

An Examination of Gaming Pieces in the Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Assemblage

“At night there were arched rings of lights above the doorways of the gambling houses. Noise and excitement accompanied the games, and the gambling bosses arranged for tea, coffee and snacks to be brought to their patrons. Every evening freshly baked cupcakes were delivered to the gambling houses. After Chinese school some of the children would stand at a certain corner on top of a bench where a delivery man with bakery tray carried on his head came around. Art Eng remembers, ‘we’d lift up the cloth and pick off some of the goodies...’” (Yu 1991:72)

The above quotation, taken from Connie Young Yu’s Chinatown, San Jose, USA, exemplifies how gaming was incorporated into the everyday lives of the Chinese living in the Heinlerville Chinatown. Like the quote above, this project attempts to illustrate the social relevance of gaming and gambling artifacts found in the Market Street Chinatown, San Jose, California. What, for instance, can the spatial distribution of gaming artifacts tell us about gaming activities? Are large quantities of gaming artifacts found in residential, communal, or business areas? Along the same lines, where aren’t gaming pieces located in the Market Street Chinatown? Arguing against Fred W. Mueller’s conclusion that “spatial analysis reveals very little regarding gaming locations” (Mueller 1987:391), I intend to present a number of theories on how space can be a useful tool in examining an archaeological assemblage with relatively little contextual information. Before turning to the artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown to address these questions, I will first situate gambling practices within a historical context. I will then present my methods of identifying gaming artifacts and detail what was found in the assemblage. Finally, I will conclude with an interpretation of the spatial layout of gaming artifacts and propose ideas for further analysis of gambling practices in the Market Street Chinatown.

Historical Background

The Market Street Chinatown was a gathering site for the numerous Chinese immigrants living in and around Santa Clara County between the years of 1872 and 1887 (Yu 1991:29):

“It was the headquarters for the nearly three thousand Chinese working in Santa Clara County. Chinatown served as the community for the Chinese who worked on farms and in white households throughout the county. They were drawn to the theatre, the temple and gambling houses” (Yu 1991:29)

In many ways, the Market Street Chinatown was a safe haven from racist outsiders. While outside of Chinatowns, the Chinese were harassed and even physically assaulted (Yu 1991:27). Many outsiders went out of their way to belittle every aspect of Chinese culture, including their “speech, dress, and cultural habits” (Yu 1991:29). The media also played a large part in insulting and stereotyping the Chinese in San Jose: “All news stories on the Chinese were negative, impressing upon readers images of opium-smoking, gambling, heathen practices and attempted bribery of police officers” (Yu 1991:29). One San Jose journalist wrote, “I used to throw rocks at them myself. It was easy to do when there were other boys doing it. We didn’t do it to hurt them, just to scare them” (Yu 1991:28).

The anti-Chinese movement in California allowed “racist attitudes and ridicule of the Chinese” to become “part of popular vocabulary” (Yu 1991:27) and can ultimately be attributed to the Market Street Chinatown’s destruction. On May 4, 1887, the Market Street Chinatown was destroyed due to arson. As the town’s inhabitants rushed to a gambling house to hear the results of a lottery announced, Ah Toy Alley was set ablaze (Yu 1991:29). The fire was rapid, “leaping from one store to the next and soon consumed the entire quarter” (Yu 1991:29). Clearly

the Chinese were not welcome in San Jose, but with the help of John Heinlen, the Chinese would once again have a place to commune. The Woolen Mills Chinatown and the Heinlenville Chinatown arose out of the ashes, providing homes and jobs for the once homeless and unemployed Chinese from the Market Street Chinatown (Yu 1991).

Gaming was an important part of social networking in overseas Chinatowns. In Down by the Station: Los Angeles Chinatown 1880-1933, Roberta Greenwood describes gambling halls as spaces of “excitement and release...where games familiar from the homeland were played” (Greenwood 1996:94). According to Sandy Lydon’s Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region, gambling practices are illustrative of the Chinese world-view of life:

“In the traditional Chinese view of the universe, fate’s hand was at the tiller and life was a gamble. For most nineteenth-century Chinese it was better to be born lucky than clever. The Chinese courted fate through astrologers, soothsayers, geomancers, and gambling.... Wherever a large group of Chinese laborers congregated, somewhere, somehow, gambling went on. Any event could be bet on, but the most attractive bets (and games) revolved around randomness rather than skill. Nothing could substitute for luck” (Lydon 1985:204) Mueller also describes gaming as a way in which “a sense of cohesiveness and companionship” could be established amongst Chinatown inhabitants and Chinese coming from outside the Riverside Chinatown: “Commiserating over losses or congratulating on winnings fostered new friendships and brought, for a time, the feeling of being ‘at home’” (Mueller 1987:386). Euro-Americans looked down upon gaming, quite possibly because it did indeed foster a sense of ethnic and social solidarity amongst the Chinese. Ironically, the outsiders who shunned gambling often ventured to Chinatowns to join in on the fun: “An observer recalled, ‘In those [early] days gambling games were conducted in little rear rooms. Many thousands of dollars in gold passed

hands - often from the white hand to the yellow - and often, too, from yellow to white” (Lydon 1985:206). Yu likewise notes Euro-Americans’ patronage of Chinese gaming halls: “Housewives and even teenaged boys bought tickets at Chinese laundries and American cigar stores, and up until the early 1930s there were active games throughout San Jose” (Yu 1991:76).

In 1897, the city of San Jose passed an ordinance to prevent the Chinese from “keeping or visiting gambling rooms” (Yu 1991:75). The ordinance also made purchasing or possessing “lottery tickets” illegal (Yu 1991:75). This ordinance did little to change gaming practices in the Heinlerville Chinatown. Art Eng’s father, for instance, operated a Heinlerville gambling house that was never raided by the police: “The Chinatown gambling establishments were all operating and knowingly under the noses of the police...I have never heard of a raid on a gambling place although it was supposedly illegal” (Yu 1991:74). City officials and police officers were frequently accused by Euro-American outsiders as well as by the Chinese inhabitants of Chinatowns of receiving payoffs from Chinese gambling businesses operators (Yu 1991:75). In 1900, gambling was officially outlawed in California. Prior to the 1900 census, gambling was seen as a legal, though discouraged activity: “By the 1900 census no Chinese listed his occupations as “gambler” or operator of an opium shop as he may have openly declared to the census taker in 1880” (Yu 1991:59). Gambling, nonetheless, continued to play a major role in Chinatowns throughout the early twentieth century (Yu 1991:76).

