Chinese American Historical Museum. Take for example the brochure that is available at the front desk. Under the Museum Highlights section, Heinlenville, and the Woolen Mills Chinatown are specifically named. However, the Market Street Chinatown is referred to simply as the Chinatown “at the site of the San Jose Fairmont Hotel, completed in 1987” (“Chinese American Historical Museum in the replica Ng Shing Gung”). This means that people who only look at the brochure or walk very quickly through the museum may not see any information or artifacts that are explicitly linked to the Market Street Chinatown. Additionally, the Market Street Chinatown and the MSCAP are mentioned only once on the CHCP project website: a link at the top of the homepage to a June 2012 San Jose Mercury News article about the “City Beneath the City” exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.

However, CHCP and the MSCAP have a long and important history together. CHCP has been a community partner of the MSCAP since its inception, and recent publications from CHCP have stressed the importance of partnering with archaeologists. For example, Rodney Lum, past president of CHCP, comments that “a shard of pottery, a pork bone, or a woman’s comb can tell us a lot about the intricacies of the social fabric or the commerce of the community” (Lum 2007: 127). He further comments that various awards from institutions (including the Society for Historical Archaeology) show the “extent to which CHCP honors the archaeological history of the site in recreating for the public the many stories of the Chinatowns” (Lum 2007: 126).

Overall, the Chinese American Historical Museum is popular within the park when it is open; many visitors go through the museum and engage with each other and the interpreters. However, this does not happen with the case containing artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown. This case is often quickly walked by, with the overwhelming majority of visitors not noticing it or spending less than a minute looking at the artifacts and reading the information. Thus, although the museum is attaining its goals in engaging and educating people, the Market Street Chinatown artifacts and story could be better woven into the overall narrative.

“CITY BENEATH THE CITY” EXHIBIT AT THE SAN JOSE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The “City Beneath the City” exhibit, on display at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art from April 2012 to September 2012, was important in understanding the interpretation of the Market Street Chinatown artifacts because it drew an a different kind of audience and was in a different kind of setting – a contemporary art museum. I sat in the ‘observation post’ (a white wooden chair on a small wooden pedestal in the gallery) when undertaking my ethnographic



Figure 4: Observation post at the "City Beneath the City" exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art

observations at the exhibit.

This observation post was a result of collaboration with the artist centered on transparency and the desire to incorporate my research into the design of the exhibit (see Figure 4).

Demographic information

Demographically, many different types of people came to this exhibit. This had the largest percentage of teenagers and young adults out of all the contexts that the Market Street Chinatown artifacts are in. As could be expected, the exhibit was most popular on weekends (when people had more time to visit) as well as during the First Friday program. Occurring on the first Friday of every month, this downtown San Jose (SoFa – South First) event includes galleries and restaurants staying open late, a street market, and bands. The galleries are open from 10am to 10pm on these days. Visitors spent on average four to five minutes going through the exhibit, including reading introductory and other informational panels on the walls. Many came because they had heard about the exhibit on the radio or in the newspaper. Others came to visit the ICA in general, not for a specific exhibit, including those that visited as part of First Fridays event.

The ratio of males to females was roughly equal. However, those age 20 – 30 years attended in much higher numbers than other age brackets: 70% of visitors were in this age range.

The same can be said for Caucasians versus other races and ethnicities: 70% were Caucasian.

(See Table 2)

Table 2: Demographic information from interviewed visitors to the “City Beneath the City” exhibit

Perceived Race	Number of Visitors
Caucasian	18
Latino/ Hispanic	6
Asian	0
African-American	0
Middle Eastern	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>26</u>

Age of Visitors	Number of Visitors
Under 10	2
10-20	0
20-30	18
30-40	1
40-50	1
50-60	4
60-80	0
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>26</u>

Gender	Number of Visitors
Female	14
Male	12
<i><u>Total</u></i>	<u>26</u>

Families with children under 18 were not as frequent as young adults. However, these families tended to go through the exhibits together. For example, a family of four visited. The mother read an introductory sign to the older girl, while the son and father joined to look at another introductory panel. They read out loud the first two introductory signs. In going through the exhibit, the mother was a little behind everyone and spent the most time at the cases containing small and daily objects; the boy stayed with a parent throughout the exhibit.

