

“THE COMING MAN FROM CANTON”  
CHINESE EXPERIENCE IN MONTANA (1862-1943)

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The Coming Man from Canton: Chinese Experience in Montana (1862-1943)

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Abstract Content:

The Chinese immigrants who came to Montana during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries forged a new community. The goals of this dissertation were to create a historical and archaeological context for Chinese Experience in Montana, and to frame the interpretation of these results within a social organization framework that highlights the role of Overseas Chinese voluntary organizations such as secret societies. Archaeologists and historians have studied the Chinese in Montana for a little over two decades, though nothing comprehensive has ever been attempted to sew together the various investigations. In addition, there has been no attempt to inventory all the known Chinese archaeological sites in Montana, and how these fit into the broad patterns of history. Between first large-scale gold discovery in Montana Territory during 1862 until 1900, the Chinese engaged largely in placer-mining endeavors and represented the largest ethnic group during this period. Federal Exclusion laws, statewide boycotts, and pervasive racism deeply affected the Chinese experience in Montana, and led to the state's abandonment by the bulk of this immigrant population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In overseas communities, the Chinese immigrants relied on voluntary associations to replace the traditional modes of social organization found in China. These organizations provided mutual protection to their members, and helped to organize resistance to the legal and social racism encountered in the United States and other diaspora communities. This dissertation interprets the history and archaeology of the Chinese in Montana in a framework that highlights the role of voluntary social organizations in the success of this population.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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*...though they [Chinese] are coolies, and heathen; and 'gobble' poor ground and carry away their treasures from our shore, they are yet a laboring element that can be, and is being, used to advantage on this continent. The direction of the labor stream has changed. It crosses now from the Orient, and whether we like or dislike him, Christianize and citizenize him, or he Paganizes us, or neither, 'John' is an impending irrepressible fixture on the American Continent and the inevitable Coming Man from Canton (The New Northwest, August 13, 1869).*

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The uncertainty about Chinese immigration expressed in the above editorial encapsulates Montana's historical interaction with this population. On one hand, Montana's vast land offered opportunity for all seekers, and the need for cheap labor was a constant in the first decades of the territorial and state history. On the other hand, most Montanans fought over how best to deal legally and socially with the Chinese, though few supported the population's continued habitation in the state. This ambiguity played out daily in Montana's history until the Chinese population became such a minority that they were no longer viewed as a threat to the white majority.

Since Leeson (1885) published the first comprehensive Montana history, the state's Chinese population remained an anecdotal appendix to the mainstream narrative. Burlingame's (1942) effort at a statewide historical narrative provided only a cursory examination of the Chinese, focusing on the stereotypical story of purchasing discarded Euro-American claims. In 1959, K. Ross Toole's thorough discussion of Montana's historical development included only one paragraph about the Chinese population of the state (Toole 1959:72-73). The displayed lack of interest in the Chinese of Montana even by the state's preeminent 20<sup>th</sup> century historian reflects the general pattern of scholarly indifference towards this population. In fact, Toole's refrain in that one paragraph

perpetuated two main stereotypical themes of Chinese history throughout the United States: 1) that they faced an insurmountable hostility from other Montanans, and 2) that they simply worked under-paying placer claims abandoned by non-Chinese miners.

Even with the contribution of Rose Hum Lee's (1949) significant analysis of Chinese immigrant employment succession in Butte between 1890 and 1940, the general flow of Montana historical scholarship passed by this population. In response to trends set by New Western History (e.g. Rohe 1982; Malone 1989; Malone and Etulain 1989), the 1980s demonstrated a growth in discussions of the Chinese in Montana. Examples of this pattern include John Wunder's (1980) discussion of the legal hurdles faced by Chinese in Montana during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Davis' (1982) analysis of anti-Chinese agitation in the state's newspapers, and Flaherty's (1987) description of the Butte Chinese Boycott. Swartout's (1988) overview of Montana Chinese history from 1862-1900, remains a significant contribution to the state's overall understanding of this immigrant group, and is the foundation from which this dissertation was built.

Swartout's (1988) article was perhaps too well-received by the Montana scholarly community, as the 1990s lacked any significant historical contributions to the topic. According to Swartout (1988:53) the Chinese, "played a crucial part in transforming Montana from a primitive, isolated patchwork of localities into an increasingly sophisticated, urbanized, and economically prosperous society," though the dearth of other studies on these immigrants in the state would tend to leave the reader questioning this assertion. Remarkably, the growth of the historical knowledge of the Montana's Chinese community expanded in direct result to archaeological projects around the state. Mitigation efforts in the late 1980s resulted in a comprehensive and voluminous

discussion of the German Gulch Chinese community, located west of Butte (Fredlund et al. 1991). A decade later, Garren Meyer (2001) produced the most significant thesis in Montana's analysis of the Chinese population by using the materials recovered from German Gulch. Additional archaeological projects in the 1990s and early 2000s (Rossillon 1997, 2002, 2003, 2008; Weisz 2003; Bowen 2004; Hall et al. 2006) continued to expand the understanding of the Montana Chinese population, though none attempted to create a more comprehensive statewide context.

Thus, the above-mentioned archaeological studies relied heavily upon Swartout's (1988) article, and broad regional historical and archaeological patterns as discussed in other references (Lee 1978; Ritchie 1986; Wegars 1993; Dirlick and Yeung 2001). While some historical and archaeological parallels existed between Montana and other diasporic communities in regards to Chinese history, each area treated this population differently, with some districts showing remarkable acceptance and tolerance (Zhu 1995; 1997). As shown by Zhu, the scholarly adherence to a narrative discussing a "dark story of oppression" glossed over significant breaks to this pattern and continually portrayed the Chinese as victims rather than active actors (Zhu 1995:38).

In 2006, the dissertation presented herein began when I commenced with the systematic study of the Chinese in Montana without any existing framework or comparative example of research of this scope. The initial impetus for this project was a supposed Chinese terraced garden site in Sanders County (Figure 1.1). After nearly a full year, and two excavations, the site remains a relative mystery though it is clearly the remains of a post-1900 adaptation of a mining site occupied by non-Chinese individuals, possibly for moonshining purpose (Merritt 2006, 2009b; Merritt and McLeod 2010).

After this important lesson in the power of local folklore and stereotypes of rockwork being associated with the Chinese, my dissertation work moved to other sites associated with the Chinese in Montana. Over the next several years I led investigations at other Chinese sites in Montana, including Louiseville and China Gulch (Figure 1.2) in the Cedar Creek area of Western Montana (Merritt 2007, 2009a), the Big Timber Chinese Community (Moschelle 2009), Granite Ghost Town (Blackford and Merritt 2008), and a regional survey and recording effort in partnership with Region 1 of the United States Forest Service (Merritt 2010). During this same period, other Montana projects have helped further the understanding of the Chinese, including new historical efforts (Flynn 2006; Stoner 2007; Dean 2009; Robison 2009a; 2009b; 2010) and archaeological projects (Rossillon 2008).

**Figure 1.1:** Crew of Poacher Gulch Field Project, 2006. Photo by Kelly Dixon.



**Figure 1.2:** Crew of Cedar Creek Project, 2008. Photo by C. Milo McLeod.



### **1.1 Overseas Chinese Archaeology**

The archaeological study of the Overseas Chinese did not begin globally until the 1970s (e.g., Greenwood 1978), and did not hit the mainstream until the 1980s (Wegars 1993:2). Over the relatively short history of Overseas Chinese archaeological studies, the theoretical perspectives and research questions of scholars shifted substantially. During the initial phases of Chinese research, archaeologists focused on the peculiar, the grand, or the understood (e.g. Teague and Shenk 1977; Olsen 1978, 1983; Hattori et al. 1979; Blanford 1987; Fredlund et al. 1991). Decades after the deconstruction of the Culture History concept by proponents of the “New Archaeology” (see Taylor 1948; Binford 1962; Flannery 1967), many of these initial efforts in Overseas Chinese research still followed the well-worn tract of describing artifacts without regard to social or cultural processes into the 1980s. While these early pioneering works furthered the interest of

archaeologists attempting to understand these immigrant Chinese populations, the effect of research was largely normative. Greenwood (1993:378) states that most of the archaeological projects until the 1980s focused towards reporting of the “whole, glamorous, or recognized” and not on attempting to understand any questions of anthropological importance. There existed no larger framework attempting to understand experiences of Chinese immigrants on a broad scale, and the role of the individual received no attention. One Overseas Chinese research domain impacted by the “New Archaeology”, or Processual movement, was the analysis of acculturation and assimilation (e.g. Moses and Whitmore 1987; Diehl et al. 1998; Hall et al. 2006). Archaeological discussions of assimilation and acculturation relegated the role of the individual to a mere vessel of social norms and cultural values (Voss and Wegars 2008:19).

In the last decade there have been a number of Overseas Chinese archaeological studies that illustrate the shift away from Processual archaeology and towards Post-Processual (see Hodder 1991) analyses that incorporate gender (Voss 2005), race/ethnicity (Meyer 2001; Voss 2008), funerary rituals and remains (Chung and Wegars 2005) and a broad variety of research domains (Lydon 1999; Lawrence 2000; Chen 2001; Allen et al. 2002; Bockhorst 2003; Hunt-Jones 2006; Morrow 2009; Ellis et al. 2010). Some archaeologists studying the Overseas Chinese altered their perspectives to incorporate an active agent concept (Praetzelis and Praetzelis 2001; Voss 2008), and looked to expand their knowledge by using ethnographic approaches to get an insider’s outlook on the material culture left behind at archaeological sites (e.g. Yang and Hellman 1996; Xia 2001). Greenwood’s (1978) and Wegars’ (1993) seminal works, provided the



research framework for current scholars in the field, and their significant contributions are unquestioned. Work by Ritchie (1986, 1993), Fee (1991, 1993), Chung (1998), Gardner (2000) and Chung and Wegars (2005), illustrate how far research has advanced since the days of Chinese environmental determinism discussed by Spier (1958). There are a number of problems with the continued study of the Overseas Chinese experience. While many historians and anthropologists have moved towards analyses of internal Overseas Chinese social organization (e.g. Lyman 1974; Woon 1984; Meyer 2001; Zheng 2001; Liu 2005; Morrow 2009), many archaeologists perpetuate a more simplistic pattern of site-specific histories focused on pitting the Chinese versus the “other,” which continues a stereotypical depiction of this immigrant population. Orientalism was discussed—and critiqued—in Said (1978), and recently re-examined by Madeline Hsu (2003) and Fong (2007). Mullins (2008:156) best summarizes the difficulties of Overseas Chinese studies as, “archaeologists face the challenge of constructing an Overseas Chinese subject that respects the authentic cultural roots and experiences of immigrants without devolving into an essentialism based on unreflective analysis of apparently unique material patterns.” Indeed, many archaeological examinations have not delved into interpretations dedicated to understanding internal Chinese social organization; rather, archaeological interpretations have focused on the ways in which the Chinese reacted to external stimuli through material culture (assimilation/acculturation). Without a proper understanding of the internal organization of the Overseas Chinese, it is difficult to understand the totality of their experiences. Stanford Lyman (1974), a social historian, studied the social organization of the Overseas Chinese in the 1970s, though it appears many archaeologists forgot those lessons until recently. Voss (2008), Baxter



(2008) and Kraus-Friedberg (2008) are some excellent recent examples of how Overseas Chinese archaeological scholarship is transitioning to a true anthropological perspective by focusing on an inside-out versus outside-in perspective on study of this immigrant group. As noted by Voss (2005), only in the last few years has Overseas Chinese research moved towards the mainstream of Historical Archaeology, due largely to a long-held adherence to assimilation and acculturation models. Over the next few decades there hopefully be more robust studies using firm grounding in anthropological research.

## **1.2 Dissertation Research Goals**

The overarching goal of this dissertation was to create a statewide historical and archaeological context for the Chinese experience in Montana. Due to the paucity of historical documentation of the Chinese in Montana—and the lack of their perspective in the available written records—archaeological evidence provides the strongest means of analyzing the daily life and cultural habits of this population. Thus, this dissertation works within a framework of Historical Anthropology as defined by Lightfoot (2005:15, 235): “integration of multiple lines of evidence from documentary, oral, and archaeological sources for a broader, more inclusive view of history.” Using this framework, here I have developed a narrative of the Chinese experience in Montana by integrating the sometimes-disparate voices of historical and archaeological resources. Oral histories represent the most limited pool of research data in this dissertation as most of the descendant populations no longer living in Montana, except for a few families in Helena and Butte.

This endeavor of seeking to understand the regional context of a Chinese immigrant group has only been attempted in Australia (Ritchie 2003:7-8) and New Zealand (Ritchie 1986). Working on a regional, that is the, statewide level, provided both opportunities and limitations to the types of information and analyses possible as part of this dissertation. For example, I had to first construct the narrative by conducting primary and secondary source searches for both historical and archaeological material to provide a more complete and thorough picture than presented in other previous works on the topic (e.g., Wunder 1980; Swartout 1988; Fredlund et al. 1991). The spatial limits in this study created a significant problem of analysis, because using the Montana state boundary only “captures arbitrary components of spatial reality in order to form a particular perspective of a spatial context” (Ridges 2006:145). Fortunately, there is a significant body of literature discussing the broader scope of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese Diaspora (e.g., Gyory 1998; Ling 1998; Gardner 2000, Dirlick and Yeung 2001; Chan 2006), which allows a more focused spatial scopes of analysis, such as the one presented here, to be put into a wider context.

Three research objectives supported this dissertation’s overarching goal:

**1) Historical Information:** Due to the relative paucity of historical research related to the Chinese in Montana, particularly when compared to neighboring states and Canada, the first objective was to compile as many primary and secondary resources as possible. Primary historical resources, including deeds, newspapers, and censuses, provided the basic constituent parts to this dissertation’s historical component and required substantial time and effort to locate and collate. For secondary resources,

Swartout's (1988) article provided an excellent but generalized overview of the Chinese Montana experience between 1862 and 1900.

**2) Archaeological Information:** The second objective was to locate, inventory, and compile an exhaustive database of Chinese-related archaeological sites and excavations in Montana. The historical story of the Chinese in Montana provides only a finite amount of information due to biases in the primary and secondary records. In addition, there are remarkably few instances of the Chinese leaving behind records of their own, to provide researchers their perspectives.

Archaeological remains can contribute a more personal image of Chinese immigrants by locating the material remains of their daily lives.

**3) Social Organization:** As noted earlier, the lack of formal archaeological study of Overseas Chinese social organization presents a significant challenge for a deep understanding of their Montana experience. Some historical and archaeological works (Lyman 1974; Woon 1984; Stanley 1996; Cheung 2002; Jiang 2004; Hsu 2006; Morrow 2009) provide some contextual information on the social organization of the Overseas Chinese in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This research was examined for the third objective, which was to develop a framework for investigating the historical and archaeological information noted above to thoroughly interpret the inner workings of Chinese social organization in Montana.

### **1.3 Chapter Summaries**

In order to help future researchers, Chapter 2 provides a thorough description of the types and sources of existing historical records used in this dissertation. As such, the chapter includes a discussion of the repositories visited and the types of Chinese-related

information discovered. In addition, Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive list of Chinese archaeological sites inventoried by the researcher.