Contrary to the common notion that Chinese gamblers lost “large sums of money in the blink of an eye” (Pan 1990:122), the games of Fan-Tan and pak kop piu involved little risk. According to Lydon, the “two most popular Chinese gambling games in California in the

nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries were Fan-Tan and pak kop piu” (Lydon 1985:204-205). Pak kop piu can be translated as “white pigeon ticket” (Culin 1891:6) and is a lottery game. Culin details how pak kop piu got its name in a quite complicated manner:

“In China, where lotteries are illegal, they are frequently carried on among the hills near the cities, and it is said that pigeons are used to convey the tickets and winning number between the offices and their patrons; whence the name applied first to the tickets and from them to the lottery itself” (Culin 1891:7)

According to Greenwood, the “lottery required the player to pick from the first eighty characters in a classical poem, and the proprietors randomly called twenty characters twice a day” (Greenwood 1996:94). Today’s popular game, keno, was derived from pak kop piu (Yu 1991:71) Mueller describes Fan-Tan (Fan means to “turn over” a bowl or cup and Tan means “to spread out” the stones/discs) in detail:

“A banker places a quantity of small stones, coins, or beans under a bowl, while the players place bets on one of four squares, numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. Then the bowl is removed and the stones are removed, four at a time, until there are four or less remaining. Winners are those who placed bets on the numbered square which corresponds to the actual number of remaining stones. Bets are typically paid out 1 to 1. There are 1 to 4 odds to win a game of Fan-Tan, making it a popular game with a low risk factor” (Mueller 1987:385)

Wei-chi, known by the Japanese as “Go,” was also popular in overseas Chinatowns; wei-chi is a two-player strategy game where the goal is to “prevent the opponent from further play by surrounding his or her zhu” (Praetzelis and Praetzelis 1997:201).

Charles Caldwell Dobie’s 1936 San Francisco Chinatown serves as a prime example of the way in which Euro-Americans sensationalized gambling practices: “When the gambling insanity

was at its height, the Abbe reports that even just men cast aside all sense of obligation. When their money was gone they offered their houses; when that was lost, they put their lands; if fortune still forsook them, they pledged even their wives” (Dobie 1936:167). Many Euro-Americans saw gambling as “one of the distinctive traits of the Chinese” (Culin 1891:15); Dobie, for instance, says that “practically every Chinese is an inveterate gambler. No people work harder and longer and more persistently at their tasks and no people dissipate what the sweat of their brows has earned so swiftly and completely over the gaming table” (Dobie 1936:167). Despite these negative portrayals of gambling in Chinatowns, winnings were often used to support community projects. In the 1891 The Gambling Games of the Chinese in America, Stuart Culin writes that Chinese gamblers were known to put their winnings towards the building of religious shrines and “temples in San Francisco” (Culin 1891:17). Yu similarly details “slips of paper pasted” on Heinlerville’s bulletin board which “indicate that seventeen gambling houses gave from five to ten percent of their annual income to the upkeep of the temple and maintenance of the Chinese school” (Yu 1991:76).

Identifying Gaming Pieces in Overseas Chinatowns: Archaeological and Historical Sources

Clearly gaming played multiple political, social, cultural, and economical roles in numerous overseas Chinatown communities. But how can gaming artifacts illuminate these varying narratives? This question cannot be answered without first investigating how archaeologists have identified gaming artifacts in overseas Chinatowns. Before delving into the gaming artifacts found in the Market Street Chinatown, I will hence describe the various gaming

artifacts associated with overseas Chinatowns.

The most popular gaming artifact found in overseas Chinese communities are “zhu discs,” (zhu is the Chinese symbol for “bead” (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997:201)) which are used in the games of Fan-Tan and wei-chi (Allen 2002:133, Greenwood 1996:94, Wegars 2001:26, Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997:201, Mueller 1987:385). Greenwood describes zhu discs as follows: “1.1 cm in diameter and approximately 0.5 cm in thickness. They tend to be slightly convex on one side and flat on the reverse” (Greenwood 1996:94). Zhu discs come in a variety of colors, including white, green, blue, red or black, and are typically made out of glass (Greenwood 1996:94). As Wegars points out, zhu discs which at first appear black may actually be green, red, or blue when held against a bright light (Wegars 2001:77).

Rebecca Allen’s excavation of the Woolen Mills Chinatown uncovered 6 white zhu pieces in a large trash pit and two of the same color from a cooking feature (Allen 2002:133). At the Los Angeles Chinatown, Greenwood found over 1300 zhu discs, “878 (64%) are white or clear as opposed to 499 (36%) which are dark” (Greenwood 1996:94). The Riverside Chinatown also had an unusually large amount of zhu discs: “659 chu of hand-formed glass account for 95% of the total gaming assemblage recovered at Riverside; 361 (55%) are white, 289 (44%) are black, and 8 (1%) are red” (Mueller 1987:387). Priscilla Wegars’ study of a Chinatown in Centerville, Idaho, mentions the appearance of zhu discs but does not go into further numerical detail (Wegars 2001:77). Zhu discs were also found at the Praetzellis’ excavation of an overseas Chinese community in Sacramento, California. Here, 3 black and 6 white zhu discs were found (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997:201). In addition, an unnamed amount of white zhu discs were found in

relation to Chinese coins at the Woodland Opera House (Farris 1984:148).

Gaming artifacts such as dominos, chess pieces, lottery tickets, and dice are found less frequently than zhu discs. At the Los Angeles Chinatown, 153 dominos made of “dense dark wood” were found and are described as follows: “The dots on the obverse were red, white, or both; the reverse was plain in all cases. The pieces frequently split along the long axis. The corners of most pieces were rounded. The dominoes ranged in size from 2.4 x 7.2 x 0.8 cm to 2.7 x 7.7 x 1.1 cm” (Greenwood 1996:95). An unnamed amount of similarly constructed dominoes were found at the Woodland Opera House (Farris 1984:148), and 17 dominos were found at the Riverside Chinatown (Mueller 1987:391). Two chess pieces, both “stamped with the Chinese character translated as horse” (Mueller 1987:391, Greenwood 1996:95), were found at the Los Angeles and Riverside Chinatowns. An artifact described only as a “chessman” was found at the Woodland Opera House (Farris 1984:148). Two lottery tickets were discovered “prior to the demolition of the last remaining structures” of the Riverside Chinatown in 1976 (Mueller 1987:390). No other archaeological reports mention lottery tickets, probably due to the fact that these artifacts are made of paper and disintegrate easily.

Dice were mentioned in only two archaeological reports. Ten dice were found in the Riverside Chinatown and are detailed as follows: “Ninety percent of the 10 dice found came from China. This was discerned by the fact that Chinese dice exhibit an oversized concavity for the number ‘1’. One die still retains red paint in the depression with numbers 2 to 6 marked in black” (Mueller 1987:390). Mueller states that Chinese dice come in two sizes and are made of bone or ivory: “the smaller averages 6.5 to 8 mm; the larger averages 11.5 to 12.5 mm” (Mueller

1987:390). 10 dice were likewise found at the Los Angeles Chinatown (Greenwood 1996:94-95).

Finally, there were multiple unidentifiable artifacts associated with gaming in several of the archaeological reports, including stones shaped as discs, and coins, buttons, and beans located in the same proveniences as gaming artifacts.

The Assemblage: Gaming Artifacts in the Market Street Chinatown

The next step in my project was to use this data to identify and catalogue gaming artifacts in 86-36 and 85-31. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the distribution of the minimum number of individual gaming artifacts found in 85-31 and 86-36's features. Figure 3 illustrates the total minimum number of individual gaming artifacts found in the entire collection. In total, 94 zhu discs (Figure 4), 8 marbles (Figure 5), 5 dice (Figure 6), 5 dominos (Figure 7), 2 chess pieces (Figure 8), and 1 indefinite artifact (Figure 9) were found in the Market Street Chinatown. A total of 68 white zhu discs were found in the assemblage, whereas only 18 black and 4 green zhu discs were found. Figure 10 is an 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map that shows where gaming artifacts were found in the Market Street Chinatown.