Additionally, many people came in groups, contributing to the social context that John Falk and Lynn Dierking discuss - the environment that is created by others around a specific visitor. The amount of people and previous relationships with these people that visitors come with influences how they experience the exhibit, including if they are comfortable or not with the others, if they are trying to make an impression, and how much time the group wants to spend in the exhibit.

Exhibit Design

What made this exhibit unique is that not everything is encased in vitrines. Some of the more delicate artifacts (such as the shoe fragments and small objects) were in vitrines, but the majority of the artifacts were simply on pedestals for display. This allowed for a different kind

of interaction; visitors were able to experience the objects on a closer and more personal level. Also unusual is that some of the artifacts (such as the bags of soil and fish vertebrae) are in original excavation or archaeological appropriate bags. This incorporates a historical and archaeological dimension into the story. These examples show the process of archaeology, whereas a lot of people (in terms of museum curation and showing artifacts) think only of the end result.

There is an interesting difference in the story that the curator is trying to tell and the way in which visitors actually experience the exhibit. Stephanie Moyer comments that, “exhibits serve as a translator between what curators and archaeologists want the public to know and how visitors understand, relate to, and apply this information” (Moyer 2007: 163-4). Take for example the direction in which visitors go through the exhibit. The museum is split into two different parallel galleries; upon entrance to the museum visitors can go either left to enter the “City Beneath the City” exhibit from the front, or go right to the other exhibit first and thus enter “City Beneath the City” from the back. Rene Yung designed the exhibit to have a subtle story if one entered from the front of the gallery. The exhibit reflects the structure of a house, with building materials presented first (windowpane glass and bricks), shoes (reminiscent of taking one’s shoes off before entering a house), a doorknob signaling entry into the house, and then small items, bottles, food remains (such as fish bones) and a table setting. Visitors often did not pick up on this indirect interpretation of the artifacts; it would be very difficult to understand this concept if one entered from the back of the gallery and went through the exhibit in the opposite way that the curator designed it.

Another difference between the curator’s design and visitor interpretation can be seen in the artifact map. This was a removable card that was located near the entrance and hung off of

the wall. This document included what the artifacts in each case were as the vitrines themselves did not have labels. This was intended for visitors that wanted to learn more about an object outside of its aesthetic appeal and evocation. However, I only saw one person during the time I spent doing my observations.

Trends in visitor experiences

The museum setting allowed visitors to go through at their own pace and look at what they were most interested in. Take for example a male and female Latino pair that came in, both in their fifties. They read the introductory panels together, but at different speeds. The man then spent most of the time looking at the pedestals that held small and daily objects, while the woman looked at both of these cases (from the other side) as well as the pedestal displaying glass bottles. Both spent time at the table in the corner with dishes, and talked quietly with each other. They walked through the exhibit mostly separately but joined together at the end to compare experiences.

Others walked through very quickly, some in under thirty seconds. None of these people wanted to talk with me about their experiences.

One of the most common sentiments of visitors was one of surprise upon learning about the Market Street Chinatown. Even many long-time residents of San Jose didn't know about its existence. This is a gap that Rene Yung sought to fix, saying that she wants to "contribute to public awareness of this overlooked history" ("Artist's Statement").

I also had some people specifically approach me to talk or ask a question, a situation that happened less frequently at the other contexts. This was because I was in a prominent position while sitting at the observation post; some perceived me as having authority while others were

simply interested in why I was there. A few people made wry comments or joked that I was part of the exhibit. This often led to them talking to me further about my project. This shows that they were interested in who I was and what my role was within the exhibit, and were comfortable approaching, joking, and talking with me. During times I was not occupying the chair, visitors sat down in it, either to observe people or fill out the community pages located near the chair.

Many visitors said that the table with the dishes set out in the corner was their favorite part. I think that people were drawn to these artifacts because exhibits can “frame objects, particularly curious ones like those recovered in archaeological investigations, to emphasize that real people lived in the past and that they, too, experienced prejudice, a feeling of insecurity, and a sense of community” (Moyer 2007: 2667). These dishes, in a familiar setting on the table, evoked a common experience that visitors connected with. Others commented that they particularly liked the printed words (taken from MSCAP publications) that wrapped around the vitrines.