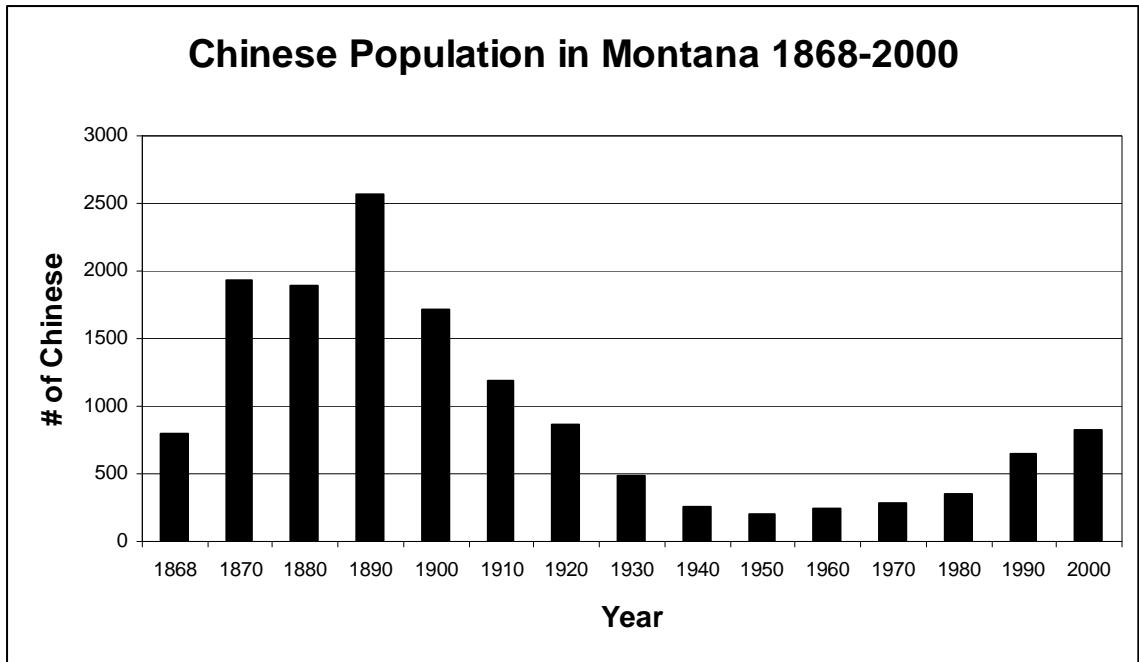
After collating and analyzing the historical and archaeological materials noted above, two basic periods of Chinese history in Montana emerged. The first period (1862-1880), discussed in Chapter 3, begins with initial gold discovery and ends with a changing legal and social landscape. Gold discovery along Grasshopper and Alder creeks in 1862-1863 spurred the first large migration of European, American, and Asian settlers into Montana. This initial flood of migrants included a small number of Chinese miners and entrepreneurs, which grew quickly to 10% of the state's total population by 1870. This first period is typified by seemingly boundless economic opportunity and the perpetual presence of easily recoverable placer gold that allowed Chinese to work without severe harassment by the rest of Montana's residents. Most Chinese in Montana during the 1860s and 1870s found gainful employment as miners, working in communal groups dedicated to profit and subsistence. Popular notions of the Chinese in the West include the belief there was a mutually exclusive transition from mining to service in the late 1800s. However, in the earliest days of Montana Territory the Chinese owned and operated restaurants, worked as cooks, and engaged in a variety of non-mining activities. Even with furtive attempts to limit the ability of Chinese to own claims and property in Montana, the first period appears to have had few concerted attempts to enforce these legal proscriptions.

Chapter 4 discusses the second period (1880-1900) of Chinese experience in Montana that could be best described as a boom/bust pattern, with great accomplishments and significant collapses. Completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in Montana

employed thousands of Chinese laborers, and many of these immigrants appeared to have stayed in the state after completion. Reaching a peak in 1890, the Chinese population declined steadily throughout the first decades of the 1900s. This population collapse resulted directly from anti-Chinese agitation, legislation, and economic boycotts.

Reaching nearly 3,000 in 1890, the Chinese population dropped to below 500 by 1940 (Figure 1.3). This second period is typified by a concerted and successful campaign of legal and illegal efforts to exclude the Chinese from Montana. This arbitrary period ends with the significant decline of Chinese population in Montana at 1900, which would prove to be a long-term trend.

**Figure 1.3:** Chinese population of Montana. Data from U.S. Federal Census.



The third historical period (1900-1943) is presented in Chapter 5, which presents the changing economic roles the Chinese played in Montana's evolution. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the easily-retrieved placer gold played out across Montana, and Chinese workers shifted their attention to more entrepreneurial opportunities. By the

1880s the number of Chinese working as miners plummeted, though they found other profitable terrain by “mining the miners” through laundry, restaurant, and garden enterprises (e.g. Zhu 1997:191; James 1998:164). Between 1900 and 1943 the Chinese population continually declined statewide, with the remaining population rapidly aging. The third and final historical period ended with the repeal of restrictive federal legislation aimed at the Chinese population, which ushered in a new era of China/United States relations.

Many archaeologists and historians studying the Chinese experience in the United States have focused on site-specific discussions of acculturation, assimilation, and ethnic boundary maintenance (e.g. Greenwood 1978; Blanford 1987; Longenecker and Stapp 1993; Diehl et al. 1998). As mentioned earlier, there has been relatively little attention archaeological scholarship paid to the ways in which the Chinese organized themselves socially in the homeland and diasporic communities. Patterns in Montana Chinese social organization are discussed in Chapter 6, with special attention paid to non-traditional roles of merchants and secret societies. Current analytical models in anthropology and archaeology that lack this perspective do not take into the account the true differentiation in market availability of goods as influenced by Chinese merchants and their connections to national and international social organizations. A more complete understanding of the ways in which the Chinese organized socially through voluntary organizations in response to the economic and social circumstances of Montana will allow more robust discussions of anthropologically-relevant questions.

Chapter 7 provides concluding thoughts on the state of Chinese history and archaeology in Montana. Since the implications of this dissertation reach beyond

Montana, this chapter examines how the results presented herein will contribute to the ways in which archaeologists and historians view and interpret the cultural heritage of the Chinese. In addition, this concluding chapter outlines some types of common Chinese-related myths in modern Montana. Finally, recommendations for future research of the Chinese in Montana is provided with the hope and expectation that others will build on the narrative presented here.

This dissertation creates the first statewide historical and archaeological context for the Overseas Chinese experienced in the United States. I hope that other researchers studying the Overseas Chinese will follow this attempt and continue to create an expansive body of literature dedicated to regional presentations of the historical anthropology of this cultural group. Archaeology and history are inherently multi-scalar in focus, with shifting spatial boundaries encapsulating different research foci. However, too many Overseas Chinese studies have focused on the smallest unit of measure, the site without attempts to pan back and look at a bigger picture. A shift to higher-level anthropological questions has been an aim of archaeology since Walter Taylor's (1948) pioneering work in the American Southwest. This dissertation's emphasis on the significance of social organization represents an endeavor dedicated to using archaeology—and history—to address such anthropological questions. Ideally, this emphasis on social organization may someday be expanded with even more in-depth studies of the complexities of the Chinese colonization of the American West, and hopefully future researchers will use the information herein to elaborate on such intricacies.

These intricacies are critical to a new type of Overseas Chinese archaeology that better reflects the nuances of this population by deconstructing essentialist views by being grounded in Chinese social history (see Mullins 2008:156-157). For the time being, though, I expect that my historical anthropological method of integrating various lines of evidence will establish a foundation for future work dedicated to understanding the region's cultural milieu and the Chinese role therein. In this dissertation, local folklore may collide with the results of archaeological investigations and a critical analysis of historical records. Drawing on an interdisciplinary range of sources, the following chapters demonstrate how multiple sources of information can be used to link site-specific data with broad, cultural events.



## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS**

### **2.1: Introduction**

Understanding the complexity of the Chinese experience in Montana between 1862 and 1943 required the analysis of a broad variety of resources. This intended to connect historical sources with specific archaeological deposits, yet the Chinese in Montana were perhaps one of the least documented ethnic minority groups in the state, and much of what has been written has been either superficial or anecdotal. On the other hand, archaeologists have studied the Chinese in Montana through a handful of sites, but as is one of the weaknesses of historical archaeology in the last century, these projects focused on fine-grained analyses of individual sites with little or no inter-site comparisons (Greenwood 1993, Cleland 2001). This meant that on both the historical and archaeological frontiers, this dissertation ventures into uncharted territory. In order to tie together the sometimes disparate narratives of history and archaeology, the research required creative yet comprehensive methods. As most of the research on Chinese in Montana was novel, this chapter will describe the types and locations of historical and archaeological sources so future researchers will not expend energy or time on redundant activities. For those readers not interested in the mundane details of the research methods, please continue to Chapter 3. This chapter is divided into two parts: the first is devoted to historical research and the second to archaeological methods.

### **2.2: Historical Research Methods**

Given the scope of this proposed project, it was necessary to be both methodical and flexible. Initial focus was on specific types of information and the researcher systematically explored these records to maximize the information. However, the

researcher had to be flexible enough to follow types of information that fell outside the defined boundaries of the research on an *ad hoc* basis. The main historical resources consulted for this project include newspapers, county courthouse records, federal censuses, archival documents, and secondary books and articles. At the onset of this research project certain types of data were considered important, specifically immigration and naturalization records. However, most of these records are held at the Library of Congress or in the National Archives, and this project did not have travel funding to permit full use of these resources. New avenues of information provided a better glimpse into a specific aspect of the Chinese experience, as evidenced by the use of criminal records from Fort Leavenworth Federal Prison in Kansas which was available for online research. A significant amount of research was completed on local historical resources, so future investigators should focus their attention on the Library of Congress and National Archives.

### *2.2.1 Historical Newspapers*

Due to the fact that the Chinese in Montana left a scant historical legacy, it was necessary to acquire as much contemporary historical data as possible, though much of these materials were from a biased non-Chinese perspective. In many cases, Montana's various newspapers reported on the Chinese with purely anecdotal stories laced with stereotypical images and racist commentaries, yet these stories still provided the most pertinent contemporary accounts of individuals and events during the period of study. Since this dissertation research spanned the entirety of Montana's vast landscape, it was necessary to extract information from a geographically diverse set of historical newspapers (Table 2.1). Most of the sampled newspapers were on microfilm and located

**Table 2.1:** Historical Newspapers Consulted, date ranges shown are not necessarily the complete run of newspaper, but simply the timeframe analyzed for Chinese references.

<i>Fully Extracted for the Date Range</i>		
<i>City, State</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Date Range</i>
<b><i>Fort Benton, MT</i></b>	<i>The Benton Record</i>	1875-1884
<b><i>Granite, MT</i></b>	<i>The Granite Mountain Star</i>	1890-1891
<b><i>Helena, MT</i></b>	<i>The Helena Independent</i>	1875-1954
	<i>The Colored Citizen</i>	1894
	<i>The Montana Plaindealer</i>	1906-1911
<b><i>Missoula, MT</i></b>	<i>The Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer</i>	1869-1873
<b><i>Superior, MT</i></b>	<i>The Mineral Independent</i>	1906-Present
<i>Partially Indexed and/or Extracted</i>		
<b><i>Billings, MT</i></b>	<i>The Billings Gazette</i>	1889-1931
<b><i>Butte, MT</i></b>	<i>The Montana Standard</i>	1880s-1929
<b><i>Deer Lodge, MT</i></b>	<i>The New Northwest</i>	1869-1888
<b><i>Fort Benton, MT</i></b>	<i>The Daily River Press</i>	1880-1923
<b><i>Glendive, MT</i></b>	<i>The Yellowstone Monitor</i>	1905-1923
<b><i>Glendive, MT</i></b>	<i>The Glendive Independent</i>	1881-1902
<b><i>Glendive, MT</i></b>	<i>The Dawson County Review</i>	1899-1941
<b><i>Great Falls, MT</i></b>	<i>The Great Falls Tribune</i>	1885-1958
<b><i>Helena, MT</i></b>	<i>The Helena Daily Herald</i>	1869-1878
<b><i>New York City, NY</i></b>	<i>The New York Times</i>	1868-1901
<b><i>Whitefish, MT</i></b>	<i>The Whitefish Pilot</i>	1904-1941

at the University of Montana’s Mansfield Library. The *Helena Independent* and the *Anaconda Standard* were both available digitally on the genealogical website Ancestry.com. The availability of digitized newspapers was enormously valuable for the research, as it saved going page by page through each weekly or daily version of the newspaper. Even though great care was taken in searching for and recording articles relating to the Chinese experience in Montana in these newspapers, it is always possible that some detail was unintentionally overlooked. Even so, the extracted articles are by far the most comprehensive and methodical effort to date in regards to the subject matter. The direct results of these extractions are posted on the research website, and hard copies have been presented to the Montana Historical Society, the Mansfield Library, and the

local historical society where applicable. As more digitized newspapers become available in the future, this will be a windfall for others who wish to research this topic.

In general, when searching for articles on microfilm the researcher limited extraction to only those stories that dealt with the Chinese in Montana or that addressed national events that directly influenced the Chinese living within the state and specifically mention Montana in those articles. For example, lengthy editorials in regards to the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 were omitted unless they were from editors in Montana, or if they mentioned the impacts of that legislation on the Chinese in Montana. To accomplish a complete extraction of pertinent articles the researcher went page by page through the various newspapers. In some cases there were partial indexes of Chinese-related articles available from historical societies from around the state such as the Overholser Historical Research Center in Fort Benton, Montana, or in the bibliographies of secondary historical resources consulted and discussed later in this chapter.

For the digitized articles available on Ancestry.com the methods employed were slightly different. While the search feature within the digitized newspapers provided an excellent means of quickly scanning through hundreds of pages of text, it was necessary to account for all spellings and colloquialisms of the Chinese. For example, the first searches for “Chinese” resulted in an incredible number of results that referred to national or international events that had little or no bearing on this research. However, after some trial and error it was discovered that searching for “Chinaman” or “Chinawoman” would result in a much higher number of Montana-specific articles. Other search phrases included, “Celestial,” “Oriental,” “Heathen,” and the names of individual Chinese already mentioned in other articles or census records. While these keywords are pejorative in

today's lexicon, at the time these were the main way of labeling the Chinese in Montana and around the world. Interestingly, after the turn of the 20th century, newspapers began naming the individual Chinese in their stories (versus racist monikers) far more often than in the 19th century. This presented additional difficulties when searching later newspapers with the above-mentioned keywords, as surely some stories were missed due to the use of an individual's name.

In some cases, individual newspapers extracted for this project include a date range that may not be inclusive of the entire run of the paper, but are in fact the timeframes that were searched. This means that for some newspapers, such as the *Helena Independent*, there are gaps in the years available online or in the library, and articles after the 1943 end date of research were not included in the extractions. Future directions for researching historical newspapers should therefore include extracting more articles from the entire run of newspapers associated with smaller Chinese communities including the *Billings Gazette*, *Livingston Enterprise*, and *Dillon Tribune*. None of these papers are easily accessible from the Mansfield Library, but can be located at the Montana State Historical Society in Helena. Newspaper extractions as a result of this dissertation are discussed in Appendix C.

### *2.2.2 County Courthouse Records*

Today the state of Montana has 56 counties, some rich with Chinese history. In addition, Montana county boundaries have shifted, which means that some sites and survey areas were located in as much as three counties over the last 150 years and each courthouse required a visit. Specifically, only 13 courthouses were visited (Table 2.2), and these were selected by the abundance of Chinese activity found in other historical

resources, and the need to guide archaeological surveys. The various county courthouses spread around the state hold a variety of historical documents that helped answer research questions and that guided other aspects of this research including archaeological surveys discussed later. In general, most Chinese references in files held by these county courthouses fall into the water rights, placer mining claims, and deed of sale books.

Water right books were not the first resources that came to mind when looking for historical documents on the Chinese, but these are one of the few types of claims that the Chinese were able to buy and sell. These documents are important as a means of placing

**Table 2.2:** County Courthouses Consulted, 13 Total Visited

<i>Montana County Courthouses Consulted</i>	
<i>Name</i>	<b>Books Consulted</b>
<i>Beaverhead County, Dillon</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Lode Claims, Deed of Sale, Leases</i>
<i>Broadwater County, Townsend</i>	<i>Deed of Sale</i>
<i>Deer Lodge County, Anaconda</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Lode Claims, Deeds of Sale, Leases</i>
<i>Gallatin County, Bozeman</i>	<i>Water Rights, Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Granite County, Philipsburg</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Jefferson County, Boulder</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Lode Claims, Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Lewis &amp; Clark County, Helena</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Lode Claims, Deeds of Sale, Leases</i>
<i>Madison County, Virginia City</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Meagher County, White Sulphur Springs</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Deeds of Sale, Leases</i>
<i>Missoula County, Missoula</i>	<i>Water Rights, Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Park County, Livingston</i>	<i>Water Rights, Placer Claims, Deeds of Sale, Leases</i>
<i>Ravalli County, Hamilton</i>	<i>Deeds of Sale</i>
<i>Sweetwater County, Big Timber</i>	<i>Deeds of Sale, Leases</i>

Chinese mining companies onto a specific part of a landscape, which makes them a good tool for targeting archaeological surveys. For example, a water right claim from the Park County Courthouse in Livingston helped to guide an archaeological survey along Emigrant Creek, just north of Yellowstone National Park that resulted in the discovery of a previously unknown Chinese mining camp owned by Quong Chong Company and dated to 1897.