The collection contained a number of intriguing gaming artifacts. Figure 9 is what Greenwood identified as a possible Fan-Tan counter, although it could have also served as an insert into several kinds of ornamental things (jewelry, for instance) (Greenwood 2004). A clear disc of the same size and shape was also found in the assemblage. Praetzellis and Praetzellis' report also mentions a similar object: "a colorless glass disk was recovered from the sub-1885 fire burn surface. This piece is different from the previously identified zhu in that it is flat on both sides and is significantly bigger, with a diameter of 11/16 inch. Although its exact purpose is

unknown, the disk may also have served as a gaming piece" (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997:201). In addition, one of the two chess pieces (Figure 8) found in the collection features a Chinese character which awaits translation.

Initial Interpretations: Analyzing Gaming Pieces within their Spatial Contexts

When first looking at Figure 10, one assumes that gaming artifacts were widely distributed across the Market Street Chinatown. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that gaming artifacts are clustered in certain areas of the community. Working under this assumption, I will now present a preliminary interpretation of the spatial distribution of gaming artifacts.

Feature 24 in 85-31, located beneath the Dexter Livery, is what appears to be a communal outdoor depositional area next to Chinese tenements. Feature 24 is distant from the business sector of Ah Toy Alley, and is not as crowded as most of the other areas in the Market Street Chinatown. Laffey notes that if this feature "postdates 1876," it "may be associated with residential or wagon making uses" (Laffey 1994:17). 6 of the 8 marbles found in the Market Street Chinatown collection were discovered here, which suggests that this was an open space where children could play and families could mingle.

Features 12, 13, 18, and 20 in 85-31 are clustered together in an open space next to a storage house and shed (Laffey 1994:15). Feature 12 contained 1 white zhu piece, Feature 13 had 3 white zhu pieces, and Feature 18 had 1 die, 3 white zhu pieces, and 3 black zhu pieces . Kathryn Flynn and Bill Roop implied that Feature 13 was a "prostitution crib because it was located near Ah Toy Alley, an area of prostitution houses named after Madame Ah Toy" (Flynn

and Roop 2004), although this information contradicts the Laffey's historical research. Laffey explains Features 18, 18B, and 20 in great detail:

“The Chinese features include five wood lined pits. Three of these features (20,21,22) were covered by structures in 1884. These features may represent an early, less densely developed period in the 1872-1887 Chinatown. This parcel was leased to Ah Choy and Ah Sam in 1873, and to Nam Kee in 1874. The individuals could not be positively identified. Nam Kee may be Sam Wy Kee, a prominent Chinese merchant who was listed in various records from 1870 through 1888. Feature 18 was directly adjacent to the southeast corner of the Bernal adobe and may be directly associated with the Chinese in this building” (Laffey 1994:15)

Feature 18B, which was a part of Feature 18, contained 2 wooden dominos and 1 zhu piece.

Finally, Feature 20 contained one black zhu piece. Within this open space (where Features 12, 13, 18, and 20 in 85-31 were located), a total of 12 (7 white, 4 black, and one color unknown) zhu pieces, 1 die, and 2 dominos were found.

This area can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, gamblers, on their way to gambling halls in Ah Toy Alley, accidentally dropped these pieces. Since dice and dominos are extremely valuable pieces (dominoes, when used in the game of Fan-Tan, were worth \$50 (Culin 1891:4)), it is unlikely that these artifacts were purposely deposited. Game play also often depends on these pieces, whereas zhu pieces can and were often substituted with other objects such as white and black buttons. Second, a gambling hall was extremely close to this open space and dumped its trash in this area. As mentioned earlier, outsiders commonly policed gaming and gambling. In an attempt to keep gambling activities out of sight and inconspicuously hidden, gaming activities may have taken place in the shed or storage room right next to this site.

Feature 18 in 86-36 is yet another feature that is somewhat far from the busy, business areas of the town. Like Feature 24 (85-31), it is also located in a residential area behind the Chinese Theatre. A large amount of gaming artifacts were discovered in this feature: 2 burnt dominos, 14 white zhu discs, and 9 black zhu discs, one green unknown disc (see Figure 9). The closest feature to Feature 18 is Feature 6 in 86-36, where a smaller amount of gaming pieces were discovered. Gaming activities may have taken place in between these two deposits, as both features are located along Ah Toy Alley.

Features 1 and 2 in 85-31 are located nearly next to each other in Chinese tenement housing. According to Laffey, the deposits may be associated with the following historical periods (Laffey 1994:17):

1809-1846	Alviso/Bernal occupation
1846-1875	Washington Inn, American/Hispanic occupation
1875-1900	Covered by Dexter Livery, feature may be incorrectly mapped
1900-1920	Vacant, unknown uses
1920-1960s	Covered by Armoy Hall, feature may be incorrectly mapped

Only 1 black zhu piece was found in Feature 1, and only 3 zhu pieces were found in Feature 2.

Since black and colored zhu pieces are pricier than white zhu pieces (white zhu pieces were each worth \$1.00 while black zhu pieces were \$5.00 each (Culin 1891:41)), it is quite possible that these pieces were accidentally dropped by gamblers heading to the gambling halls in and around Ah Toy Alley.

Features 5, 7, and 10 in 86-36 are clustered around a shed in the Market Street Chinatown. Flynn and Roop interpreted Feature 5 as a “major site of communal activities;” it is near “pig roasting ovens and could contain debris primarily from communal food preparation and

consumption” (Flynn and Roop 2004) Feature 5 was no doubt a site of importance, as it contained 50 zhu discs (38 white, 3 green, and 4 black), 2 dice, and 1 chess piece. Feature 10 contains the only other chess piece in the collection as well as 1 white zhu piece. In Feature 7, 2 marbles and 6 white zhu pieces were found. It appears as though this area of the Market Street Chinatown was a central hub of activity and/or depositional processes. 100% of the chess pieces (2) found in the collection and over 60% of the zhu discs in the collection (57 zhu discs) are from this area. Furthermore, 2 of the assemblage’s 6 marbles and 2 of the 5 collection’s dice were discovered here. This Feature may have acted as an important depositional space, as it is far from tenement housing and major businesses. Since the Market Street Chinatown was an extremely compact and highly populated community, this site may have been one of the only depositional options. This was probably a prime location for such activity, as the odor would most likely be unable to reach the residential and business areas.

Feature 6, 86-36, is situated in Ah Toy Alley and is described as follows:

“Feature 6, a circular Chinese trash lens, was located very close to the intersection of lots 9, 2, and 3. This feature was located under the southeastern unit in the 1871-1887 Brick Chinatown. Again depending the temporal chronology of the artifacts it could be associated with either of the two Chinatowns that developed on this lot. Both were destroyed by fire, and the feature could have been a demolition layer resulting from either of these events” (Laffey 1994:8)

Only 3 zhu pieces (1 white, 1 dark (possibly a stone shaped to appear as though it is a zhu piece), and 1 green) were recovered from Feature 6. The lack of additional zhu pieces and the presence of a normally expensive green zhu piece suggest that the artifacts were accidentally deposited. This interpretation may be challenged once all of Feature 6 is catalogued and the

pieces can be considered contextually.