Suggestions and Reactions

Visitors had various suggestions for improvements on what they weren’t getting out of the exhibit. The Latino couple mentioned in a previous example suggested showing some of the African-American influence and experience; they commented that it “seems to be missing from San Jose”. Other visitors included adding more material, while many commented that photographs (of people that used the artifacts or of the archaeological process) would help recreate the story better. Many also commented that they wanted to know more about the artifacts and wished that there were labels that explained what an object is, what it was used for, and where it came from. This was the most commonly echoed sentiment.

Additionally, visitors asked me various questions about the Market Street Chinatown and archaeology. For example, a mother asked if I knew how long the fire burned, how big it was, if anyone died, and where it moved to. Another visitor was interested in why some artifacts remained in almost perfect condition and others were shattered.

Why would visitors be so interested in the archaeological and historical dimensions of objects that are being presented in a contemporary art space? Such feelings show that people wanted to delve deeper than the purely aesthetic sense of the artifacts; they wanted to make the objects more personal by knowing more about the context from which they came and who would have used them. In doing so, the story of this Chinese community can be better understood and evokes a stronger emotional reaction from visitors.

As would be expected, many visitors commented on the intersection of art and archaeology. Many were surprised by it; a male in his twenties commented that “It’s not art or contemporary, but it’s local and that’s important”. A female in her forties somewhat angrily commented to another person with her, “This isn’t art!”

Overall, this exhibit elicited strong reactions out of many people, especially those who were particularly interested in the intersection of art and archaeology or those that came expecting something else entirely. Although the majority of people interviewed wanted more information (either through attached labels, photographs, or other forms), they still commented on the striking aesthetic appeal of the exhibit as well as what they *did* learn. Visitors were able to engage with the artifacts in the manner they wanted to in this context because there was room for multiple valid interpretations.

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY EVENTS

As previously mentioned, the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project has been putting on public archaeology events aimed at children four to ten years old since 2011. These public archaeology events are important because they allow the children (as well as their parents or guardians) to interact with the artifacts outside of the glass cases, allowing for a much more hands-on experience.

Demographic Information

Demographic information (see Table 3) shows that the majority of the visitors are Caucasian. They total over half of the visitors; at the April 2012 event they outnumbered other perceived races at a ratio of 2:1. Children under 10 years of age were also higher in attendance numbers; at the April 29, 2012 public event children under 10 far outnumbered those older than 10 at a ratio of roughly 5:1. There were also more adult females in attendance than males at a ratio of 3:2. Additionally, the racial groups with the lowest representation included African Americans and Middle Easterners. The groups that children came with were also recorded; many of those that came were with their immediate family – mother, father, brother, or sister. There were fewer examples of people with family friends, cousins, or school friends. This demographic data was taken only at the April 2012 public archaeology event. Every 45 minutes I recorded the number of people present that fit into each category. Thus, the data here is not meant to be all-encompassing, but rather representative of the whole.

Table 3: Demographic information from the April 29, 2012 public archaeology event

Perceived Race	Number of Visitors
Caucasian	42
Latino/ Hispanic	10
Asian	10
African-American	0
Middle Eastern	2
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<u>64</u>

Age of Children	Number of Children
Under 10	38
Over 10	7
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<u>45</u>

Gender of Adults	Number of Adults
Female	18
Male	12
<u><i>Total</i></u>	<u>30</u>

Influence and trends in visitor experience

The favorite station of children tended to be excavation and reconstruction. These were often closely connected in the children's' mind; many tried to fit together broken pieces found at

the excavation station without knowing that they would do this at a later station. These tended to be older children.

The way in which the students and other volunteers at the public archaeology events interact with the children shapes the way in which children undergo the ‘archaeological process’ and how they interpret the artifacts. For example, it influences the order in which the children go to the stations. Although the conversational approach is used, those that run the program still disseminate information in particular ways. At the welcome station, children are told that they can go to whichever station they want to and that the stations can be done in any order. Many go to the excavation station first, whether because this is what is most interesting to them or because it is the first station in their archaeology passport. At this and other stations, volunteers say different things when the children have completed the station. Some say that the children can go to any other station that they haven’t been to, while others point the children to the ‘next’ station in the archaeological process (excavation, screening, artifact identification, reconstruction, Chinese American Historical Museum if applicable). In this way, the program volunteers are sometimes creating authority in explicitly telling the children in which order to experience the stations.