Montana Territory's Alien Law, passed in 1872 and rescinded shortly thereafter, barred Chinese from formally owning lode claims and was supposed to extend to placer mining claims. Yet, the law in principal did not work in practice with relation to placer claims, and many transactions between Chinese and Euroamerican miners are captured within the books. Placer claim records contain approximate locations of Chinese-owned claims, property value and purchase price, and other pertinent information. Thus, while placer claims proved useful, the lode mining claim books at these courthouses appear to have little value to researchers interested in the Chinese Overseas, and should be a last resort in historical studies.

Finally, the deed of sale books were by far the most productive suite of historical records consulted for this project at the county courthouses. While the same 1872 Alien Law was supposed to bar Chinese from owning any type of real property, it again did not influence the sale and purchase of town lots, pre-existing buildings, or rural properties. In all county courthouses sampled in this research, each had at least one Chinese reference within the deed books.

During the course of the research a major and unexpected problem was encountered with the courthouse documents. It appears that there was county by county

variability in the recording of Chinese transactions in the various books. In particular, Lewis and Clark, Meagher, and Park Counties had little or no references to the Chinese, even though those areas had substantial Chinese populations for decades. For example in Lewis and Clark County, after consulting the water right, placer claims, deeds, and even lease books, only two references were found from 1864 to the 1940s, and both came from 1866. This is highly unusual, as Lewis and Clark County had upwards of 500 Chinese in 1880. There are similar situations for Meagher and Park Counties where there were only four and two references, respectively. In contrast, Jefferson and Beaverhead Counties had comparably less numbers of Chinese during the historical period but had 14 and 48 references, respectively. It is unclear why exactly there was such a disparity in county records, but it appears that there was some effect from the cultural biases in the historical records in counties with large Chinese populations.

Results of the county courthouse records search accomplished parts of the proposed research and can be retrieved online at the project website. Yet the incompleteness of the records at some courthouses hindered efforts. Overall, it was easy to locate Chinese records as individual names stand out in comparison to Euroamericans during this period. A major weakness of the project was the inability of researchers to canvas more of the county courthouses due to time and budgetary constraints. Most Montana counties, except for Cascade, Chouteau, Flathead, Mineral, and Yellowstone Counties, had little or no Chinese populations; given this, Cascade, Chouteau, Flathead, Mineral, and Yellowstone Counties should be examined by future researchers.



### *2.2.3 Federal Census Records*

The federal census records are an important source for determining the number, age, occupation, and location of Chinese around the state. There are of course inherent problems with the federal censuses, such as census taker bias with the Chinese, the fact that censuses are conducted every 10 years, and the incompleteness of the records (such as the burnt 1890 census). In Montana a few institutions house the entire rolls of the Federal Censuses, including the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana and the Montana Historical Society. However, the genealogical website Ancestry.com has the complete run of census records digitized and searchable which greatly eased the consultation of these resources.

The 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses were studied in detail for this project. As mentioned earlier the 1890 census rolls for Montana, and most of the nation, were lost in an accidental fire in St. Louis. It would have been useful to use the 1940 census, but it is not available for public review. Other scholars such as Swartout (1988) only used total numbers of Chinese, but for this project it was necessary to acquire more detailed information such as where they lived by city/township, age classes, and other pertinent information. Appendix B contains maps produced from the 1870, 1880, and 1900-1930 Federal Censuses. Even with the problems noted above, the various census records still offered a snapshot of the population every ten years and helped guide a macro-scale analysis of population movements. Gaps within the ten year snapshots partially can be filled by using contemporary newspaper accounts.

During research on the federal census records it became clear that there were serious flaws in some of the datasets. In particular, the 1870 census, which recorded

1,949 total Chinese, only reported a handful of personal names, with the rest listed as “Chinaman” or “Chinawoman.” In subsequent years, however, there were fewer Chinese listed in this fashion.

#### *2.2.4 Archival Documents*

There are only two archives in Montana that had a significant number of Chinese-related materials. However, while not technically archival institutions, local historical societies in Granite, Mineral, and Meagher Counties had some primary documents that housed information on past Chinese residents. The K. Ross Toole Archives and Special Collections at the University of Montana’s Mansfield Library, and the Montana Historical Society Archives in Helena are the two main institutions in the state with Chinese materials. An extensive search of the Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections at Montana State University did not uncover any Chinese-related materials that were not already available in general circulation (e.g. Smith 1996, 2007).

The K. Ross Toole Archives had a number of collections that referred to the Chinese in both text and photographic media formats. In particular, the Frank M. Ingalls Photograph Collection (MSS498) had four photographs of Chinese men and women from Missoula dating to ca. 1900 (Figure 2.1). Another important resource is the Audra Browman Collections that have many of the Missoula newspapers indexed by subject, and have numerous references to the Chinese. There are no collections dedicated to the Chinese in the K. Ross Toole Archives, but scraps of information are spread through several collections.

**Figure 2.1:** Unidentified Chinese Man, Frank M. Ingalls Collection, K. Ross Toole Archives and Special Collections, University of Montana, Missoula, MT.



The second institution visited was the Montana State Historical Society Archives in Helena. This institution holds hundreds of linear feet of material on the Chinese in Montana, spread through vertical files, boxed collections, and even artifacts housed in their curation facility. One major collection was donated by Hal Waldrup and includes dozens of Chinese-related artifacts from the Mai Wah Noodle Parlor on West Mercury St. in Butte. With the wealth of materials housed at this location, it is hard to summarize. Most of the materials used for the research project came from the vertical files for “Chinese” or “Tommy Haw.” These indexes included newspaper clippings from the *Helena Daily Herald*, unpublished manuscripts, and hints of information hidden in other collections. Possibly the most important collection housed at the facility is the group of

business records and correspondence for a Chinese laundry in Butte dating to the period 1890-1930s, because it promises an inside view of the Chinese experience. However, this collection was not analyzed as the documents are in Chinese and no translator was available for such a large number of documents. This would be an interesting avenue to pursue for future researchers.

A number of local historical societies provided materials that would tend to be classified as archival, including additional photographic prints, receipt books, newspaper clippings, and even artifacts. The Granite County Historical Museum located in Philipsburg has two receipt books from a Chinese laundry during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a few historical photographs. Superior's Mineral County Historical Society and Museum provided historical photographs, newspaper and census indexes, and miscellaneous primary documents including a welfare request from concerned citizens for a local Chinese resident dating to 1915. The Overholser Historical Research Center in Fort Benton had a number of photographs, newspaper and census indexes, and a wide variety of historical documents. Beaverhead County's Historical Society and Genealogical Center had detailed information on one Chinese resident, Tommy Haw, and small clippings on other events. Finally, Meagher County Historical Society had a few notes regarding Chinese servants and gardeners in White Sulphur Springs. Other historical societies around the state were contacted in regards to the Chinese in their area, but they could not locate any materials (Table 2.3).

#### *2.2.5 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps*

While not systematically used during the course of this dissertation, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps are a significant tool to assist researchers. Established in the

1860s, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company created detailed maps of over 12,000 American communities, including several dozen in Montana (Oswald 1997). These maps, designed to assess fire potential and liability, recorded an entire town's layout, construction, building function, and in some cases the ethnicity of the occupants, on large colored plat maps. The Chinese-focused archaeological investigations at Virginia City, Butte, Big Timber, and Marysville used these maps to target excavation units and to guide remote sensing investigations. For instance, Sanborn Maps from 1889 and 1893 helped University of Montana archaeologists locate the remains of the Chinese laundry/restaurant in Big Timber, and allowed excavators to target specific sections of the subsurface building remains. In addition, the Sanborn Maps can provide the spatial location of Chinese houses and businesses within Montana's communities and the range of businesses during a particular place and time. Most of Montana's Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are located online, and accessed via a password available at the University of Montana's Mansfield Library or the Montana Historical Society. However, the online maps do not include the color portions of the original plats that relate to the type of building material used in the construction of structures. It is recommended that future researchers visit local archives, courthouses, the Montana Historical Society, or the special collections departments of universities to locate the originals. Some of these original plat maps for Montana are also held at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

#### *2.2.6 Secondary Resources*

Montana has an extensive collection of books chronicling the settlement and growth of the state from the era of the earliest Euroamerican exploration. The first

attempt at a systematic history of Montana was undertaken in 1885 by Michael A. Leeson and commissioned by the Montana Historical Society. Since 1885, hundreds of local, state, and regional books and articles have been published. However, the numbers of secondary materials that include detailed information on the Chinese contributions to the state's broad patterns of history are few and far between. In fact, the paucity of Chinese-related secondary resources forced detailed research of primary documents including newspapers and original materials from historical societies.

**Table 2.3:** Montana Historical Societies and Museums contacted, their location and an annotation on the presence or absence of Chinese materials.

<i>Historical Societies Consulted</i>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Chinese References?</b>
<i>Beaver Head Hunters Genealogical Society</i>	<i>Dillon</i>	Yes, extensive
<i>Beaverhead County Historical Society</i>	<i>Dillon</i>	Yes, extensive
<i>Big Horn County Historical Museum</i>	<i>Hardin</i>	No
<i>Cascade County Historical Society</i>	<i>Great Falls</i>	<i>Yes, limited</i>
<i>Crazy Mountain Museum</i>	<i>Big Timber</i>	<i>Yes, limited</i>
<i>Custer County Art &amp; Heritage Center</i>	<i>Miles City</i>	No
<i>Fort Missoula Historical Museum</i>	<i>Missoula</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Frontier Gateway Museum</i>	<i>Glendive</i>	No
<i>Granite County Historical Museum</i>	<i>Philipsburg</i>	Yes, extensive
<i>Livingston Heritage Center</i>	<i>Livingston</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Meagher County Historical Society/Castle Museum</i>	<i>White Sulphur</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Mineral County Historical Society</i>	<i>Superior</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Northwest Montana Historical Society</i>	<i>Kalispell</i>	No
<i>Overholser Historical Research Center</i>	<i>Fort Benton</i>	Yes, extensive
<i>Park County Historical Society</i>	<i>Livingston</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Ravalli County Historical Society</i>	<i>Hamilton</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Sanders County Historical Museum</i>	<i>Thompson Falls</i>	Yes, limited
<i>Yellowstone Western Heritage Center</i>	<i>Billings</i>	None

In reality, the bulk of Montana's secondary sources dealing with the Chinese are only useful as a means of finding primary source documents, and tracking down applicable newspaper stories. Most local history books rely merely on period newspaper

articles or anecdotal stories with little or no citations (i.e. Davis 1966; MCHA 1976; Davis 1982; Helterline 1984; Hahn 1986; BCHBA 1990; Smith 1996, 2007; Draszt 1998; Whitfield 2007), though this not always the case (i.e. Davis 1987; Paige et al. 1998; Flynn 2006; Stoner 2007). The *Montana Magazine of Western History* published a number of articles over the last few decades that help illuminate the role of Chinese in the state (Wunder 1980; Newby 1987; Rohe 1982, 1996; Swartout 1988; Schnieder 2004). However, as found in other types of historical resources in Montana, many secondary sources on other Montana topics gave no mention at all to the Chinese pioneers of the state. The researcher did not conduct a thorough survey of pioneer memoirs and diaries from this period, though two were identified as significant sources (Dunbar and Philips 1927[1]; Grant 1996:198).

### **2.3: Archaeological Research Methods**

The historical record has relatively little to offer on describing the Chinese in Montana, especially in regard to the daily lives of these immigrants. While there is an abundance of historical data describing important figures and events in Montana's history, the Chinese, and other ethnic groups, were largely ignored by the chroniclers of the state's general history. Archaeological materials provide some patches for these holes, as material culture in the forms of artifacts are the residue of past daily human activity. For the dissertation research, previously excavated sites and their reports were the backbone of investigations. However, new surveys and excavations in targeted areas helped to uncover additional information on specific Chinese experiences in Montana. This section is divided into two main parts, previous archaeological studies and new research that was part of the dissertation work.

### *2.3.1 Previous Chinese in Montana Archaeological Work*

Even though there were significant Chinese populations in the state of Montana from the territorial period through the mid-twentieth century, only five major archaeological projects (e.g., Fredlund 1991 and Meyer 2001; Rossillon et al. 2002; Bowen 2004; Hall et al. 2006; Rossillon et al. 2008) were conducted on sites pertaining to this history before initiation of my dissertation research in 2006. The relative paucity of work compared to states in the greater Northwest region including Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, might result from a lack of awareness of these resources archaeologically and historically. Given this, these four studies are landmarks in the archaeology of Chinese in Montana and offer important comparative information for research endeavors.

In the late 1980s the cultural resource management firm, GCM Inc., conducted archaeological survey and testing of the German Gulch Mining District (24SB0212), located approximately 16 miles west of Butte, MT (Fredlund et al. 1991). The project was executed in front of a road expansion to the Beal Mine at the head of German Gulch, and was contracted through the Beal Mountain Mining Company and the Deerlodge National Forest. German Gulch's history will be discussed in greater detail in following chapters, but for summary purposes the site was occupied by a large Chinese mining population from the 1870s through the 1890s. Archaeologists with GCM, Inc. discovered upwards of 40 features spread throughout the drainage that relate to both Chinese and Euroamerican mining features and habitations. Intensive archaeological excavation uncovered thousands of artifacts relating to the life and habits of the German Gulch residents, most of which were Chinese materials.



The reports for this project are excellent and detailed (Fredlund et al. 1991), though lacking in theoretical analysis. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office in Helena holds a copy of the finished two-volume report. In addition, the results of the excavations were used in a forward-thinking master's thesis (Meyer 2001) from the University of Montana. Most professionals in the state knew the existence of this study when dissertation research commenced, but the collection had apparently been lost. The

**Figure 2.2:** Sample of Chinese Materials from the German Gulch Collection.



Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) did not even hold a copy of the finished report in its files. Finally, after nearly a year of research the collection was discovered in a wooden cabinet in the garages at the BDNF. The collection appears to be in good condition, with the exception of poor curation over the last 17 years (Figure 2.2). There are a number of artifacts missing from the collection, though efforts in 2009 and 2010

located the bulk of the most significant missing artifacts. During the spring of 2010, archaeologists and Passport in Time volunteers at the University of Montana spent an entire week re-processing the collection. The collection is temporarily housed at the University of Montana, but permanent storage will be undertaken at the Bureau of Land Management's Curation Facility in Billings, MT. Bill Norman, a Master's student at UM, is using the German Gulch collection for his thesis research, with a scheduled completion date of spring 2011.

The cultural resource management firm RTI, Inc. conducted the second large-scale archaeological project with a large Chinese component in 2002 under direction of Mitzi Rossillon. In 2002, a number of destructive wildfires roared through the Big Belt Mountains located 20 miles east of Helena, on property managed by the Helena National Forest. The Big Belt Mountains were the scene of significant placer and lode-mining endeavors from the early discovery period in the 1860s through the 1880s. The 2002 wildfire in particular hit Cave and Magpie gulches, with both drainages having significant historic Euroamerican and Chinese influences. During the course of survey and testing of sites in the wake of the wildfire, RTI located two sites that had Chinese artifacts and identified two more that could have the potential for more materials. Compared to the archaeology conducted at German Gulch, the Big Belt sites were smaller and ephemeral but retained significant integrity since occupation. Unlike the German Gulch research, the report (Rossillon et al. 2003) and archaeological collection were easily accessible at the Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office.

A smaller study conducted in the downtown part of Virginia City, Montana during the early 2000s uncovered a number of Chinese-related materials. These

excavations were executed by Dr. John Douglas and Linda Brown of the University of Montana and resulted in a thesis dedicated to the Chinese in Virginia City (Bowen 2004) and a technical report (Douglas and Brown 2002). This collection is currently housed at the Montana Heritage Commission curation facility located just outside of Virginia City.

The investigation of the Marysville Chinese laundry was the last major project conducted before inception of the dissertation research in fall of 2006. During the fall of 2005 archaeologists with Western Cultural, Inc. (WCI), under the direction of lead investigator Dan Hall, excavated a Chinese laundry in the town of Marysville. This project was contracted through the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT), as the agency was proposing to widen the current Marysville Road, and would have impacted some parts of the Marysville Historic District. Marysville was a silver mining town dating to the 1880s, and the Chinese at this site were entrepreneurs, not necessarily miners. Hall et al. (2006) detail the excavation of numerous Chinese and Euroamerican-related artifacts, and possibly even the sign of Chinese children in the archaeological record. While yet unconfirmed beyond a reasonable doubt, the discovery of Chinese children archaeologically would be exciting to understand various cultural processes. WCI and MDOT orchestrated the donation of the Marysville Chinatown collection to the University of Montana's (UM) Department of Anthropology during the fall of 2006 after the final report was finished. The materials are now used as a comparative and teaching collection.