Feature 20 in 86-36 is also located in the middle of Ah Toy Alley. Two of the assemblage's 5 dice were found in Feature 20. Again, due to the limited information available in the excavation records, I am uncertain as to what this feature is and why 2 dice were deposited at this location. Because dice were less replaceable than zhu pieces, it appears as though these artifacts were accidentally deposited into the archaeological record. Feature 20 is relatively close to Features 10, 7, and 5 (all in 86-36), so it seems justifiable to conclude that gambling took place somewhere in between these features.

The large amount of zhu pieces in the assemblage can indicate a number of things. First, Fan-Tan is popular game that could possibly represent the Chinese's maintenance of homeland and cultural ties. By engaging in traditional Chinese games such as Fan-Tan and wei-chi, the Chinese could assert and maintain their cultural identity. Moreover, zhu game pieces are adaptable. The game does not depend on the shape or marking of the piece (such as chess pieces, dominos, dice). Lastly, zhu discs may have been less expensive and easier to purchase than dominos, dice, and checker pieces.

In summation, the two major sites of gaming artifacts, Features 12, 13, 18, and 20 in 85-31 and Features 5, 7, and 10 in 86-36, tend to be centered around sheds as well as communal and open space areas in the Market Street Chinatown. Both clusters are also somewhat distant from tenant housing and close to Ah Toy Alley. This suggests a number of things. First, gambling was located in the central part of the town, Ah Toy Alley, and trash was deposited away from Ah Toy Alley in open spaces behind the busy alleyways. Second, gambling was conducted in sheds

to keep it hidden from nosey outsiders and policemen. Third, gaming activities often took place in outdoor, communal areas where families gathered and shared food. This theory challenges the notion that gambling took place in isolated “opium dens” or gambling halls and suggests that gaming played a role in family life and in nurturing community relationships. A summary of the gaming artifacts found within the Market Street Chinatown can be viewed in Figure 11.

Now that I have covered all of the features that contained gaming artifacts, I believe it is important to address where gaming artifacts were not found in the community. With the exceptions of lots 8 and 2 (Figure 12), Flynn and Roop found archaeological deposits in almost every part of the town. Gaming artifacts are not found near the majority of tenant housing complexes, nor are they found near the center of commerce and Ah Toy Alley. What this preliminary analysis reveals is that actual sites of gaming activities (gambling halls, for example) are nearly impossible to locate without having a basic knowledge of depositional processes in overseas Chinatowns. While I have presented several theories on the locations of gambling in the Market Street Chinatown, further research on such processes must be conducted in order to better comprehend the physical sites of gambling.

Future Research Potential

In the future, I plan to conduct a contextual analysis of gaming artifacts in excavated overseas Chinatowns in the United States. Historical sources mention numerous different artifacts that may be found near or around gaming artifacts. While studying gaming practices in 1891, Culin noted the presence of orange rinds in gambling halls; according to Culin, orange rinds symbolized good luck (Culin 1891:6). Culin likewise notes the use of white buttons and coins in

the place of zhu discs (Culin 1891:6). Pan similarly describes the use of grains of maize, coffee, and beans as Fan-Tan counters (Pan 1990:121). A high frequency of coins, buttons, beans, and/or maize in relation to a high frequency of identifiable gaming artifacts (dominos, zhu discs, chess pieces, dice) may allow archaeologists to identify objects that don't necessarily fall into the pre-established categories of gaming pieces.

At the present time, the use of gaming pieces is at illustrious. While archaeological literature and early travelogues depict some of the games played in overseas Chinatowns, the information is limited. The most commonly cited study of gambling in overseas Chinatowns comes from Stuart Culin, an early American ethnographer who "believed that that the similarity in gaming practices was proof of a worldwide contact between cultures" (www.fact-index.com). Though further study of Culin's works may elucidate the multi-facted uses of game pieces in overseas Chinatowns, more ethnographic and archival research may produce a more multi-vocal understanding of how pieces were used in various games. Marbles, for example, were found in conjunction with gaming artifacts in Feature 7, 86-36. Today, marbles are commonly associated with children. While it's feasible that marbles were considered children's toys in overseas Chinatowns, it is naïve to assume this. It is therefore important to question the use of marbles. For example, were children the sole owners of marbles, or were marbles used in other "adult" games? The same questions can be asked about all of the gaming pieces found in the Market Street Chinatown. For instance, were chess pieces used in games of chess, or were they also used as counters in wei-chi or Fan-Tan?

Beverly Chang's project on gaming and gambling habits in 85-31 raises similar important

questions. How, for instance, can we identify the individuals who were playing games and gambling? Were there social stratifications amongst the inhabitants in the Market Street Chinatown, with only a select portion of the community able to participate in gambling activities? Perhaps the gaming pieces themselves can tell archaeologists more about the socio-economics and cultural identity of the community. Investigating where gaming pieces were manufactured and sold may illuminate wider trade networks between the Market Street Chinatown and other Chinatowns as well as explain the large amount of zhu pieces in the collection.

As I mentioned earlier, my initial intention in researching gaming pieces was to see how gambling and gambling were incorporated into daily life. Ethnographic data and oral histories will perhaps complicate the way in which archaeologists and outsiders have come to view these practices. Interviewing members from the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project will likewise possibly broaden archaeologists' understandings of gaming in Chinese communities.

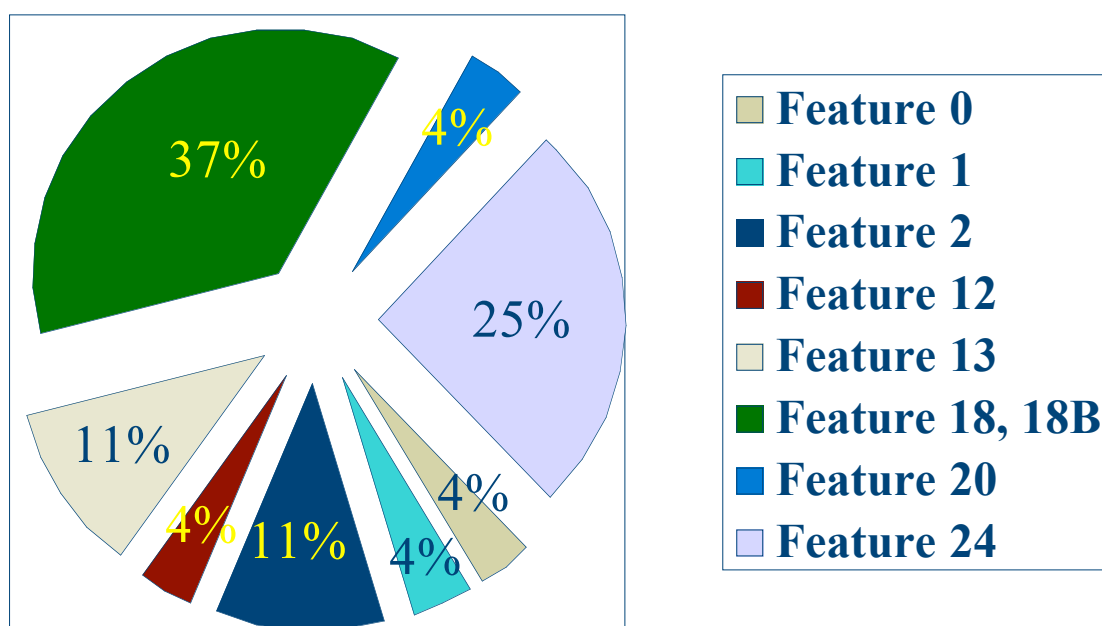
Multi-site comparisons of trash deposits at overseas Chinatowns may also yield more information on why and how gaming pieces were distributed in the Market Street Chinatown. Are, for instance, gaming pieces at the Woolen Mills Chinatown found in the same areas as the Market Street Chinatown? Along the same lines, how do different types of Chinese communities (bachelor vs. family, for instance) deposit their trash?