Conversely, the children and their own background can also affect how they interpret and engage with the artifacts. A good example of this is age. Especially at the excavation station, older children seemed more involved than younger ones in learning about what a specific object was as well as thinking about the context these artifacts would have come from (a restaurant, a butcher, or a house). For example, I worked with a young brother and sister, both of whom were under ten years old. The boy was younger, about five years old, and was at the station with his mother first while his sister was somewhere else. Although I asked him questions about what he

was finding to see what he thought about the objects, he was too young and uninterested, and so he just played and dug in the dirt while uncovering artifacts.

His older sister then joined the others; she was more animated and seemed more engaged with the objects she was finding. She was also more intent on uncovering the objects instead of simply playing in the dirt. She asked me, "Did you find these objects in the ground?" I said yes and told her that they all came from a Chinatown in San Jose and they had been excavated. While digging, she uncovered an animal bone. The station encourages children to think about the contexts the objects came from and why they would end up in the 'trash pile' being excavated, so I asked her what size animal she thought it came from. She thought it was from a camel; I told her it was a good guess and that I thought it came from something that was about the size of a pig. I also asked her what kind of bone it was; because she didn't know I told her that I thought it was a shoulder bone and held it up to my own body to show her. She was very interested in the soy sauce pot (spouted jar), which she discovered contained five marbles when she turned it upside down. I asked what she thought it was. She smiled and guessed a cookie jar, and when I asked her to guess a second time she said a cup. I told her that it was probably a sauce jar, for soy sauce. The young girl also repeatedly showed her mother a blue overglaze ceramic fragment, saying, "Look what [brother's name] found!"

One can see here as well as from the later example of a seventh grade boy that that older children tend to understand the overall story that the project is trying to get them to understand. At the excavation station this takes the form of a trash pit and each square within it is a specific business or place's trash area. The older children are more able to make the connections between the broken artifacts they find and the original context in which it might have been

found. They are also more frequently able to connect an artifact to something in their own lives – cups being the most common.

The artifact identification station is another area in which the creation of knowledge can be examined, especially because children are encouraged to pick the object they want to work with and the conversational approach is used. At this station, children fill out a worksheet with questions about what the object is, its color, weight, size of the rim if applicable, and where it might have come from. There is also a space on the back to draw a picture. Children struggle with properly identifying objects, especially the soy sauce pot that is available to work with. At the April 2012 event, two children working together thought it was a tea kettle until I told them otherwise. At the next event in May, a new sheet was added to the station that includes pictures of the complete artifacts with their names underneath it. This makes identification much easier, especially for the soy sauce pot because it is already complete. No children I worked with afterwards misidentified the soy sauce pot after seeing it on the sheet, although some still incorrectly guessed before seeing the sheet. This is an example where authority comes from those that are running the event – we tell the children that this artifact is a soy sauce pot.

However, children also bring their own interpretations that they believe are correct. For example there was a seventh grade boy at artifact identification with his mother. He picked the soy sauce pot and very easily identified the name. He claimed it was metal - because “in China at the time they had gunpowder”. Even when another volunteer and I suggested it was pottery, he insisted it was metal. He also thought that it had no glaze or decoration, even though it matched the picture of brown glaze. He said that the picture (that we provided) was lighter, although he acknowledged that this may have been from the light of the flash or if the photograph was taken in sunlight. Thus, he circled both brown glaze and no decoration. He also

decided the artifact was not whole, instead marking it as 75-100% complete, because he said there was no lid. He said it needed a lid if you were pouring hot tea from it as he picked it up and mimed pouring tea, even though we repeatedly said it was most likely used for sauce. Thus, these public archaeology events are really a discussion about the artifacts rather than a one way street of knowledge from project personnel to the children.

Parental involvement

The artifact identification station is one of the stations that children tend to need the most help with, so volunteers are very involved in this station. The children often need help weighing and measuring the artifacts, or figuring out what the questions and answers actually mean. Because of this, this station is perhaps the most structured of the stations, with the children methodically going through the worksheet.