Finally, during the summer of 2007, volunteers and employees of RTI, Inc. under the direction of Mitzi Rossillon conducted the first full-scale archaeological testing of Butte's Chinatown. The final report (Rossillon et al. 2008) details that most of the

recovered archaeological materials date to the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These materials offer the first analysis of an urban Montana Chinese population, and provide detailed information on the lifestyles of these immigrants.

### *2.3.2 Chinese in Montana Archaeological Research in the Last Four Years*

As shown by the few studies above, there was a distinct lack of archaeological excavations and reports dealing with the Chinese in Montana. This dissertation research intended to expand the archaeological literature on the Chinese in Montana by conducting some targeted investigations of previously recorded sites, and by facilitating investigation of new areas and sites. All sites excavated and surveyed met the Montana State Historic Preservation standards for archaeological recordation. Three sites in particular were tested as part of the dissertation effort, with an additional site excavated for a masters student's research. In addition, researchers revisited sites with possible Chinese components, and new pedestrian surveys were conducted in areas with high potential for Chinese materials.

In the Fall of 2006 and the summer of 2007, a site located outside Plains, Montana that was reported to be of Chinese origin was archaeologically investigated through joint USFS and UM field schools (Merritt 2006; Merritt 2009b). The Poacher Gulch Terraces (24SA0122) are a visually impressive series of hand-stacked rock terraces (Figure 2.3) located in a narrow drainage of Western Montana, and are broadly similar to known Chinese terraces in Idaho (Fee 1991, 1993). According to oral histories and local lore, the terraces were rumored to have been built by opportunity-seeking Chinese from the nearby Northern Pacific Railroad. There are a number of instances of similarly impressive rock features attributed to the Chinese with or

**Figure 2.3:** Overview of Poacher Gulch Terraces, April 2007.



without substantiation (Wegars 1991; Valentine 2001; Smith 2003). In the case of the Poacher Gulch terraces, four weeks of archaeological excavation and survey did not uncover any Chinese materials, and historical materials discovered after end of fieldwork conclusively negated the hypothesis. However, the site is important as an exemplary case of the attribution of Euroamerican rock stacking features to Chinese construction.

In the spring of 2007, investigation of a 1995 excavated collection from the Lolo National Forest resulted in the discovery of two more sites relating to the Chinese in Montana. The limited work in 1995 by Lolo National Forest archaeologists to determine eligibility of various sites for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places inadvertently discovered a number of Chinese artifacts. However, the results of this research were not formally published and only held on file at the Lolo National Forest. With assistance of students from UM, the China Gulch (24MN0262) and Louiseville (24MN0249) collections were re-catalogued, and summarized in a new report (Merritt 2007). The two sites investigated date to the first migration of Chinese into Western

Montana through the Cedar Creek Gold Rush of 1869-1870, and provide a rare glimpse of Chinese vernacular architecture through hand-stacked rock hearths. This is a significant collection as it is earlier than either the German Gulch or Marysville assemblages. Results of the reanalysis of this collection led to additional testing of features in China Gulch and Louiseville during the summer of 2008 and results have helped better understand this facet of Montana's cultural heritage (Merritt 2009a).

The final new Chinese site was excavated in Big Timber, Montana. This examination of Big Timber's Chinatown paralleled with the dissertation fieldwork, but was part of master's student Justin Moschelle's research, which resulted in a professional project (Moschelle 2009). Moschelle, a former resident of Big Timber, had heard the stories of the Chinatown located near the old Northern Pacific Railroad, and this led to a three-week archaeological field school dedicated to learning about the community's Chinese. The field school crew uncovered the remains of a Chinese laundry/restaurant (24SW0738) dating from 1882 to the 1940s. Archaeologists uncovered approximately 35,000 artifacts, many relating to the Chinese occupation of the city block and parcel.

Outside of these four sites, there was no way of easily determining the number of previously recorded Chinese sites across the state. The state Archaeological Records Laboratory housed at UM holds all the digital and print copies of the nearly 40,000 archaeological site forms recorded in the state. In the current databases it is impossible to search for keywords such as "Chinese," thus making it remarkably difficult to try to locate all previously recorded sites with Chinese affiliation. Thus one goal of the dissertation was to compile a list of all Chinese sites in the state, and the results of this endeavor are tabulated in Table 2.4 and shown in Figure 2.4. The sites noted under the

“Potential or Unconfirmed” heading have the possibility for archaeological remains of the Chinese as indicated by oral histories, historical documents, and proximity to known Chinese sites. It is likely that most, if not all, of the “Potential” sites could have Chinese archaeological components.

In perusing the site forms and reports it was also determined that there were many areas of the state with Chinese populations that had not been intensively surveyed for sites or materials. Working through a partnership with Region 1 of the USFS, UM researchers worked on six National Forests throughout the state of Montana surveying new areas with high Chinese probabilities, revisiting previously recorded Chinese sites or those that may hold unrecorded Chinese features. During the summer of 2008, archaeologists surveyed nearly 4,000 acres across the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Gallatin, Helena, Lewis & Clark and Lolo National Forests. Other forests, including the Bitterroot, Flathead and Kootenai National Forests have potential for Chinese archaeological sites but due to limited time and resources these were not researched for this dissertation. As a result of the 2008 fieldwork, three new Chinese sites were located, ten sites were revisited (two of which were previously not recorded as having a Chinese presence when in fact they did), and several sites were removed from the “potential” list. Results of this research was compiled into a USFS Northern Rockies (Region 1) Management and Interpretation Plan (Merritt 2010) in conjunction with a public oriented document. This document will provide land-managers a historical and archaeological context for future research and preservation efforts on the various forest components. These sites will be discussed in more detail throughout this dissertation, but Appendix A contains a brief summary of all sites in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.4:** Table showing confirmed, disproved, and potential Chinese sites in Montana.

<i>Confirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</i>			
Site #	Site Name	Period	Owner
24BE0169	Bannack	1862-1880s	State of MT
24BE0187	Glendale	1870-1900	Private/BLM
24BE0807	Lion City	1870-1880s	University of MS
24BE1381	French Creek Cabins	1870-1880s	USFS
24BE2186**	Blue-Eyed Annie	1895-1901	USFS
24BW0112	Confederate Gulch	1865-1890s	Private/USFS
24BW0497	Lombard	1890-1910	BLM
24GN0009	Chinese Graves	1900-1920	USFS
24GN0363	Granite	1880-1893	USFS/Private
24GN0377	Sierra Mine Site	1870s-1910s	BLM/Private
24GN0540	Garnet	1880s-1930s	BLM/Private
24JF0059	Ruddville	1871-1880	USFS
24LC0712	Chinaman's Cove	1860s-1880s	BOR
24LC1032	Forestvale Cemetery	1898-1954	Private
24LC1083	Marysville	1870s-1900s	Private
24LC1711	Upper Cave Town	1868-1880s	USFS
24LC1723	Upper Cave Gulch	1870s-1890s	USFS
24MA0723	Virginia City	1863-1890s	Private/State
24MN0249	Louiseville	1870-1890s	USFS
24MN0262	China Gulch Hearths	1870-1875	USFS
24MN0332*	Rowley Chinese Hearths	1870-1890s	USFS
24MO0110	Montreal or "Old Town"	1874-1890s	USFS
24MO0172	Coloma	1880s-1910s	BLM/Private
24MO0266	Fort Missoula	1877-present	County/USFS/Private
24PA1330*	Huckleberry Camp	1897-1900	USFS
24PW1021	Blackfoot City	1865-1880s	Private/BLM/USFS
24SA0155	Weeksville	1881-1883	Private
24SA0591*	West Noxon Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0592*	Submerged Noxon Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private (Avista Corp.)
24SA0593*	Thompson River Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0594*	East Eddy Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0595*	East Weeksville Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0596*	"Last Chance" Railroad Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0597*	"Fu Sang" Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0598*	"Taklamakan" Chinese RR Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0599*	Perma Bridge Railroad Camp	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SB0212	German Gulch	1865-1900	USFS/Private
24SW0738	Big Timber	1882-1940	Private
24SB0765	Butte	1864-1940s	Private
24SB0067	Highland City	1865-1870s	USFS
<i>Disproved Chinese Archaeological Sites</i>			
24BE0173	"Chinese" Stone Cabins	1860s-1890s	Private
24SA0122	Poacher Gulch Terraces	1900-1920	USFS
<i>Potential or Unconfirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</i>			
24BE0806	Hecla	1870s-1880s	University of MS
24BE1511	Cow Creek Placers	1870s-1880s	USFS
24BE1615	Trapper City	1865-1880s	USFS

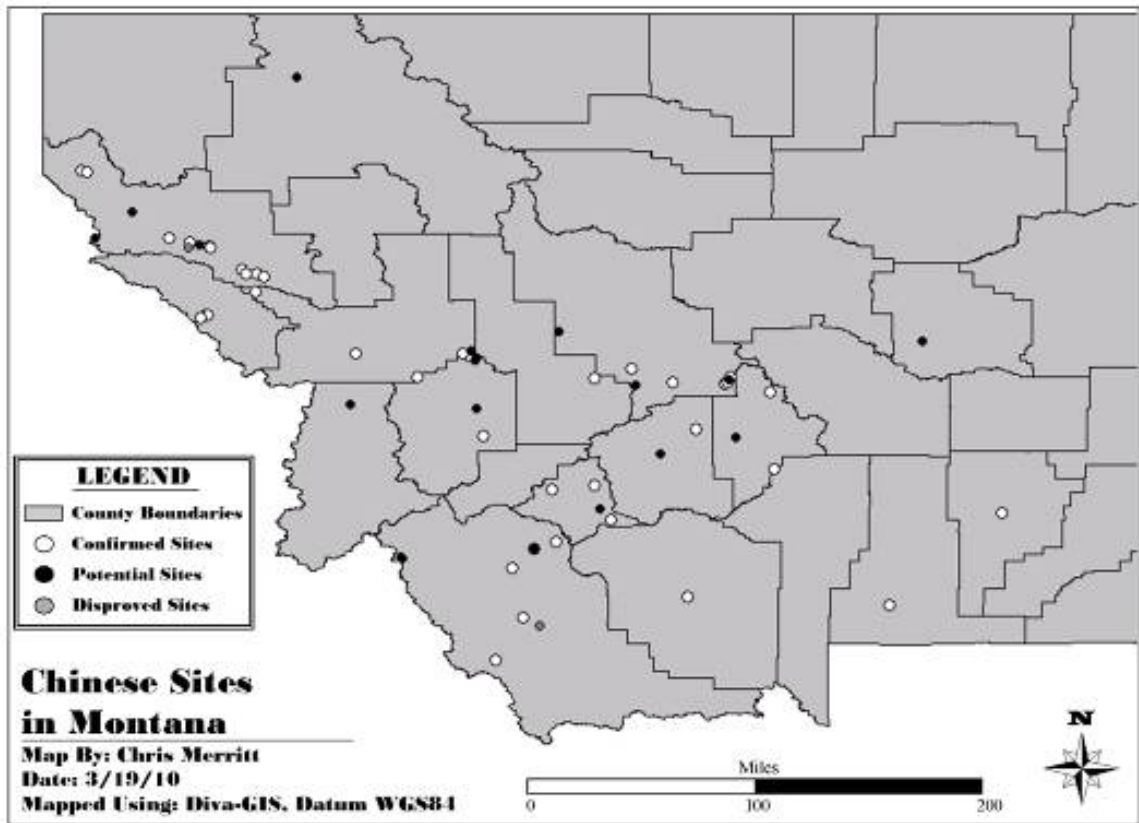


<b>24BE1872</b>	<i>Pioneer Cabins</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
<b>24BW0287</b>	<i>Ten Mile Tunnel</i>	1860s-1880s	BLM/Private
<b>24FH0446</b>	<i>China Basin Cabin</i>	1920s-1930s	USFS
<b>24GN0894</b>	<i>Bedrock Flume or “China Diggings”</i>	1860s-1890s	Private/BLM
<b>24JF0290</b>	<i>Chinese Diggings</i>	1870s-1880s	Private
<b>24JT0075</b>	<i>Yogo Town</i>	1878-1880s	USFS
<b>24LC0467</b>	<i>Old Lincoln</i>	1865-1880s	USFS
<b>24LC1112</b>	<i>Austin Mining District</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS/Private
<b>24LC1716</b>	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
<b>24MO0179</b>	<i>Yreka</i>	1860s-1890s	State/UM/Private
<b>24PW0183</b>	<i>Reynold’s City</i>	1860s-1890s	BLM/Private
<b>24PW0392</b>	<i>Emmetsburg Cemetery</i>	1865-1879	BLM
<b>24RA0148</b>	<i>Fort Owen</i>	1855-1870	State of MT
<b>24SA0105</b>	<i>China Ditch</i>	1885	USFS
<b>24SA0348</b>	<i>NPRR Eddy/Weeksville</i>	1881-1883	Private
<b>24SA0568</b>	<i>White Pine</i>	1881-1910	Private
<b>24SB0742</b>	<i>China Gulch Pads</i>	1870s-1920s	USFS

\* = *New Site Summer of 2008* \*\* = *New Site 2008, No Chinese Artifacts*

Over the course of the archaeological research it became clear that the majority of Chinese sites that existed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have slowly been removed from the landscape by a variety of processes. Mineral exploitation through dredging in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century destroyed many of the sites located along creeks and streams that were probably similar in size and scope to German Gulch’s remains. Today, a resurgence of mining, logging, and housing developments are influencing the few fragments of the past not already destroyed. Between the ravages of time and negative developmental impacts, the 40 confirmed Chinese sites noted in Table 2.4 may represent a majority of large, intact archaeological sites. There is likely additional yet an undetermined number of sites on other private lands in the heart of Montana’s mining country. Such a small, but important series of sites certainly need sufficient protection to ensure their survival for many generations, and this topic is discussed in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

**Figure 2.4:** Location of Chinese Archaeological Sites in Montana.



## 2.4: Research Omissions

The broad methodological goals of this dissertation project intended to tie together the threads of history and archaeology in reference to the Chinese experience in Montana. As mentioned earlier, such a macro-scale endeavor had not been attempted in Montana, especially on historic sites. At the end of this project's research phase, it is clear that much has been accomplished, but so much more needs to be done. Studying the Chinese in Montana could easily be a life's work, but the boundaries had to be drawn to keep this dissertation manageable. This chapter was written to not only outline the research methods used for the dissertation research but also to provide future researchers with a starting point for further work. Overall, the major regret is the fact that the

immigration and naturalization records, which would have allowed an individual portrait of Chinese pioneers in Montana, were not examined, and I encourage future researchers to visit the Library of Congress and the National Archives to contribute to the foundation outlined here. In addition, most of the investigations of Chinese in the state focused on areas west of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, which left out rural Chinese populations across the eastern third of Montana. However, due to the occupations of Chinese in rural eastern Montana, most potential areas of archaeological remains are located within current urban areas and would be difficult to locate and survey without significant excavations.

## **CHAPTER 3: ENTRANCE AND EXPANSION (1862-1880)**

### **3.1: Chapter Overview 1860s-1880**

As noted in the introduction, the organization of this dissertation is different than many other historic archaeological studies. Specifically, instead of separating the history and archaeology data into separate chapters or sections, I attempt to weave both together to complete a more holistic image of the Chinese in Montana. Due to the historical prejudices against the Chinese during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries their incorporation into primary-source historical documents is limited and focused largely on simple demographics or caricatures in newspaper accounts. Thus, archaeological materials are the only source of substantial information on the daily lives of these early Chinese pioneers.