Moreover, further archival research may help archaeologists identify gambling activities with specific businesses in the Market Street Chinatown. Yu and Laffey have both utilized the Wells Fargo business directories in writing about the Market Street Chinatown. Perhaps these

directories will shed light on where gambling activity may have occurred or even contradict my spatial interpretations. Unfortunately, due to inconsistencies in data from the original excavation, it is nearly impossible to identify gaming with one particular family or business using the archaeological data alone.

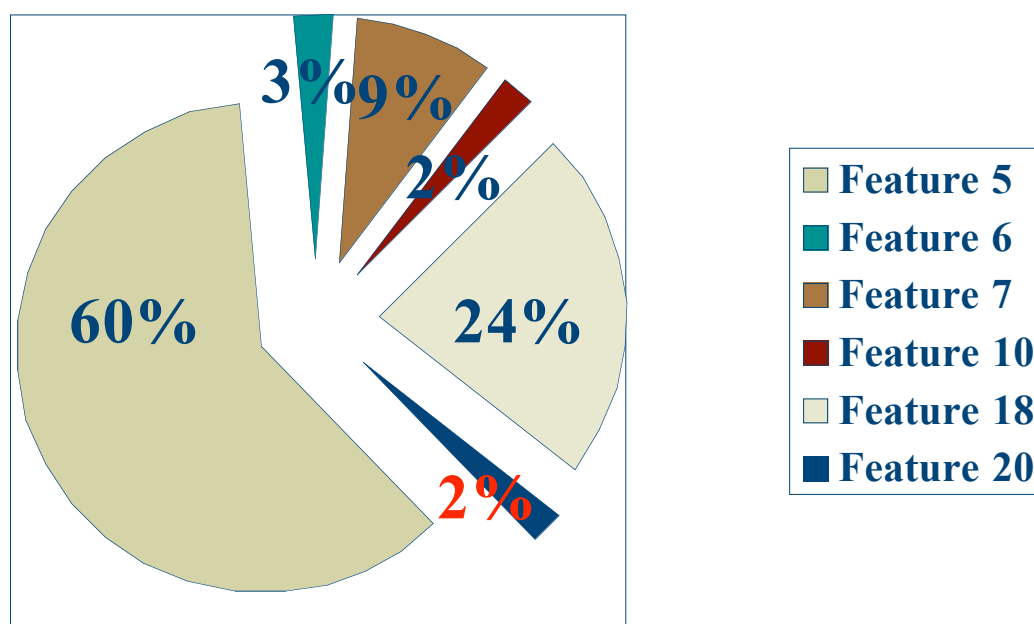
Though the excavation and cataloguing records of the Market Street Chinatown are inconsistent (Michaels 2003, Williams 2003), I feel this paper provides a strong argument for continued study of the assemblage. Though much of the contextual data is presently inaccessible, much can be still be learned from analyses of space.

Figure 1: Distribution of Gaming Artifacts in 85-31's Features



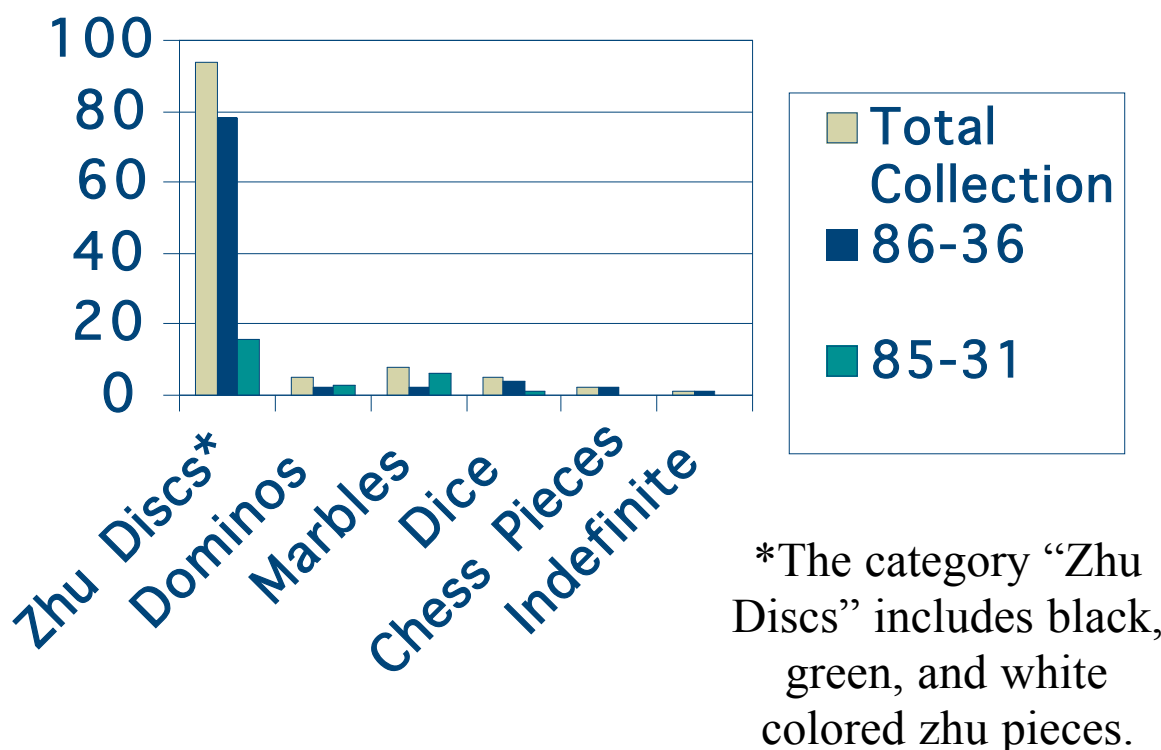
This chart illustrates the percentage of gaming pieces in 85-31's Features. For example, 30% of the MNI gaming artifacts in 85-31 are in Feature 18. There were a total of 27 gaming artifacts found in 85-31.

Figure 2: Distribution of Gaming Artifacts in 86-36's Features



This chart also demonstrates the percentage of gaming artifacts identified with specific features in 86-36. I identified a total of 89 artifacts associated with gaming in 86-36. While it appears as though gaming artifacts aren't as widely distributed in 86-36 (in comparison to 85-31), this may be due to high volume of artifacts found in Feature 5.

Figure 3: Total Distribution of Gaming Artifacts



This chart breaks down the amount of gaming artifacts found in the total collection versus 85-31 and 86-36. As this chart demonstrates, zhu discs are the most widely distributed and frequently found gaming artifacts in the assemblage. This is a common trend in overseas Chinese archaeological collections. In addition, a total of 68 white zhu discs were found in the assemblage. Only 18 black discs and 4 green discs were found in the entire collection.