The parents, guardians, or adults that come with the children to the public archaeology events are another influence on the way in which children experience the artifacts. Their behavior ranges from very involved to very detached. Many parents of the younger children (those under four or five) participate in the stations right alongside their children. Parents prompt the children when answering questions, provide an example on how to do an activity, assist in filling out worksheets, and provide a lot of encouragement. Generally the level of parent participation decreases as age increases, although of course there are always exceptions.

Parents are most involved in the excavation and reconstruction stations. This may be because these are the stations that they are most interested in themselves, or because they see that their children are particularly enjoying the station and want to join in.

Children often take pride in what they have learned and accomplished during the public archaeology events. For example, a ten year old boy was proud that he had “set a record time for putting an artifact together” at the reconstruction station. The reconstruction station is the station where children most often expressed pride at being able to accomplish a task, perhaps because this activity can be time intensive and does involve a certain amount of talent and concentration. Children are especially proud when they complete one of the artifacts that volunteers tend to describe as bring more difficult. Many of the parents of children who are very involved in this station comment that their children enjoy puzzles.

Overall, various factors influence the way in which children experience the public archaeology events, including their age, volunteer patterns of speech, worksheets or background information provided, the flexibility of the conversational approach, and parental guidance.

Chapter 7

Future Directions

There are various future directions in which my research could go. Ultimately, I want my research and results to be directly applicable to both the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project (MSCAP) and the community partners involved in this research. I hope my research will allow partner organizations to understand how visitors truly interact with their events and programs and improve any areas which visitors suggest need improvement. The optimal result would allow for the expansion of programs to better suit the needs of both the community partners and the local community that they serve. I will disseminate my results to partners through copies of my honors thesis, executive summaries, meetings to discuss my research, and any other information in other formats they may need.

There are also specific areas of programs or events that each community partner organization can work to improve. I will divide suggestions into sections for the Chinese American Historical Museum (involving History San José and the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project [CHCP]), the “City Beneath the City” exhibit (involving the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art [ICA] and Rene Yung), and the MSCAP.

Chinese American Historical Museum

I will begin with the Chinese American Historical Museum, owned and operated by History San José and run in conjunction with the CHCP. Overall, the museum is doing an excellent job of drawing visitors in, teaching them about the Chinese history in the San Jose area

up to the present day, and engaging visitors with real objects. Many visitors leave the museum excited about what they saw and eager to talk about it with family and friends they may be with.

However, there are a couple of areas in which the school programs that use the Chinese American Historical Museum can be improved (this is limited to the “Coming to America: The Immigration Experience” program, as other school programs were outside of my research period). The information docents give children is inconsistent between docents, and does not reflect current research about local Chinese immigrants, especially the research done by the MSCAP, a community partner of both History San José and the CHCP. The different docents emphasize different areas of the museum or historical information about Chinese immigrants. This can be seen in the different attention given to the Market Street Chinatown case in the museum – one docent talked about the destruction of the Market Street Chinatown and the public archaeology events put on by the MSCAP, while another docent did not mention the Market Street Chinatown at all. Because children from the same school class may be divided into two different groups and taken through the museum by different docents and thus receive different information, later discussion in the classroom may be difficult and confusing as children are bringing different narratives to discuss. Students should be provided the same information to make their education more uniform and fair.

Additionally, children participating in this school program are being taught outdated information that is no longer correct. The most striking example of this is information about immigrant families. One of the docents told the children that only Chinese men immigrated to California to work, and that they didn’t bring their wives, children and family with them. However, research done on MSCAP artifacts have helped to disprove this common stereotype. The school programs would be able to educate children in a more accurate manner by

incorporating more current research into their teachings, especially research done by a community partner.

The best solution I have for this problem is to create a new docent information packet. This will serve to both ensure that the same information is being disseminated to all of the children in attendance, as well as incorporating up-to-date MSCAP research into the school programs. This would be relatively simply to produce, requiring collaboration between MSCAP, CHCP and History San José. It could be disseminated to the docents at no additional cost through email.

The experience of general visitors to the Chinese American Historical Museum can also be improved by making some small changes. As noted in the previous section, the majority of the people that visit the museum outside of school programs tend to be couples over 40 or young couples with their children. Perhaps more marketing attention could be given to drawing in more teenagers, young adults, and single people. This could be a coordinated effort between History San José and CHCP.