Historical documents from the 1862-1880 period of Montana Chinese history provide some information on where they lived, for how long, and some anecdotal stories of individual lives. However, archaeological studies of sites within this period supply detailed data on the daily lives of these individuals and bring them into better focus. There are currently 20 confirmed archaeological sites recorded in the state with at least some connection to the first period (1862-1880) of Montana's Chinese, with an additional 13 sites containing potential for data relevant to this period (Table 3.1). Unfortunately, many of the sites recorded on this list are heavily disturbed by re-mining or development. The archaeological remains of Confederate Gulch and Diamond City specifically, are destroyed, though a few miscellaneous Chinese artifacts have come out of the modern mining claims. Virginia City, Butte, and Bannack have existing Chinese archaeological materials, though due to their relatively urban environments, significant mixing has

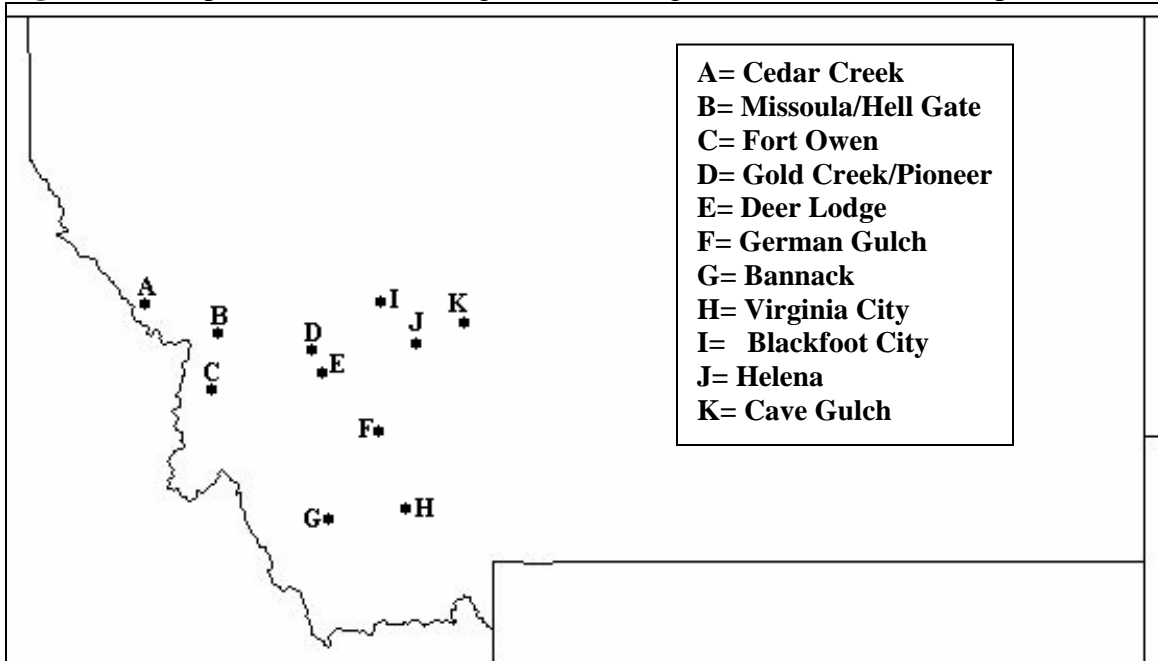
occurred, placing artifacts out of context. It is not feasible to discuss each recorded site individually (See Appendix B for summaries); instead I incorporate the archaeological contributions to interpreting early Montana Territory Chinese experience on equal footing with the historical discussions.

**Table 3.1:** Chinese archaeological sites in Montana relating to the 1862-1880 period.

<b>Confirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Owner</i>
24BE0169	<i>Bannack</i>	1862-1880s	State of MT
24BE0187	<i>Glendale</i>	1870-1900	Private/BLM
24BE0807	<i>Lion City</i>	1870-1880s	University of MS
24BE1381	<i>French Creek Cabins</i>	1870-1880s	USFS
24BW0112	<i>Confederate Gulch</i>	1865-1890s	Private/USFS
24JF0059	<i>Ruddville</i>	1871-1880	USFS
24GN0377	<i>Sierra Mine Site</i>	1870s-1910s	BLM/Private
24LC0712	<i>Chinaman's Cove</i>	1860s-1880s	BOR
24LC1711	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	1868-1880s	USFS
24LC1723	<i>Upper Cave Gulch</i>	1870s-1890s	USFS
24MA0723	<i>Virginia City</i>	1863-1890s	Private/State
24MN0249	<i>Louiseville</i>	1870-1890s	USFS
24MN0262	<i>China Gulch Hearths</i>	1870-1875	USFS
24MN0332	<i>Rowley Chinese Hearths</i>	1870-1890s	USFS
24MO0110	<i>Montreal or "Old Town"</i>	1874-1890s	USFS
24MO0266	<i>Fort Missoula</i>	1877-present	County/USFS/Private
24PW1021	<i>Blackfoot City</i>	1865-1880s	Private/BLM/USFS
24SB0212	<i>German Gulch</i>	1865-1900	USFS/Private
24SB0765	<i>Butte</i>	1864-1940s	Private
24SB0067	<i>Highland City</i>	1865-1870s	USFS
<b>Potential or Unconfirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
24BE0806	<i>Hecla</i>	1870s-1880s	University of MS
24BE1511	<i>Cow Creek Placers</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
24BE1615	<i>Trapper City</i>	1865-1880s	USFS
24BE1872	<i>Pioneer Cabins</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
24BW0287	<i>Ten Mile Tunnel</i>	1860s-1880s	BLM/Private
24JF0290	<i>Chinese Diggings</i>	1870s-1880s	Private
24JT0075	<i>Yogo Town</i>	1878-1880s	USFS
24LC0467	<i>Old Lincoln</i>	1865-1880s	USFS
24LC1112	<i>Austin Mining District</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS/Private
24LC1716	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
24MO0179	<i>Yreka</i>	1860s-1890s	State/UM/Private
24PW0183	<i>Reynold's City</i>	1860s-1890s	BLM/Private
24PW0392	<i>Emmetsburg Cemetery</i>	1865-1879	BLM

This chapter is largely organized on a chronological discussion of the Chinese in Montana, starting with a basic history of Montana before gold strikes in 1862. After gold discovery at Bannack in 1862, Chinese immigrants began moving into Montana Territory in substantial numbers (Figure 3.1 shows locations of discussed areas). By the 1870 Federal Census, Chinese immigrants accounted for 10% of Montana Territory's population. Between 1870 and 1880, Chinese population centers spread throughout Montana Territory, in many instances overtaking and controlling certain mining districts after Euro-American miners had abandoned the areas. With the increase of Chinese population in the Territory, there were significant legal challenges leveled on this large but politically and legally weak population. With growing racism in Montana Territory's legal system towards the Chinese, a significant facet of Chinese history during this period was how the population handled crime within their own ranks, and how crimes against their population was handled in Montana's courts. Finally, the legal precedents and inherent biases in Montana Territory's treatment of the Chinese forced the population to adapt to a significant lack of women in the community. Even with a series of legal challenges during the first 18 years of Chinese history in Montana Territory, courts and judges handled the population on a remarkably level playing field but this would change by the end of the 1870s. The rapid growth and expansion of their population and a creation of a self-supporting society within Montana Territory exemplify the first period of the Chinese in Montana (1862-1880).

**Figure 3.1:** Map of Montana showing location of significant areas in this chapter.



### 3.2: Montana Pre-1862

Until the mid-1850s the land that Montana's boundary encompasses today was predominantly a fur trading frontier with sparse populations of trappers, traders, and only a handful of prospectors. The two main settlements were Fort Owen, located in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana, and Fort Benton at the upper end of the Missouri River in the north-central part of the state. Fort Owen was predominantly a trading hub to a small but growing group of Bitterroot Valley farmers and offered some supplies to the travelers of the Emigrant trail heading to California or Oregon (Dunbar and Phillips 1927[1]:2-10). Fort Benton was a center of the fur trade where trappers would bring their wares for sale and trade (Malone et al. 1991:57).

Before the major gold strikes, Montana was decidedly on the fringes of American western expansion. Until 1864 there was no Montana at all, as the lands now comprising the state were split between Idaho and Washington Territory. Euro-American settlements

at this time were limited to Fort Owen, Fort Connah, Fort Benton, a loosely organized band of settlers in the Deer Lodge Valley, and a handful of dispersed and relatively insignificant homesteaders (Philips 1925). As such, the lack of established transportation thoroughfares kept the growth of Montana's settler and prospector populations to a minimum. Survey and construction of the Mullan Road from Fort Benton to Fort Walla Walla in Washington Territory began during the mid to late 1850s and assisted in developing overland trade in the region (Malone et al. 1991:72). However, even with the construction of the Mullan Road, the primary means of moving goods destined for Montana Territory was by steamboat up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to Fort Benton. From Fort Benton, traders took wagon or pack train loads of goods to the various outposts in Montana Territory. Major John Owen was among those involved in early freighting trips. Until settlement of Bannack, and the development of trade routes from Utah and the Emigrant trail, Montana remained an area limited in its ability to prosper by the primitive transportation corridors. However, the bulk of Euro-American and Chinese interest in Montana did not begin until after gold discovery.

The exact year of the first gold discovery remains unclear, but most agree that between 1852 and 1855 a French fur trapper named Francois Finlay, commonly called Benetsee by both Native Americans and Euroamericans at the time, discovered gold in the west-central part of the state near modern-day Gold Creek (Burlingame 1942:79). Finlay, however, had neither the equipment nor ambition to undertake substantial or systematic prospecting. Rather, the gold potential of Montana was not taken seriously until after the arrival of brothers James and Granville Stuart in 1858 (Philips 1925:133-140). After four years of rumors and growing gold prospecting parties, on July 28, 1862



John White and John McGavin fresh from the Idaho gold mines discovered a large pay streak at the mouth of Grasshopper Creek, roughly 20 miles south of modern-day Dillon, Montana (Wolle 1983:50). Within days a rush of miners from across the West began the long trek to Grasshopper Creek from Idaho, Nevada, and California. By the fall of 1862 these miners had established the town of Bannack, approximately five miles from the discovery spot, and some estimates suggest the town's population was nearly 2,000 (Wolle 1983:52). By 1863, Major Owen estimated 2,000 or 3,000 additional emigrants entered the area around Bannack largely from Pikes Peak area of Colorado and Salt Lake (Dunbar and Philips 1927[1]:281).

The discovery of major placer gold deposits along Grasshopper signaled an end to the early years of Montana's history as primarily a farming and fur trapping frontier. The establishment of Bannack as Montana's first large urban center ushered in this new historical period with pick and pistol. Bannack's colorful early years are not the subject of this chapter in Chinese history, but this was the nature of the social and cultural environment they found when they entered Montana. There is no clear historical evidence that any Chinese were part of the initial flood of immigrants to Bannack in 1862, but it seems a strong likelihood. Regardless of the exact date of their first arrival in the state, the discovery and exploitation of large tracts of placer ground along Grasshopper Creek did signal to the Chinese that Montana had become a land of opportunity.

### **3.3: Chinese Entrance 1862-1870**

The discovery of gold in California during 1849 prompted the first large-scale migration of Chinese to the United States. By 1850, hundreds of Chinese began arriving

on the coast of California looking for their fortunes on the goldfields. By the mid-1850s, Chinese had moved into the adjacent gold fields of Oregon and Idaho, and into the hardrock communities of Nevada. Within only a decade the Chinese population of the United States had expanded to be several thousand strong, with most engaged in mining and mining-related activities along the Pacific coast. It is from these neighboring mining communities in Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, and California that the initial Chinese immigrants came to Montana Territory in the 1860s after the gold strikes.

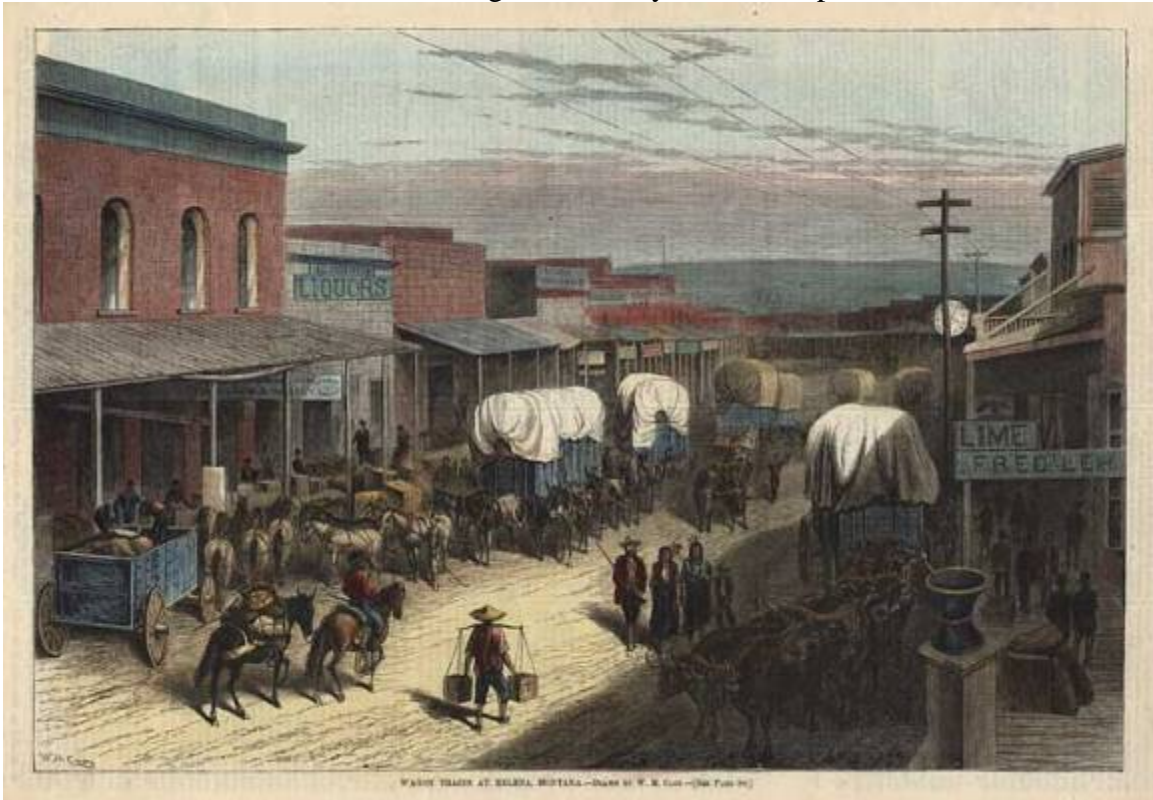
After discovery of gold in Bannack, prospectors spread throughout southwest Montana in search of the next big strike. In quick succession prospectors found gold along Alder Creek in 1863, Last Chance Gulch in 1864, and by 1865 miners founded dozens of placer mining camps throughout the majority of southwest and south-central Montana. Small populations of Chinese began to enter this milieu of entrepreneurial opportunity during the middle 1860s. According to the transcribed minutes of a meeting at the Montana Institute of the Arts History Group in January 1967, Chinese potentially arrived in Virginia City from Bannack in 1863 (Davis 1967:2). According to Davis (1967:2), “When Alder Gulch was discovered I was told that there was one or two Chinamen that left Bannack in 1863 when the gold rush was on and headed for Alder Gulch and I believe this was true.” However, the speech by Wiley Davis is based on his conversations with his father, who owned a store in Bannack in the early 1860s, so there is potential for error in his recollections and this information must be given a critical eye. The earliest historical documentation of Chinese in Montana comes from the pages of Virginia City, Montana’s newspaper *The Montana Post*, in 1865. In that article from

June 3, 1865, the newspaper editors disparagingly speak of the arrival of a small group of Chinese to Alder Gulch (*The Montana Post* 1865:2).

By 1866 descriptions of Chinese began appearing in a variety of historical documents, showing a significant increase in population throughout the Territory. The first mention of Chinese in Helena is in the Lewis and Clark County Deed Records, where several groups of Chinese companies began to purchase mining lots in the “Rattlesnake District” in Last Chance Gulch. The deed books record that in 1866 groups of Chinese miners led by Ah Gown, Ah Quay, and Ah Rey purchased several placer claims in upper Last Chance Gulch (Lewis and Clark County Deed Book B:192). In the same year Ah Gih purchased Lot 14 in Block 3 of the original town plat (Lewis and Clark County Deed Book B:189), which now lies under the current public library in downtown Helena (Figure 3.2). At the time of the Chinese purchase of claims and lots, Helena was part of Edgerton County, named after the first Territorial Governor of Montana appointed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864. Edgerton County was officially renamed Lewis and Clark County on March 1, 1868. The most interesting aspect of the purchase of claims and lots by the above-mentioned individuals is that after 1866 there were no more recorded deeds under Chinese names until the 1900s in Lewis and Clark County.

A small community of Chinese had moved into the western part of Montana Territory by 1867, as evidenced by entries in Major John Owen’s journals. One of the earliest Euro-American settlers to Montana, Major John Owen established Fort Owen in the Bitterroot Valley in the early 1850s. This frontier outpost quickly became a center of commerce and culture for the growing Euro-American population of Montana, and even served as Indian Agency for the Salish Tribe into the 1870s. Fort Owen and the farmers

**Figure 3.2:** Lithograph of Helena, Montana Territory, 1878. *Harper's Weekly Magazine* Wood Cut. Note Chinese man in foreground with yoke and suspended items.