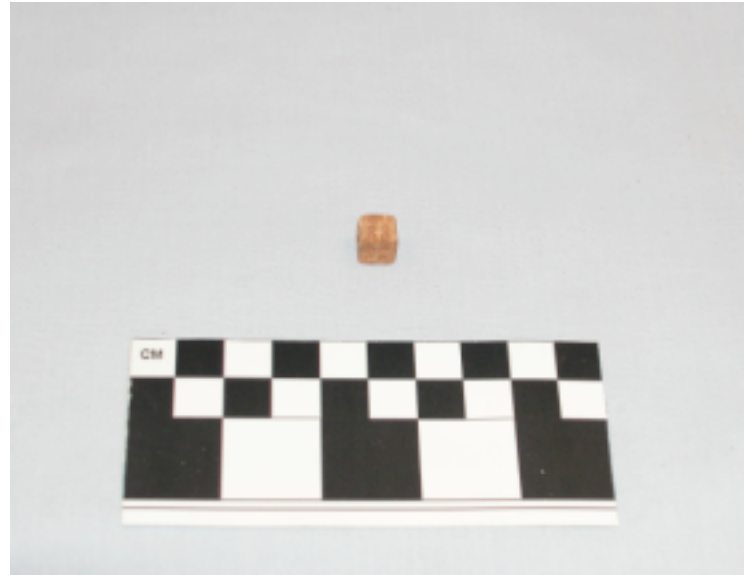


Figure 6: A Die from 86-36

Figure 4: Zhu Discs and Marbles from 85-31

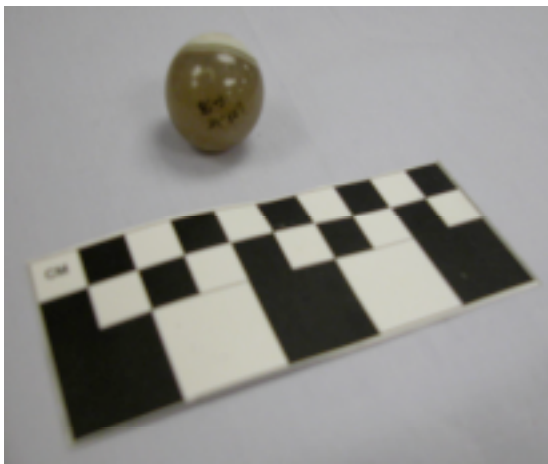
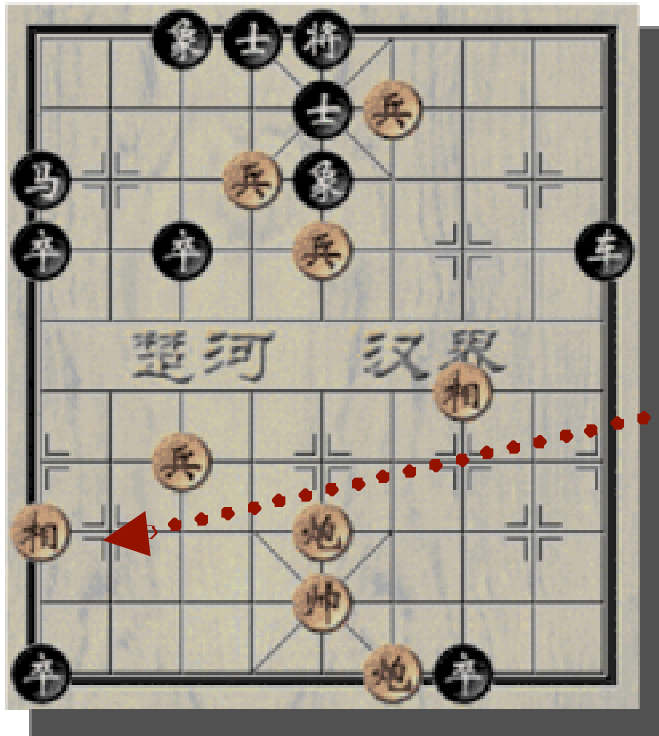


Figure 5: A Marble from 86-36 *Figure 7: A Domino from 85-31*

Figure 8: Chess Pieces from the Market Street Chinatown

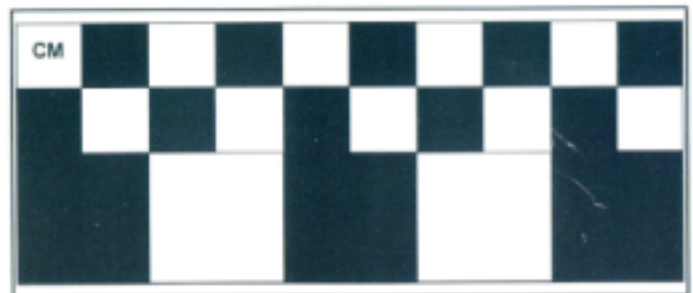


*Image courtesy of
Chess-poster.com*

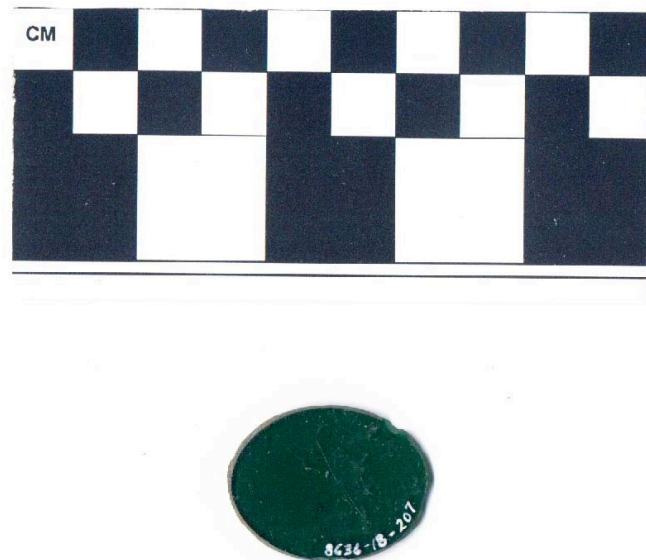
(Above)

Chess Piece from
Feature 5 in 86-36

(Right)
Chess Piece from Feature
10 in 86-36



*Figure 9: Possible Green Fan-Tan Counter from
Feature 18, 86-36*



Roberta Greenwood identified this green disc as a possible Fan-Tan counter. She also suggested that it may have served as an insert into several kinds of ornamental things (jewelry, for instance). A clear disc of the same

size and shape was also found in our collection.