Additionally, visitors that talk with members of CHCP or other interpreters tend to be those that stay the longest. If CHCP is interested in getting people to stay longer in the museum and engage with the displayed objects in a more meaningful and significant way, more attention could be given to talking to more of the visitors that come through the museum. However, I realize that it may be difficult to find more people to volunteer on the weekends in the museum.

Similar to the suggestion for school programs that use the Chinese American Historical Museum, I believe that general visitors to the museum would benefit from the incorporation of the most current research being done on Chinese immigrants, especially by the MSCAP. A show-and-tell box may help to further engage visitors. It could include period pieces or real

artifacts (similar to the Feature 0 artifacts used in public archaeology events which have little or no research value) and allow visitors to hold the objects, thus drawing them more completely into the experience. The integration of current research and new visitor attractions into the Chinese American Historical Museum will serve to attract even more people to the museum and the rich history it presents.

Public Archaeology Events

The public archaeology events held by the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project have done an excellent job so far in exposing children to archaeology and the story of the Market Street Chinatown. Project personnel are pleased with the amount of visitors that come through, students express excitement about the events, and visitors (especially the children) enjoy themselves while learning. There are opportunities for change and improvement in the future, especially because it is a relatively new program and it is easier to implement changes here than in a museum exhibit. Additionally, student volunteers are highly encouraged to think about and implement changes; as a result the program is flexible and accustomed to slightly changing stations to improve them.

One way in which the public archaeology events can improve is to widen the audience that generally attends these events. As noted in Chapter 6, many children that come are with their immediate family. The MSCAP could expand their marketing to encourage extended families and friends to attend. One way to achieve this would be to reach out to local groups, such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, the Boys & Girls Club, and children's sports leagues to encourage children to come together as a group.

The opportunities for very young children (those under four) to engage with the artifacts can be improved. At such a young age, children do not necessarily understand what is going on or what archaeology is, but their presence is still important. A suggestion for expansion is to provide coloring pages of items or pictures that are related to archaeology or Chinese immigrants. Young children enjoy coloring and this would be a good way to entertain them without trying to explain the complexities of the history of the Market Street Chinatown.

Additionally, more historical references and information could be included in the program for older children and parents that attend. The volunteers and program coordinators have recognized this as an area that could be improved. It is more difficult to incorporate this part of the MSCAP into the event because it is less tangible than the artifacts that are used in the stations. Suggestions include bringing books (such as Connie Young Yu's *Chinatown San Jose, USA*), pictures or posters for them to look at. This would serve to further engage all of the visitors that come to these events, thus enriching the positive experience that the majority of current visitors have.

“City Beneath the City”: Art and Archaeology

The future directions and suggestions for the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art and the “City Beneath the City” exhibit by Rene Yung are different because the exhibit is no longer at the ICA and is currently on temporary display at the Stanford Archaeology Center. While suggestions cannot be applied to this exhibit in particular, perhaps this experience can be used by those interested in future collaborations between art and archaeology. I believe the key is an open and trusting relationship. Rene Yung worked closely with various members of the MSCAP, and as a result both sides were able to voice their concerns and create a collaborative

exhibit. Such collaborations are crucial because they bring a new perspective to both art and archaeology and new ideas about how to experience archaeology. This helps to engage groups of the public that may not normally come to an archaeology-specific event.

Eventually, I would like my research to be disseminated to other public archaeology groups and museums that exhibit archaeology or local history. Although my research is not as directly applicable to their collections and programs as compared to my community partners, I still want my results to be useful to others in similar fields. This has already begun through my past presentations both small and large, including at the Symposium for Undergraduate Research and Public Service at Stanford University in October 2012 and the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project session at the Society for California Archaeology's annual meeting in April 2013. I also contributed to the MSCAP annual report in fall of 2012 and my thesis will be published on the MSCAP website. I plan to try to publicize my research in either an archaeology or museum magazine. This would allow my research to reach to widest range of audience possible.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Overall, the way in which the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project's (MSCAP) artifacts are displayed and presented to the public has a large effect on the way in which the public interprets the objects, history of the Market Street Chinatown and the story of Chinese immigrants in the area.