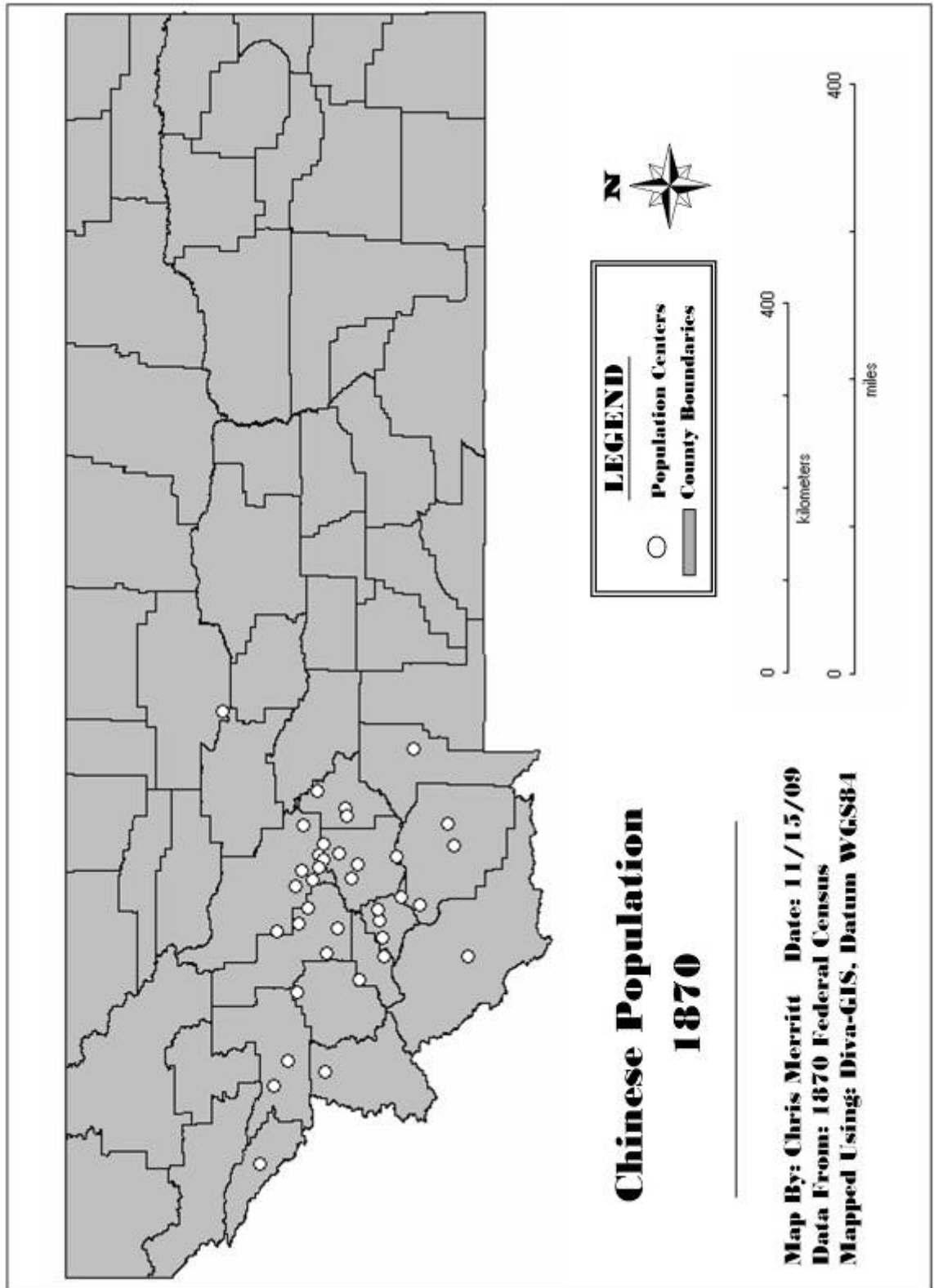
surrounding it supplied the initial mining rushes with fresh fruit and vegetables as early as Bannack in 1862 (Spence 1975:130-131). Major Owen's journals also include various mentions of the employment of Chinese cooks to operate the Fort Owen kitchen. It appears Major Owen hired his first Chinese cook, noted as "John Chinaman", from Missoula on June 7, 1867 and paid \$110 for his services over a period of 11 weeks (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:58, 68). During his employment at Fort Owen, the Chinese cook was apparently accosted by a grist mill employee badly swelling one eye, and Major Owen subsequently fired the Euro-American employee (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:67). On August 22 of 1867 the Chinese cook hired by Owen returned to Missoula to visit his brother, suggesting at least a small population in the growing agricultural community 35 miles north of Fort Owen (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:68). In October of 1867, Owen

hired another Chinese cook, but fired him after only one week as Owen remarked in his journal, “My Jno China Man Not so good a cook as the one I had during the Summer. He appears Stupid” (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:74-75). Only a few days after firing the previous cook, Major Owen hired another Chinese cook, though by January of 1868 he mentions two in his journals (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:75, 82). It appears that the same two Chinese cooks appearing in Owen’s journals for January of 1868 worked through the summer of that year, and were re-hired the following fall of 1869 (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:82, 144). The last recorded mention of Chinese at Fort Owen is located in the 1870 Federal Census where it lists Jako Lann, a 51-year-old Chinese man, whose occupation is listed as, “cooks at [Indian] Agency” (Census Bureau 1870). The presence of Chinese cooks from 1867 to at least 1870 at Fort Owen highlights one type of employment opportunity that Montana Territory offered this immigrant population, and at least tangentially associates them with the most significant individuals in early state history.

Outside Fort Owen and the Bitterroot Valley in the 1860s, miners discovered large placer deposits in Montana Territory, and with each new rush, the Chinese population increased. By 1868, Raymond (1869:140-141) estimated the Chinese population of Montana Territory to be near 800, with two-thirds of that number employed in placer mining. In 1869, however, Raymond (1870:260) expanded that estimate to between 2,000 and 3,000 Chinese residents. The significant disparity between Raymond’s 1868 and 1869 numbers suggests a less than thorough accounting of the population or a massive increase in the population over the intervening winter.

Regardless, in the late 1860s the Chinese population, as well as the general population, of Montana Territory rapidly grew, due in large part to the rapid increase in the number of new placer districts. In particular, by the late 1860s, placer districts such as German Gulch, Gold Creek, Pioneer, Ophir Gulch, Bear Creek, Alder Gulch, Grasshopper Creek, and Last Chance Gulch became large, capitalized, hard-rock mining ventures or were abandoned for new placer strikes elsewhere in the Territory. It appears that similar to other areas of the western United States, Chinese miners were purchasing either abandoned claims or those claims that Euro-Americans could no longer profitably work (Raymond 1869:141; 1870:260). The completion of the Central Pacific Railroad, with its nearest station 290 miles south of Montana Territory's borders, helped to open the region to further settlement by Euro-Americans and Chinese. Indeed, in the fall of 1869, newspaper reporters noted that in Corinne, Utah Territory, "By the eastern bound train yesterday seventeen more [Chinese] arrived. This makes fifty-eight within four days. They are stopping in Corinne for a few days and will probably proceed on their journey to Montana early the present week" (*Helena Daily Herald* 1869:3).

**Figure 3.3:** Location of Chinese populations in 1870.



### 3.4: Montana Territory's 1870 Chinese Demographics

Montana Territory's first federal census enumeration in 1870 recorded 1,949 Chinese spread across 9 of 13 counties (Figure 3.3). Major placer mining counties such as Deer Lodge (776), Lewis and Clark (299), and Madison County (122) accounted for over 61% of the entire Territory's Chinese population (Table 3.2). While much has been said about the Chinese population of Montana Territory being 10% of the total (Swartout 1988; Dirlick and Yeung 2001), in the counties noted above the proportions were higher than the territorial average. Specifically, in Madison County, which included Virginia City and the surrounding mining camps, Chinese contributed 11% of the population. Chinese in Helena and surrounding communities within Lewis and Clark County accounted for 13% of the population. Most significantly, however, Deer Lodge County had the highest proportion of Chinese in Montana Territory, with their numbers comprising nearly 18% of the population. Of the 1,949 Chinese recorded in 1870, only 128 or 6.6% were women, with the highest numbers in Deer Lodge and Lewis and Clark Counties. Interestingly, smaller communities in Beaverhead and Gallatin Counties had lower ratios of male to female Chinese but had far smaller total populations.

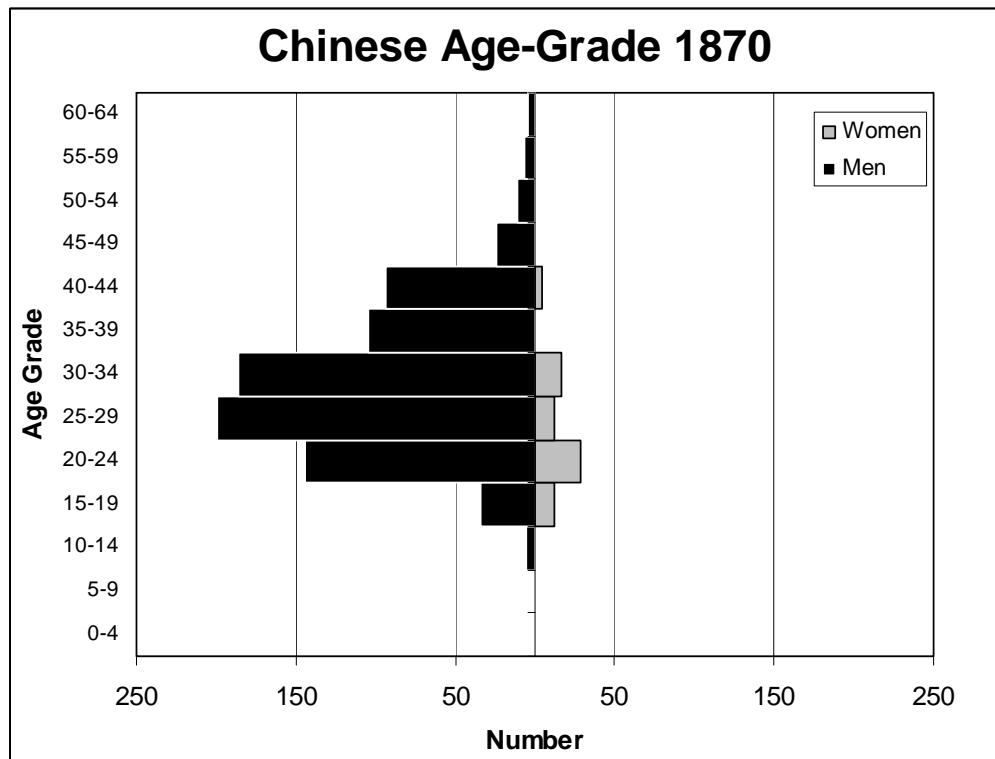
**Table 3.2:** Montana Territory Chinese Population by County, 1870 Federal Census.

County	Chinese Population		
	Male	Female	Total
Beaverhead	3	3	6
Choteau	3	0	3
Deer Lodge	723	53	776
Gallatin	2	2	4
Jefferson	121	1	122
Lewis and Clark	606	60	666
Madison	292	7	299
Meagher	29	0	29
Missoula	42	2	44
<b>Totals</b>	1,821	128	1,949



Analysis of individual records within the 1870 census illuminated more patterns in regards to population demographics and employment (Figure 3.4). The average age of Chinese regardless of sex, was 30, however due to poor census enumeration 1,043 entries had no age data at all. Of the 75 Chinese women with age data, the average was 25 years old, with the median at 24. In contrast, the average age of the 816 Chinese men with associated age data was 30.5 years old, with a median age of 30. The youngest Chinese recorded was a 6 year-old boy in Helena who was apparently born in China, while the youngest female was 16. On the other end of the age spectrum the oldest Chinese male listed was 60, while the oldest female was 40. It would have been extremely useful to have more data to accurately discuss the Chinese population demographics, but due to the inherent racism or oversight of some census takers elsewhere in the American West (e.g. James 1998:96) during 1870, the data simply does not exist.

**Figure 3.4:** Population Pyramid for Chinese in Montana, 1870.



The 1870 census supported the determination by Raymond (1869:140-141) that the majority of Chinese in Montana Territory were engaged in placer mining. In fact, miners accounted for 88.6% of male Chinese employment alone, and 83% of total Chinese employment in the Territory. Rohe (1982:13) underestimated the numbers of Chinese placer miners at 70%. Besides the dominant numbers of those working in the mining industry, smaller numbers of Chinese men worked as clothing launderers, domestic servants, and even doctors (Table 3.3). Of the four doctors listed in the 1870 census, three were located in Helena and one in New York Gulch, northeast of Helena. Dr. Fook On Hong Tong, age 40, provides a clue to Chinese social organization as it seems more likely that his last name, Hong Tong, actually denoted the mutual aid society or fraternal organization he belonged to at the time.

Chinese women had fewer employment options, and for the most part they were “Keeping House” or engaged in prostitution (Table 3.4). Together these employment spheres accounted for 44.5% and 41.4% of Chinese women’s employment respectively. “Keeping House” is a broad term that could suggest domestic servant activities outside a home for a Euro-American family or a business, the duties of a homemaker, or less mundane activities like prostitution. However, there is potential that a large proportion of the women “Keeping House” were actually prostitutes or concubines, as many census takers used euphemistic terms to identify uncouth employment practices. However, elsewhere in the mining West, census enumerators in Virginia City, Nevada mistakenly assumed Chinese women were prostitutes when they were possibly wives or concubines (Chung 1998:220-223). More interesting perhaps, are the seven women engaged in “Merchanteel” and two noted as gamblers in the Montana Territorial 1870 census. It is

likely that the seven women, who lived near one another in a section of Virginia City according to the census records, were actually prostitutes in a Chinese brothel or cribs; less likely, they could have been involved in a different type of merchant activity based out of their home. The two women, aged 30 and 25, listed as gamblers were living with Fook On, a 36 year-old Chinese male operator of a gambling house in Helena. It is unclear what relationship the two women had to Fook On, but again it is possible that they were prostitutes, wives, or consanguinal family relationship.

The broad population statistics detailed above provide a sufficient background on Chinese demographics in 1870 Montana Territory. However, such macro-scale numbers gloss over the detail on areas of dense Chinese occupation (Table 3.5). In 1870, areas like Helena, Virginia City, Pioneer City, and Silver Bow comprised the bulk of Chinese population. Helena had the highest proportion of Chinese, with numbers twice that of second-ranked Virginia City. The 1870 census is important as it shows that even early in the Territorial Period, Chinese populations clustered in several key locations in and around major placer districts. As noted earlier, Lewis and Clark and Deer Lodge County had significant Chinese populations, yet the individual numbers indicate different settlement patterns. For Lewis and Clark County the bulk of the population, 648 of 666 total, lived within the boundaries of Helena itself. More significant than any other statistic discussed already, Chinese accounted for a surprising 20.8% of the total population of the Helena Township. In Deer Lodge County, however, a series of small to moderate Chinese populations dispersed in outlying communities of Pioneer City, Blackfoot City, Cable City, and Beartown, among others.