Figure 10: 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

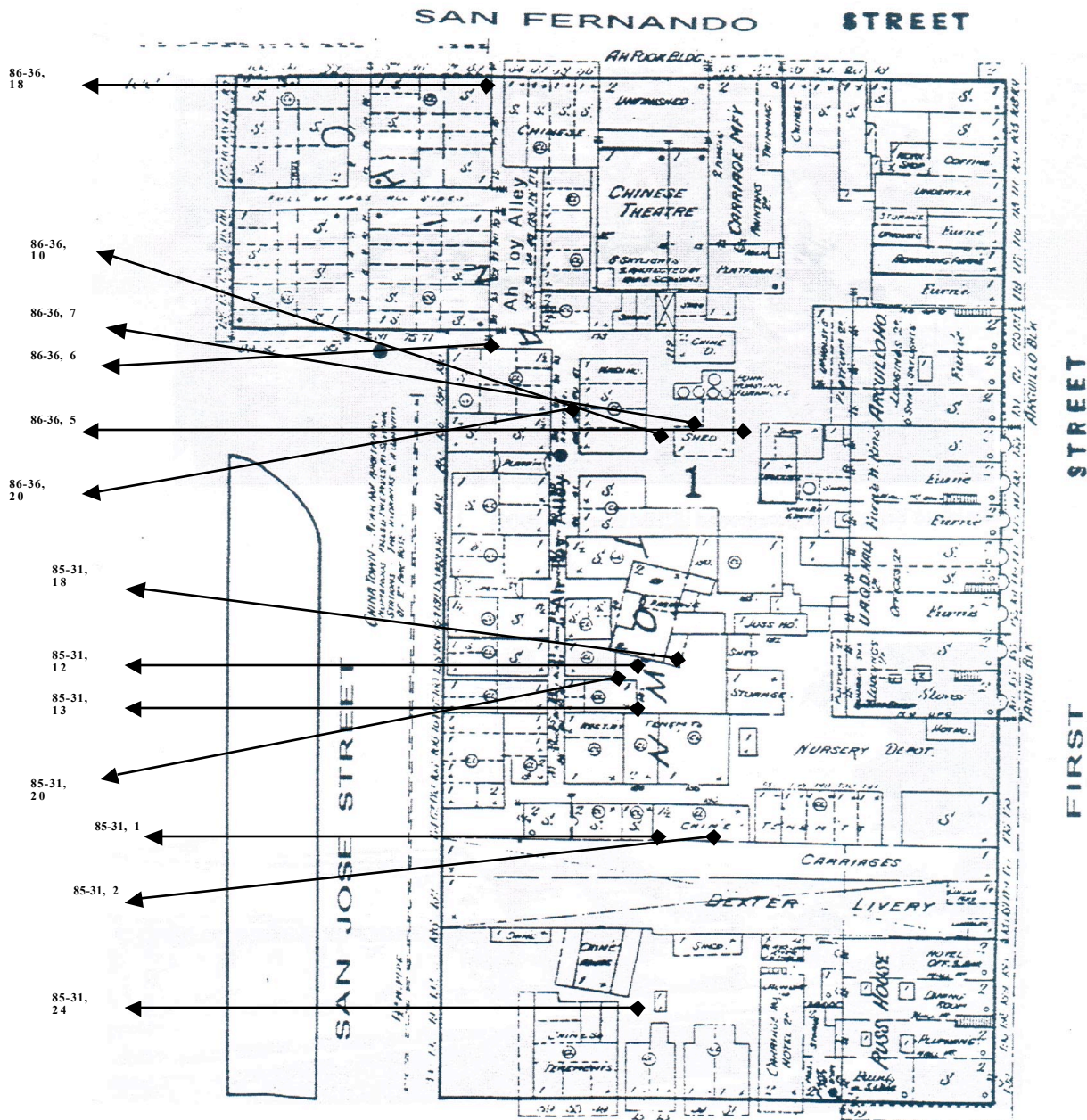


Figure 7 Market Street Chinatown, 1884 (Sanborn 1884)

This map demonstrates where gaming artifacts were found in the Market Street Chinatown and their possible associations with businesses and residences in the town.

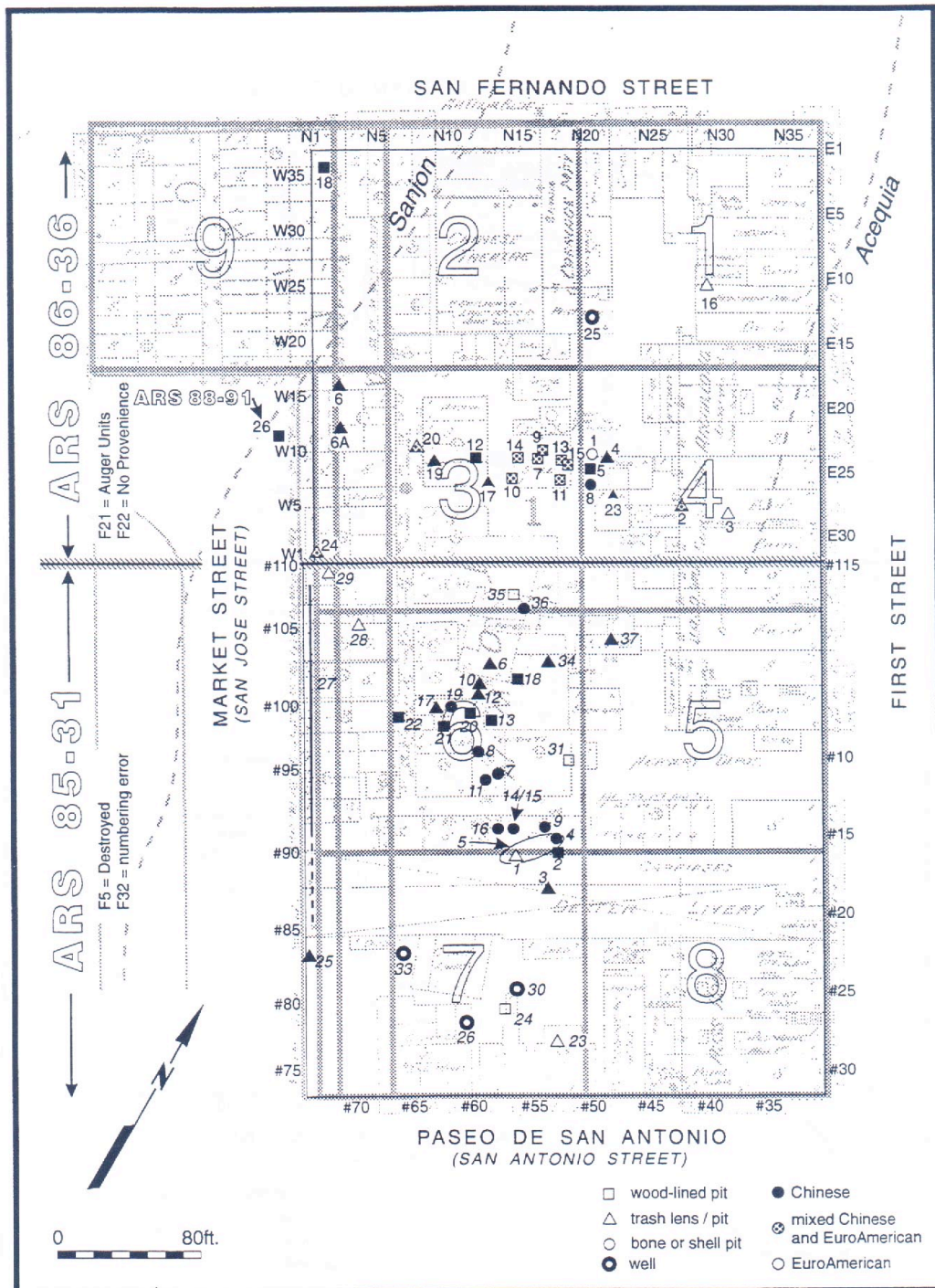


Figure 5: Block 1 Feature Locations 1884 (Parsons 1993: Figs. 2-3; ARS various; Roop et al. 1988; CSJ 1983; Sanborn 1884)