Central to this is the level of accessibility between the artifacts and the public. The more removed the artifacts are from the audience – if they are behind glass cases or not the main focus of the event or exhibit - the less time visitors will spend looking at or discussing the artifacts, and the less engaged they will be. This can be seen in the different contexts that the Market Street Chinatown artifacts are presented in. At the Chinese American Historical Museum, MSCAP artifacts are presented in a typical museum exhibit style: they are behind a glass case, labels briefly explain what the object is, and there are small textual and image panels throughout the case that tell the story of the Market Street Chinatown. This case is just one of several on the first floor of the museum dedicated to other topics about Chinese immigrants and their culture. My research shows that visitors did not spend a lot of time looking at and talking about these objects. The majority of visitors to the museum did not look at the case, and of those that did less than 25% spent more than a minute reading the labels and looking at the objects.

In contrast to this is the “City Beneath the City” exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art. This differed from traditional museum exhibitions in that many objects were not enclosed behind glass – only small or fragile items were within glass vitrines. All other

objects were simply on pedestals, allowing for a more intimate viewing by visitors.

Additionally, there were no labels associated directly with the objects themselves. Instead, an optional artifact map was available that had information regarding each artifact. In this unusual environment which juxtaposed art and archaeology, visitors spent more time engaging with and talking about the artifacts than at the Chinese American Historical Museum.

Of the three distinct field site contexts in which my research took place, the public was most engaged with artifacts at the public archaeology events held by the MSCAP. The vast majority of visitors stayed for over half an hour, and children and parents were able to physically engage with the artifacts, unlike the other contexts. Children learned about the archaeological process through which artifacts are found and cared for, not just the historical or aesthetic value placed upon them. Children asked far more questions at the public archaeology events than the other contexts and took a lot of new knowledge away. This context also had the largest amount of talking, both within groups of visitors and between visitors and those in an authority position (program volunteers). The conversational approach advocated for and used by project personnel allows for a more informal, relaxed environment and exchange of ideas.

This research is important not only for the MSCAP but also for its community partners and beyond. Community partners will be able to see how the public engages with their events and exhibits, with particular attention to what is working very well and what areas could use improvement. Changing some facets will improve the visitors' experience; this in turn will hopefully bring more people to the events and exhibits, thus increasing the amount of people aware of community partners and their goals.

My research can also help improve public archaeology and the way in which archaeologists think about presenting their material to the public in general. Although the public

is not always given the careful attention it deserves within archaeology, attention to the public is increasing. Archaeologists have a duty to conserve artifacts for future generations and make objects and information about them readily available to the public. This cannot always happen, albeit in a timely manner, due to time and resource constraints. However, public programs and exhibits can increase public awareness about a particular field site, thus increasing attention and helping educate the public about specific region or type of artifacts. In some areas, it may help decrease problems such as looting or amateur excavations as attention is brought to the importance of a field site and proper handling of artifacts. Public archaeology can also bring forward sometimes-unheard voices or stories that may not be well known but are important to an area.

Research such as this can help pinpoint what aspects of an exhibit or event most engage the public, what people are drawn to, the different forms that public archaeology and outreach can take, and the role of authority within such contexts. It is my hope that my research will help other archaeologists and programs in creating and improving their own public archaeology programs.

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Appendix

The appendix includes supplementary materials relating to the events and exhibits containing artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project. The archaeology passport, excavation worksheet, artifact identification worksheet, and history worksheet are used at public archaeology events. The artifact map comes from the “City Beneath the City” exhibit at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art.



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Market Street Chinatown

The Market Street Chinatown was the first Chinatown in San Jose. It was founded in 1862 and was burned down in 1887. More than 1,000 people lived in the Chinatown.

In 1985, the remains of the Chinatown were found during a building project in San Jose. Archaeologists excavated the Chinatown to learn more about it.

What is archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of artifacts, or items left behind that tell about past human activities or culture.

Go from station to station to learn about archaeology and earn the title of Junior Archaeologist!



The tools of an archaeologist

Visit the Ng Shing Gung Museum



Go visit the Ng Shing Gung Museum to learn more about the history of Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Americans in the Santa Clara Valley and the Market Street Chinatown.