**Table 3.3:** Montana Territory Employment Categories of Chinese Men, 1870 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Mining	1,613
Laundry Business	101
Cook	35
Domestic Servant	19
Grocer	9
Store Clerk	5
Day Laborer	5
Unknown	5
Doctor	4
Baker	4
Operates Gambling House	3
Waiter	3
Saloon Worker	3
Boarding House Keeper	3
Boarding House Worker	2
Tailor	1
Blacksmith Assistant	1
Store Keeper	1
Restaurant Keeper	1
Gambler	1
At Home (6-year-old)	1
“He No Understand”	1
Unemployed	1

**Table 3.4:** Montana Territory Employment of Chinese Women, 1870 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Keeping House	57
Prostitute	53
Merchanteel	7
Laundry Business	4
Gambler	2
Cook	2
Unknown	2
At Home	1

**Table 3.5: Montana Territory Chinese Population by Location.**

<b>City/Town or Locale</b>	<b># of Chinese Residents</b>
Helena	648
Virginia City	279
Pioneer City	245
Silver Bow	160
Blackfoot City	111
Butte City	97
Cable City	75
Basin	41
Prickley Pear	40
Beartown	37
Cedar Creek	34
French Gulch	27
New York City	24
Upper Boulder	19
Rochester	18
Deer Lodge City	15
Fish Creek	12
Trinity/Pidgeon Gulch	7
Bannack	6
Greenhorn Gulch	6
Missoula Village	6
German Gulch	5
Springville	5
Diamond City	5
Bozeman	4
Fort Benton	3
Jefferson City	3
Unionville	3
Frenchtown	3
Lincoln	2
St. Louis	2
Madison	2
Red Mountain City	1
Washington Creek	1
Tenmile/Nelson Gulch	1
Silver Creek	1
Fort Owen	1

Perhaps one of the most important Chinese population centers in Deer Lodge County was Deer Lodge itself, though the population was small, only 15. Deer Lodge was important to the Chinese as it appears to be a nexus of trade for the southwestern part of Montana Territory during the 1870s. As early as fall 1870, Gem Kee & Co. opened a store in Deer Lodge with imported goods to cater to both Chinese and Euro-Americans (*New Northwest* 1870d:4). There are other storeowners mentioned in Deer Lodge including Ah Kane and Quong Lee, but it seems that Gem Kee was a fixture in the town into the 1880s. Monthly freight shipments from Corinne, Utah Territory indicates the flow of business transacted by Gem Kee, who owned the Kung Chung Lung Co. store in Deer Lodge. In May of 1877, Kung Chung Lung Co. (sometimes written as Kim Chong Lung Co.) received a shipment included with 7,136 pounds of goods bound for three customers in Deer Lodge, and the next month the same company was included in a 6,080 pound shipment (*Helena Independent* 1877a:3; 1877b:3). Manifests of steamers coming into Fort Benton on the Missouri River also carried packages for the Kung Chung Lung Company of Deer Lodge in 1878, further illustrating the various ways Chinese goods made it into Montana Territory (*Helena Independent* 1878:3).

It is suspected that Deer Lodge, and the various Chinese merchants in that community, served as a central distribution point of goods and facilitated communications between companies across southwest Montana Territory and out-of-territory interests. Indeed, Chinese companies in German Gulch, near Butte, were making the over-30 mile trek to purchase goods and supplies from Jen Sing, Ah Kane, and Company of Deer Lodge in 1871 much to the chagrin of Euro-American businesses in German Gulch (*New Northwest* 1871g:3). The preference for imported goods from

China over domestically available items in host countries is well documented by historians and archaeologists (e.g. Greenwood 1978; Ritchie 1986; Fredlund et al. 1991; Wegars 1993; Lawrence 2000; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Smith 2003). As an indication of the wealth of Chinese merchants in Deer Lodge, Ah Kane returned to China in 1874 for a short visit to his family, which would have been a relatively rare and expensive occurrence in 1870s Montana Territory (*New Northwest* 1874g:3). It appears that Deer Lodge, at least in the early 1870s, was part of a three distribution point network in Montana Territory for Chinese goods, while Virginia City and Helena serviced areas around their locations.

### **3.5: Chinese Population Centers and Mining Districts**

During the 1870s there was a remarkable increase in the number of mining districts that Chinese populations dominated, as Euro-American miners moved to higher-paying placer strikes or settled into hardrock mining ventures elsewhere in the Territory. As noted by Rohe (1982:19), the increase of Chinese in a district “did not necessarily correspond with a district’s decline. Often it coincided with the exhaustion of the rich surface placers.” Even while the economies of numerous countries of the world suffered through a painful slowing of growth during the 1870s, Montana Territory seemed nearly immune. The gold and silver industry of Montana Territory “muffled the impact” of the Panic of 1873, which led to a small depression throughout much of the United States (Spence 1978:39). While the depression of the 1870s did slow the entrance of railroads into Montana Territory, the flow of Chinese continued but at a slightly decreased rate.

### 3.5.1: Helena

The Chinese population of Helena was unsurpassed by any other single district in the Territory during the 1870s, and comprised nearly 21% of the residents in that township. It appears that the majority of Chinese in Helena clustered around the downtown area, near the mouth of Last Chance Gulch. Newspaper accounts indicate that Chinese businesses and habitations were in and around the intersections of Cutler, Water, and Main Streets (Figure 3.5). As noted in the 1870 federal census, Helena had a population of 666 Chinese, including 60 women, by far the largest number of Chinese females in the Territory. As a result of this significant population, there were reports in 1870 that Helena had a Chinese owned and operated newspaper and post office (*Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette* 1870:2; *Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1870a:3). The Chinese newspaper office in Helena was on Cutler Street, and instead of using printing presses, Chinese workers reproduced the volumes using traditional calligraphy by brush and ink (*Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette* 1870:2).

A series of disastrous fires marked the early history of Helena's Chinese community. In April of 1869, a fire originating in a Chinese dwelling on the corner of West Main and Bridge Street swept through Helena's business district, destroying dozens of buildings including the offices of the *Helena Herald* (Wolle 1983:74). A few years later and after a second major fire--this time not centered in Chinatown--Helena city officials began to implement a systematic plan to protect the citizens from a major conflagration, including attempts to regulate Chinese housing at the mouth of Last Chance Gulch (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871b:3). The efforts, however, appear to have been ineffective, as on January 17, 1874 a fire again burnt through Helena's business



**Figure 3.5:** 1875 Bird's Eye View of Helena, Montana Territory. Drawn by E. S. Glover. A.L. Bancroft & Co., lithographers. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. (Circle denotes area of main Chinese district).



district, destroying at least 150 buildings and with an estimated lost of \$850,000 (*New Northwest* 1874a:3). The source of that fire was an alleged Chinese gambling house on West Main, and due to severe winds coming out of Last Chance Gulch, ashes were all that were left of most of Chinatown and Helena's downtown. Tong Hing, a Chinese entrepreneur or company, lost three buildings, including the structure where the fire began, totaling a financial loss of \$7,000 (*New Northwest* 1874a:3). Since this was the second destructive fire in Helena originating from Chinatown, the Euro-American population's animosity towards the Chinese increased and editors urged restraint from violence or retaliation in the fire's aftermath (*New Northwest* 1874b:3).

In 1875, the frayed nerves of Helena's Euro-American population were evident in the *Helena Independent*, which ran a story about another fire alarm from Chinatown stemming from fireworks; in this instance a blaze was averted (*Helena Independent* 1875:3). Likely in response to the problems and devastation associated with the previous fires, Chinese merchants Ah Kane & Co. in Deer Lodge took the initiative and constructed a fireproof building using clay and traditional tamped-earth building techniques (*New Northwest* 1872d:3). Without question, the series of devastating fires originating in Helena's Chinatown had an unmeasured yet significant effect on policy and planning, forever changing the fabric of the appearance of the future capital city and other communities.

### 3.5.2: Virginia City

Virginia City during the 1870s had a Chinese population fluctuating near the 200-300 mark (this was 1/3 of the town's total population), though much of the Chinese residents worked at camps up and down Alder Creek. According to Grant (1998:22) a Virginia City ordinance limited the Chinese to settle in the area of lower Wallace Street, though no other historical support exists for this interpretation. Of the 279 Chinese recorded at Virginia City in 1870, there were seven women, one male cook, and 271 men listed as miners. The Chinese population was significant enough to warrant the construction of a temple and fraternal meeting house as early as the 1860s (Bowen 2003:22). Virginia City's Chinese temple, or "Joss House," was most likely the first such building in Montana Territory, though by 1870 there was a temple in Louiseville (*New Northwest* 1870d:4) and probably in Helena. Chinese miners and merchants located themselves along lower Wallace Street, and established a laundry in 1878 (Douglas and

Brown 2002:21) and at least two stores by 1884 (Leeson 1885:774). However, Bowen (2003:22) mistakenly states that Leeson (1885) noted the presence of stores in the late 1870s.

The most commonly told story of Virginia City's Chinese population is of a supposed "Tong War" in the 1870s. However, it is difficult, even after analyzing historical accounts, to separate fact from fiction when examining this event. Wolle (1983:38-40) provides a detailed account of the battle, yet she provides no citations, or a relevant date for the event. The only evidence for a date for the Tong War is indicated by two stories in the *Mineral Independent* of Superior dating to 1938 and 1941, which place the event in 1879. However, a survey of the *Helena Daily Herald*, *Helena Independent*, and *New Northwest* newspapers for 1879, can find no corroborating accounts of the supposed "Tong War." Careful analyses of the two stories covered by the *Mineral Independent* highlights major disparities in reporting, including the means of warfare and even the outcome of the conflict. The two news stories share a common thread that the Four Company and Two Company of Chinese miners in Alder Gulch had a conflict over a mining lease that resulted in open warfare and the death of one individual. However, in the 1938 account the charged Chinese murderers escaped punishment by the clandestine removal of the body by supporters the night before the trial, thus leading to a mistrial. In the 1941 account of the same event the two Chinese defendants escaped punishment by the help of supporters switching the arrested individuals during a prison visit, and when the case came to trial the defense noted that the men in custody were not the ones who were arrested and the court again dismissed the case. It appears that Wolle (1983:38-40) based her account of the Tong War on the 1938 account, as her discussion repeats--nearly

verbatim--the *Mineral Independent* story. This story has now entrenched itself in the psyche of many Montanans, though the original facts are have clearly been lost.

### 3.5.3: Cedar Creek

Only a few months after the completion of Montana Territory's enumeration in the 1870 Federal Census, an influx of Chinese immigrants altered demographics in the western part of the Territory. In fall of 1869 a pair of French-Canadian prospectors located gold along Cedar Creek, approximately 60 miles west of Missoula (Merritt 2007:5). This was the first major placer strike in Western Montana Territory, and thousands rushed the fledgling district over the winter of 1869-1870. Some estimates place the winter population of 1869-1870 Cedar Creek at nearly 3,000 though the true population was probably much lower (Wolle 1983:270). Newspaper reports exaggerated the mining prospects in the drainage, comparing the potential gold wealth of Cedar Creek to Alder Gulch and Virginia City (*New Northwest* 1869:3). The 1870 Census recorded 34 Chinese individuals in the Cedar Creek area during April of that year, most of whom where either miners or operating stores and businesses at the mouth of Cedar. However, during the summer of 1870, the population of Chinese immigrants increased by hundreds due to events in Idaho.

Beginning in the early summer of 1870, Euro-American miners in the Moose Creek Mining District, which was on the Idaho Territorial boundary and directly on the opposite side of the divide from Cedar Creek, passed restrictive rules on the occupation of the district by Chinese (Merritt 2007:9). By 1870 the Moose Creek District was already in decline, which left Euro-American and Chinese miners fighting over the best claim locations (Rice 1977:1-2). Specifically, the Euro-Americans in Idaho passed

Miner's Laws to the basic effect that no Chinese could hold claims or real property, or even live within the district's boundaries. This created an exodus of Chinese from that area, and by October of 1870 at least 300 Chinese men had entered the Cedar Creek drainage from the Idaho Territory, with another 400 expected to immigrate by the end of year (*New Northwest* 1870c:3). If the estimates of the population surge in the latter parts of 1870 are near correct, then the total Chinese in Montana Territory was between 2,300 and 2,600 by this point, substantially higher than the census of that year would indicate. An editorial in the *Helena Daily Herald* in October of 1870 supports this supposition as Chinese, "have been coming all summer; have no children or wives here. The females are all prostitutes. There must now be nearly 3000 Chinese in Montana" (*Helena Daily Herald* 1870c:3).

The initial center of settlement in the Cedar Creek District was Louiseville, located approximately halfway between the Clark Fork River and the Idaho Territorial border (*Helena Daily Herald*, 1870a). By mid-1870, however, Euro-American miners moved either higher up the gulch to Forest City and Mayville or to lower camps at Cayuse Gulch, Cedar Junction, and Cedar Mouth, thus leaving Louiseville mostly abandoned within just a few months of initial construction. Chinese flowing into Cedar Creek from Idaho used the area in and around Louiseville as their initial base of settlement, and by fall of 1870 outnumbered Euro-Americans in that community by a two to one ratio. By fall of 1870 the Chinese had already established a store in Louiseville (*New Northwest* 1870c:3). Over the next three years Chinese immigrants established at least one doctor's office, a butcher shop, and even a traditional temple in the abandoned town of Louiseville (*New Northwest* 1870c:3; *New Northwest* 1870d:4).

Cedar Creek's boom in 1869-1870 led to the first mass-migration of Chinese into western Montana Territory, and left a lasting physical and archaeological impact on the area. Cultural resource surveys in 1995 and 2008 discovered three sites in the Cedar Creek drainage related to the 1870s-1880s Chinese occupation. Of the original five towns associated with the Cedar Creek gold strike, only one townsite exists today, Louiseville. The only modern evidence of Forest City is a series of hand-stacked rock hearths, depressions, and some ditch works in Mary Anne Gulch, but the main town has long since vanished due to hydraulic mining. Due to re-mining in the 1880s through the 1910s, there are no physical remains of the three other main settlements of Mayville, Cedar Junction, and Cedar Mouth.

An east/west trending tributary of Cedar Creek—currently called China Gulch—is adjacent to downtown Louiseville. In the 1870s China Gulch was actually called Town Gulch as Louiseville's main street ran from Cedar Creek up this side gulch. In 1995 archaeologists from the Lolo National Forest performed archaeological investigations of Louiseville and China Gulch. At Louiseville (24MN0249), archaeologists discovered and mapped a dilapidated log cabin dating to the 1870s, a rock building that locals termed the Louiseville jail, and an unassociated 1930s structure that housed a family mining operation through the 1960s. Surface artifacts at Louiseville indicated a mixed deposit of Chinese and non-Chinese archaeological materials. A pedestrian survey of China Gulch (24MN0262) from the eastern boundary of Louiseville located three intact hand-stacked rock hearths and associated tent or building pads, with an addition of two suspected, but unconfirmed, hearth features. However, there were no surface artifacts associated with the features and ethnic affiliation was not determined. Located only a few hundred yards

from Louiseville, it is likely that these hearths served as a satellite settlement on the fringes of the larger community. Crews in 1995 excavated two units and three shovel tests in Louiseville, and an additional four units at one hearth in China Gulch.

Results of the 1995 excavations suggested that Louiseville had a substantial Chinese archaeological component. The units at the hearth in China Gulch provided no clear ethnic indicators to the 1995 excavators; however, they did recover hundreds of small bone fragments and bottle glass, supporting the hypothesis that these features related to domestic occupations. After the initial 1995 analysis, the Louiseville and China Gulch collections remained at the Lolo National Forest Supervisor's Office in Missoula. In 2007, UM volunteers reanalyzed the collection and observed material traits missed by the earlier excavators and germane to the area's Chinese occupation. Reanalysis prompted the creation of a new report using the original collection and field notes (Merritt 2007) and spurred further archaeological investigations during the summer of 2007 and 2008 (Merritt 2009). The 2008 fieldwork also led to the discovery of the hand-stacked rock hearths near the now-disappeared town of Forest City at Mary Anne Gulch, 1 ½ miles farther up Cedar Creek from Louiseville and recorded as the Rowley Chinese Hearths (24MN0332).

The China Gulch excavations, while not recognized in 1995, recovered several modified opium can fragments termed "funs trays" which suggests a strong affiliation with Chinese miners (Figure 3.6). In fact, archaeologists consider *funs* trays purely a Chinese material class, as they have not been found in exclusively non-Chinese related archaeological deposits (Felton et al. 1984:68-69; Ritchie 1986:387). It appears that the Chinese used these modified opium cans as standard weights for measuring out

proportions of opium for sale (Ritchie 1986:387), but might have also found use as a gold dust weight (Merritt et al. 2008:2). While the artifact is not as recognizable as the more common Chinese ceramics of celadon or brownware, *funs* trays do provide sufficient indication of a Chinese presence. What makes the China Gulch assemblage of *funs* trays distinct is their quantity, with 11 in various levels of formation recovered between the 1995 and subsequent excavations in 2007. Before the China Gulch collection, archaeologists located only a handful of *funs* trays from other excavations in the United

**Figure 3.6:** “Funs” Tray from China Gulch, 24MN0262. Photo by author, 2007.





States (Felton et al. 1984:68-69), with the bulk of known examples (116) found in New Zealand (Ritchie 1986:387; Wyle and Fike 1993; Merritt 2007:2). In fact, excavations at nearby Louiseville recovered no additional *funs* trays suggesting that the accumulation at the hearth might indicate a distinct cultural occurrence. As noted by Ritchie (1986:387), the primary use of *funs* trays was the sale of opium, and the predominance of these artifacts in a single hearth feature in China Gulch suggests that the location may have served as a hub for opium trade or smoking in the area; this activity could have supplemented the income of local miners and/or provided some of those individuals with temporary reprieve from the rigors of the mining lifestyle.