Figure 11: Archaeological Deposits Found in the Market Street Chinatown
 Figure 12: A Breakdown of Artifacts in the Market Street Chinatown

85-31 Gaming Artifacts

Feature 0

85-31:0-987 Domino

Feature 1

85-31:1-3 Black Zhu Piece

Feature 2 (Missing Artifacts)

85-31:2-26 Game Piece (Color Unknown)

85-31:2-27 Game Piece (Color Unknown)

85-31:2-28 Game Piece (Color Unknown)

Feature 12

85-31:12-4 White Zhu Piece

Feature 13

85-31:13-182 White Zhu Piece

85-31:13-183 White Zhu Piece

85-31:13-194 White Zhu Piece

Feature 18

85-31:18-474 White Zhu Piece

85-31:18-475 White Zhu Piece

85-31:18-243 White Zhu Piece

85-31:18-472 Black Zhu Piece

85-31:18-653 Black Zhu Piece

85-31:18-473 Black Zhu Piece

85-31:18-23 Die

Feature 18B

85-31:18B-244 Wood Domino

85-31:18B-132 Wood Domino

85-31:18B-358 Glass Bead

Feature 20

85-31:20-221 Black Zhu Piece

Feature 24

85-31:24-108 Marble

85-31:24-107 Marble

85-31:24-110 Marble

85-31:24-111 Marble

85-31:24-113 Marble

85-31:24-109 Marble

86-36 Gaming Artifacts

Feature 5

86-36:5-1443 White Zhu Piece

86-36:5-705 2 Green Zhu Pieces

86-36:5-1429 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1437 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1434 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1439 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1446 Black Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1441 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-706 Black Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1447 Black Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-704 4 Black Zhu Pieces
 86-36:5-703 21 White Zhu Pieces
 86-36:5-1433 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-35 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-33 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-32 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1444 Black Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1431 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1430 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1436 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-808 Die
 86-36:5-1440 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1438 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1445 Black Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1448 Green Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1442 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1432 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:5-1482 Die
 86-36:5-1478 Chess Piece

Feature 6

86-36:6-202 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:6-117 Green Zhu Piece
 86-36:6-109 Stone Zhu Piece?

Feature 7

86-36:7-494 Marble
 86-36:7-87 Marble
 86-36:7-490 2 White Zhu Pieces
 86-36:7-813 4 White Zhu Pieces

Feature 10

86-36:10-23 White Zhu Piece
 86-36:10-65 Chess Piece

Feature 18

86-36:18-392 Burnt Domino

86-36:18-393 Burnt Domino
86-36:18-422 4 White Zhu Pieces
86-36:18-276 Black Zhu Piece
86-36:18-277 White Zhu Piece
86-36:18-364 White Zhu Piece
86-36:18-205 8 White Zhu Pieces
86-36:18-206 8 Black Zhu Pieces
86-36:18-202 Green Unknown Disc (possible Fan-Tan counter?)

Feature 20

86-36:20-71 Die
86-36:20-72 Die

Figure 12 (continued): A Breakdown of Artifacts in the Market Street Chinatown

	White Zhu	Black Zhu	Green Zhu	Unknown Zhu	Total Zhu	Dominos	Dice	Marbles	Chess Pieces	Indefinite
Feature 0, 85-31						1				
Feature 1, 85-31		1			1					
Feature 2, 85-31				3	3					
Feature 12, 85-31	1				1					
Feature 13, 85-31	3				3					
Feature 18, 85-31	3	3			6		1			
Feature 18B, 85-31				1	1	2				
Feature 20, 85-31		1			1					
Feature 24, 85-31								6		
Feature 5, 86-36	38	9	3		50		2		1	
Feature 6, 86-36	1		1	1	3					
Feature 7, 86-36	6				6			2		
Feature 10, 86-36	1				1				1	
Feature 18, 86-36	14	9			23	2				1
Feature 20, 86-36							2			

Works Cited

- Allen, Rebecca. 2002. *Excavation of the Woolen Mills Chinatown (CA-SCL-807H), San Jose*. California Department of Transportation, District 4, San Jose CA USA. 1:133-135.
- Culin, Stewart. 1891. *The Gambling Games of the Chinese in America: Fan-Tan: the Game of Repeatedly Spreading Out. And pak kop piu or, the Game of White Pigeon Ticket*. University of Philadelphia Press, Philadelphia PA USA.
- Dobie, Charles and E.H. Suydam. 1936. *San Francisco's Chinatown*. D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York NY USA.
- Farris, B. 1984. "Chinese and Annamese Coins Found at the Woodland Opera House Site." *The Chinese Laundry on Second Street: Archaeological Investigations at the Woodland Opera House Site*. Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento CA USA. 24:147-150.
- Flynn, Kathryn and Bill Roop. 2004. Personal Correspondence to Stacey Camp. February 27.
- Greenwood, Roberta. 1996. *Down by the Station: Los Angeles Chinatown, 1880-1933*. Institute of Archaeology. University of California, Los Angeles Press, Los Angeles CA USA.
- - -. 2004. Personal Correspondence to Stacey Camp. February 3.
- - -. 2004. Personal Correspondence to Stacey Camp. February 5.
- Laffey, Glory Anne. 1994. "Lot Histories from Block 1 Chinatown, San Jose, California." San Leandro: Basin Research Associates, Inc.
- Lydon, Sydney. 1985. *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region*. Capitola Book Company, Capitola CA USA.
- Michaels, Gina. 2003. A Mark of Meaning: Archaeological Interpretations of Peck Marked Vessels from a 19th Century Chinatown.
- Mueller, Fred W. 1987. "Gaming and Gaming Pieces." Pages 385-393 in Leun, W.H., ed. 1987. *An American Chinatown, Volume Two*. Great Basin Foundation, San Diego CA USA. 2:233-249.
- Pan, Lynn. 1990. *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora*. Little, Brown, and Company, Boston MA USA.

Praetzellis, Adrian. 2004. Personal Correspondence to Stacey Camp. February 17.

- - -. 2004. Personal Correspondence to Stacey Camp. March 14.

Praetzellis, Mary and Adrian Praetzellis. 1997. *Historical Archaeology of an Overseas Chinese Community in Sacramento, California, Volume 1: Archaeological Excavations, Anthropological Studies Center*. Sonoma State University Academic Foundation, Inc., Rohnert Park CA USA. 1:201.

The Fact Index. 2004. Stewart Culin. Available at:

http://www.fact-index.com/s/st/stewart_culin.html. Accessed 3/12/04.

Wegars, Priscilla. 2001. *Uncovering a Chinese Legacy: Historical Archaeology at Centerville, Idaho: Once the Handsomest Town in the Basin*. US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Cultural Resource Series Number Five, ID USA. 26-28.

Williams, Bryn. 2003. Opium Pipe Tops at the Market Street Chinese Community in San Jose.

Yu, ConnieYoung. 1991. *Chinatown, San Jose, USA*. History San Jose, San Jose CA USA.