Can you find artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown in the Ng Shing Gung Museum?

Put your
Museum
Sticker here!

Reconstruction Activity

We put the pieces back together so we can study the whole object. What things can you learn from a whole object that you can't learn from the pieces?

Most artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown are in small pieces because people threw them away after the object broke.



Incense burner put back together by archaeologists

Put your
Reconstruction Stick-
er here!

Try to put the broken
items back together.

Excavation Activity

Archaeologists excavate to find the things that people used in the past. How do you think these objects ended up in the ground?



An excavated trash pit

The people who lived at the Market Street Chinatown threw trash into deep pits. In 1985, archaeologists discovered these trash pits during construction in downtown San Jose.

Go learn how
archaeologists
“excavate” or
dig up artifacts.

Put your Excavation
Sticker here!

Screening Activity



Tiny artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown

Even small objects provide important clues to life in the past. Why does screening help us find these objects?

Little artifacts at the Market Street Chinatown include fish bones, buttons, gaming pieces, and small pieces of dishes and bottles.

Put your Screening Sticker here!

Go see what artifacts you can find when you screen through the dirt.

Identification Activity

Most things that archaeologists find are broken. How can we identify the original objects from these pieces?

People living at the Market Street Chinatown used objects from all over the world. The collection includes artifacts made in China, Korea, Japan, Germany, England, and all over the United States.



Can you guess what these objects might have been?

See if you can figure out what the objects were before they were broken.

Put your Identification Sticker here!

Excavation Worksheet



Name: _____

EXCAVATION WORKSHEET

You are digging in a **TRASH PIT** where the people from four different buildings threw away their trash. Can you figure out what the buildings were from the trash that the people left behind? Draw or write in what you find in each location below to help you.

The buildings might have been a **HOME**, a **SCHOOL**, a **STORE**, a **RESTAURANT** or a **BUTCHER SHOP**. Think about the trash that people might have thrown away from each of these buildings.

Unit 1	Unit 2
Unit 3	Unit 4

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Artifact Identification Worksheet



Name: _____

ARTIFACT IDENTIFICATION SHEET

1	Site: <u>San Jose Market Street Chinatown</u>						
2	What is it? _____ 						
3	<p>What is it made of? (circle one)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>• Pottery </td> <td>• Bone </td> <td>• Stone </td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Wood </td> <td>• Shell </td> <td>• Metal </td> </tr> </table>	• Pottery 	• Bone 	• Stone 	• Wood 	• Shell 	• Metal 
• Pottery 	• Bone 	• Stone 					
• Wood 	• Shell 	• Metal 					
4	<p>What kind of decoration does it have? (circle one)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>• Four Seasons</td> <td>• Bamboo</td> <td>• White Ware</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Celadon</td> <td>• Brown Glaze</td> <td>• None</td> </tr> </table>	• Four Seasons	• Bamboo	• White Ware	• Celadon	• Brown Glaze	• None
• Four Seasons	• Bamboo	• White Ware					
• Celadon	• Brown Glaze	• None					
5	How much does it weigh? _____ Grams 						
6	<p>How big is it?</p> <p>• Bowls, cups, plates: _____ centimeters in diameter <i>Hint: With the rim chart, you only need a little piece of the rim to figure out how big the entire dish was!</i></p> <p>• All other items: _____ centimeters in length</p>						





Reprinted courtesy of the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project

History Worksheet for the Chinese American Historical Museum Station



Name: _____

HISTORY WORKSHEET

1	<p>Can you find the Market Street Chinatown on the timeline?</p> <p>What was going on in the rest of the world at this time?</p> <p>_____</p>
2	<p>How many Chinatowns have there been in San Jose through the years? (circle one)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 4 5 6</p>
3	<p>The original Ng Shing Gung Temple had many different uses. What were they? (circle the answer)</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>• Hostel</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>• School</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>• Town Hall</p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>• Temple</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>• All of the above</p> </div> </div>
4	<p>Can you find one object that is LIKE one you have at home? What is it?</p> <p>_____</p>
5	<p>Can you find one object that is DIFFERENT from anything you have at home? What is it?</p> <p>_____</p>

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“City Beneath the City” Artifact Map



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