The second significant discovery at China Gulch was the potential starvation signature as evidenced by the presence of small, calcined, and smoked faunal fragments. In seven (1x1m) excavation units at a single hearth, crews discovered over 1,000 small (<2cm) fragments of faunal material. Most significant is the complete absence of any larger fragments of bone, and faunal analysis only identified one of these fragments to a species, a domestic pig (*Sus scrofa*) (Merritt 2007:45). Meanwhile at Louiseville, excavators recovered a wide variety of identifiable large cuts of beef, pig, and wild game. The disparity between the China Gulch and other Montana Chinese sites like German Gulch (Fredlund et al. 1991) or Cave Gulch (Rossillon 2002), suggest different taphonomic processes. Analysis of the bones from China Gulch by Dr. Shannon Novak and Ph.D. Student Meredith Ellis of Syracuse University confirmed a starvation-signature to the remains. Statistical analysis of the faunal remains indicated a 99% similarity to the Donner Party's Alder Creek camp, a well-known starvation and hardship episode in Northern California. Further excavations in 2008 at another hearth in China Gulch

retrieved an almost identical faunal assemblage to the 1995 and 2007 projects.

Publication of the starvation findings is currently in review (Ellis et al. 2010).

Artifacts recovered at the three excavated hearths cluster around the late 1860s and early 1870s, which fits ideally with the increase in Chinese population after the forced exodus from Idaho. In particular, a Jamaican Ginger bottle dating to the 1860s-1870 and a Drake's Plantation Bitters Bottle dating to 1865-1875 suggest a rather brief duration of occupation (Merritt 2007:25; Merritt 2009:70). Numerous square (cut) nails and the complete lack of wire (round) nails suggests that the initial Chinese miners scavenged structures in Louiseville to stoke their fires, as there is no physical evidence of any log structures in China Gulch (Merritt 2007:45). A paucity of cultural materials at the hearths suggests that the Chinese living in China Gulch occupied the features only for a few months before moving to better quarters, and/or they were too poor to accumulate a substantial number of goods. Historical documents and the faunal remains support the assertion that the forced exodus from Idaho placed the Chinese migrants in a fragile economic position within Cedar Creek in late 1870, and they were likely only able to improve their status and quarters after working mining claims.

Perhaps the most distinctive cultural features of China Gulch are the two intact u-shaped, hand-stacked rock hearths (Figure 3.7). These rock structures seem unique to itinerant or short-term Chinese occupations as evidenced by other hearths located in California (Smith and Dixon 2005) and New Zealand (Ritchie 1986). Other examples of this style hearth construction have been found on other Chinese sites in Montana including German Gulch (24SB0212) and Upper Cave Town (24LC1723). However, archaeological excavation of a similar hearth found in 2008 at Yogo Town (24JT0075)

located in the Little Belt Mountains of Central Montana found no associated Chinese artifacts. Further survey of Cedar Creek discovered six to seven additional u-shaped rock hearths near the former settlement of Forest City—these were recorded as the Rowley Chinese Hearths (24MN0332). It is unclear if the hearths are actually Chinese in construction due to the lack of archaeological excavation, though they are nearly identical to those in China Gulch. An archaeological investigation in Cedar Creek of these hearths has provided significant information on historical and cultural processes of Chinese miners living on a mining landscape in western Montana. It is likely that the hearths served as cooking areas with tents closely constructed to take advantage of radiative heating from the rocks during cool Montana nights. Comparative work by Ritchie (1986) in New Zealand did not discover any examples of these types of hearths in China itself.

**Figure 3.7:** Hand-stacked rock hearth (~2 meters wide and 1.5 meters tall) at China Gulch. Photo by author, 2008.



Archaeological evidence suggests a strong association of the hearths in China Gulch with a short-term Chinese occupation after the migration to Cedar Creek in 1870. Louiseville's archaeological remains, on the other hand, might relate to the second phase of Chinese occupations in Cedar Creek. Excavations in 1995, 2007 and 2008 recovered several thousand artifacts, many of which relate to Chinese occupation. While the historical record did indicate that Chinese occupied Louiseville beginning in 1870, the scope and scale of the occupation is unclear. Artifacts recovered from several excavation units indicate a long-term occupation, as indicated by a wide variety of Chinese ceramics, opium pipe bowl fragments, opium cans, "Go" pieces, in addition to the non-Chinese bottles and ceramics. Most artifacts recovered from Louiseville suggest a date of 1870-1890s, with some mixing from later occupations in the 1930s-1950s.

The variety of Chinese ceramics located at Louiseville does suggest a long-term occupation and the importation of a wide variety of goods directly from China. Archaeologists recovered fragments of several celadon-style ceramic serving bowls, two Bamboo-style bowls, and two "Four-seasons" vessels. Imported storage vessels, commonly termed Chinese brown-glazed stoneware, include at least four liquor jars, five wide-mouthed jars, two spouted jars, and a single ginger jar fragment. In addition, crews uncovered several unglazed stoneware lids that would have sealed a wide-mouth jar (Merritt 2009). However, there was no evidence of the large, thick-walled Chinese globular jars commonly found in areas with a store as in German Gulch discussed later. This might indicate that Louiseville did support a large Chinese population, and any store in town imported only smaller, more portable Chinese vessels that held less bulky items. Foods commonly contained in wide-mouthed or spouted Chinese jars included soy sauce,

vegetable oil, dried fish, pickled duck eggs, and a variety of preserved goods. After consumption of the original contents, these vessels could have served any number of functions (Yang and Hellman 1996). While the vessels can only suggest indirect evidence of certain foods, faunal remains provide more direct evidence of menu items at Louiseville. Unlike China Gulch, excavations at Louiseville uncovered several hundred large and identifiable faunal materials largely relating to domestic pig, cow, sheep and chicken.

The artifact assemblage suggests that the Louiseville's occupation concentrated on the south end of the site, as a Missoula-based hotel owner occupied most of the north part of town. A dense concentration of a 15 opium cans located in a single excavation unit in the southern end of town might indicate the presence of a communal recreation area for the purpose of smoking opium. Excavators located only a few additional fragments of opium cans across the rest of the site, further supporting a special-use area. Several of the opium cans retained the original orange and black paper label with Chinese characters, though they are illegible. Interestingly, crews did not uncover any opium pipe bowl fragments in the same unit, possibly suggesting the opium smoking occurred elsewhere on site (Merritt 2009:16).

Louiseville's diverse population, in at least respect to other settlements in the immediate area, is apparent in several other artifacts discovered during the 2007 and 2008 excavations. Archaeologists discovered several fragments of a Chinese inkstone, used in traditional calligraphy. This is the first example of a Chinese writing stone located at a Montana archaeological site and indicates literacy among at least some of the Chinese population of Louiseville. Ritchie (1986:500-502) notes that inkstones found on Chinese

sites in New Zealand probably correlate to educated individuals that served as letter writers for uneducated Chinese immigrants. In the same unit, excavators located a cobalt blue glass syringe plunger (Merritt 2009:19). Analyzed in concert the inkstone and syringe plunger might be evidence of an educated Chinese physician plying his trade in Louiseville, though we may never know this for certain.

When combined, all of the archaeological and historical information help create a more complete picture of the Chinese experience in Cedar Creek. After their forced migration from Idaho in August of 1870, many of the Chinese miners settled in China Gulch, directly adjacent to the Euro-American dominated and bustling town of Louiseville. After a few harsh weeks or months of scraping by on low food rations, the Chinese moved into permanent quarters by using abandoned cabins and dwellings of Louiseville. Within the next few years Chinese entrepreneurs established a store, butcher shop, and possibly a doctor's office in the town to cater to the several hundred Chinese miners working claims in the center of the Cedar Creek District. However, the settlement remained on the periphery of major settlements in Idaho and Montana Territories, and Chinese store-owners imported only small and easily transported ceramic vessels (and the goods therein) and opium cans. The diet of the Louiseville Chinese seems dominated by domestic animals including cow and pig, following a pattern found in other archaeological settings (Wegars 1993; Rossillon 2003). By the end of the 1870s, the Chinese population dipped to approximately 130 and continued to decline throughout the next decade. Chinese accounted for 50% of the population in the Cedar Creek Mining District in 1880 (Federal Census Bureau 1880). By 1890 there were only a handful of

Chinese working the claims in Cedar Creek with the boom long-since leaving Louiseville and its last few residents.

#### *3.5.4: Ninemile Creek*

In 1874, the same French-Canadian prospectors that discovered gold in Cedar Creek, hit paydirt in the Ninemile District, located 15 miles west of Missoula. In addition to the hundreds of Euro-American miners from Cedar Creek that rushed to the new Ninemile strikes, Chinese also moved to the area to establish laundries and purchase under-performing claims. The initial boom of the Ninemile District in the mid-1870s spurred construction of two new settlements, Martina and Montreal (or “Old Town”), but by 1880 there were no Chinese recorded in the district. During the initial (1874-1875) boom of Ninemile District, Montreal had nearly a dozen Euro-American-owned businesses and two Chinese laundries (Wolle 1983:268). By 1876, newspaper accounts stated that Chinese miners are the “monarch of all they survey” in Eustache Gulch, a tributary of Ninemile Creek and located just upstream from Montreal (*Helena Independent* 1876c:3).

Unfortunately, there is little articulated historical information available on the Chinese on Ninemile Creek, and the overall history of mining district is remarkably poor. Archaeological materials recorded by the Lolo National Forest are the only significant evidence of the Chinese population of Montreal, found at the confluence of St. Louis, Eustache and Ninemile creeks. In 2000, crews battling a massive wildfire in the Ninemile drainage cut a bulldozer line through the downtown section of the previously recorded Montreal (24MO0110) archaeological site. A few days later, archaeologists surveyed the bulldozer cut and noted the presence of Chinese artifacts including

fragments of opium cans, celadon vessels, and brown-glazed stoneware consistent with a liquor jar (Roenke 2000:1). It is likely that by pure accident the bulldozer crews encountered the archaeological remains of the Chinese laundries or associated habitations apparently existing at Montreal in the late 1870s.

### 3.5.5: German Gulch

Throughout the early 1870s Chinese began purchasing large tracts of previously worked placer claims in districts across Montana Territory. Nearly every time a new Chinese purchase occurred, a newspaper carried an editorial with the details. Beginning with the Cedar Creek strike discussed earlier, Chinese began purchasing large numbers of claims throughout previously developed areas. In the 1870 census, German Gulch, west of Butte (Figure 3.8), had only five Chinese individuals listed.

**Figure 3.8:** Map showing location of German Gulch in relation to Butte. From *Cram's Universal Atlas of the World*, 1887.





The first mention of transactions in German Gulch began in April of 1871 when negotiations began between Chinese and Euro-American companies for purchase of placer claims for a total of \$17,000 (*New Northwest* 1871c:3). Within the next few months, Chinese companies purchased several claims from the Euro-American-owned Union Mining Company totaling 1,600' of German Creek for a combined cost of \$28,600 (*New Northwest* 1871f:3). The following year, 1872, Chinese companies purchased additional mining claims at German Gulch and nearby French Gulch, totaling \$61,000 (Raymond 1873:272). For context, between 1871 and 1872, the Chinese purchased at least \$106,600 of mining claims in the German Gulch area, translating to over \$1.8 million in today's dollars (Williamson 2010). As in Blackfoot City, the Chinese purchasing claims in German Gulch must have possessed financial backing, likely through wealthy merchants and their connections to voluntary organizations. The purchases were indicative of a rapidly growing Chinese population in German Gulch, from only five in early 1870 to upwards of 150 in July of 1871, and 225 in June of 1872 (*New Northwest* 1871f:3; *New Northwest* 1872f:4). The shift in population in German Gulch led one reporter to claim that in 1876, "the Chinese have almost taken full possession of German Gulch" (*Helena Independent* 1876b:3). Dramatics notwithstanding, the reporter was accurate to not only German Gulch's situation, but also the situation of various placer districts outside German or Cedar Creek.

In the early 1870s Chinese miners entered the German Gulch district as the easily worked placer deposits began to decline in productivity for their Euro-American counterparts. As noted earlier, there was a precipitous increase in the Chinese population

of German Gulch, going from only a handful in 1870 to several hundred by mid-decade. By the late 1880s mining in German Gulch shifted to lode-mining in the upper reaches of the drainage, and the majority of Chinese miners left the district. For a century, from the 1890s through 1990s, episodic yet intensive hard-rock mining significantly altered the physical landscape of upper German Gulch, while low-intensity placer mining did little to alter the rest of the drainage.

In the mid-1980s, Pegasus Gold Inc. purchased all the lode claims at the head of German, with goals of creating a large-scale open-pit mine. With the need for widening the existing Forest Service road to accommodate large mine equipment, GCM, Inc., a contracting cultural resources firm from nearby Butte, surveyed the entire German Gulch drainage from its head to the confluence of German, Beefstraight, and Norton Creeks. GCM, Inc. pedestrian surveys discovered 54 areas of historic occupations, termed “localities,” within the drainage (Fredlund et al. 1991:1). In 1988 and 1989 the company performed archaeological investigation of several areas within the six of the localities along the gulch. The majority of excavations focused on two areas directly impacted by the road widening, Localities 30 and 48, termed Lower and Upper Town, respectively. All tested localities had extensive Chinese archaeological remains, suggesting that for some period they dominated the demographic and physical landscape, with the majority of Euro-American miners working at the head of Upper German Gulch. Their excavations discovered thousands of artifacts relating to the Chinese occupation of German Gulch, and represent the most significant Chinese archaeological collection in Montana (Figure 3.9).

GCM archaeologists mapped and tested one area at Locality 24, which is comprised largely of ditches, as well as a retention pond and dam likely associated with hydraulic mining and indicative of Chinese mining practices. Sometime after abandonment of the nearby mining operation, the dam breached, leaving an exposed cross-section. Excavators in 1988 cleaned the profile of the cross-section and determined that the dam was of tamped-earth design, similar to known Chinese techniques (Fredlund et al. 1991:59). Valentine (2002) recorded similar tamped earth dams at American Canyon in Nevada in association with Chinese miners. This same tamped earth construction is likely the way Chinese workers constructed the fireproof store in Deer Lodge discussed earlier (*New Northwest* 1872d:3). The excavation at Locality 24 provides sufficient evidence to analyze other historic dams across Montana for a specific signature of Chinese construction. Specifically, excavation of dams at Chinaman's Cove and Cave Gulch, discussed in the next section, might help to discover the origins of the mining features at that locale.

**Figure 3.9:** Selection of Chinese artifacts recovered from excavations at German Gulch.



Locality 30 excavations recovered evidence of re-occupation of abandoned structures by Chinese miners, and possibly even unique terrace construction organized along traditional *feng shui* principles. In many of the features at Locality 30 there was a mixture of both Chinese and non-Chinese artifacts, though several features appear to have solely Chinese materials. GCM recorded 21 features at this locality and tested 10 of these, with the majority of artifacts of Chinese origin. It is likely that Locality 30 is the Upper Town area noted in historical documents, and by the early 1870s had been completely taken over by Chinese miners as they worked the adjacent claims.

One feature in particular at Locality 30 appears to have served a specific and special function that GCM did not fully determine. The mysterious feature is composed of local rock made into a circle two meters in diameter with a narrow entryway extending to the southeast, and a small ground-level air vent on the side. GCM interprets the feature as either a charcoal kiln or a type of oven for melting gold, retorting amalgam, or even baking communal food (Fredlund et al. 1992:92). However, the construction of the feature does not fit examples of known charcoal kilns or even Italian or Slavic ovens (Wegars 1991). There is another possibility, however, as evidenced by Chinese cremating their dead in German Gulch in 1874. According to a report the first cremation in Montana Territory occurred by:

[T]he Heathen element of German gulch [sic], who one day last week cremated six of their deceased countrymen in the most successful manner. The process is this: The dead are disinterred, the flesh scraped from the bones and these are placed in a crucible and reduced to ashes, which, in this instance are to be packed in tin boxes, box of ashes separate, and sent to the Flowery Kingdom for a final interment (*New Northwest* 1874g:3).

Little is known of Chinese cremation techniques in rural environments, so the possibility does exist, that the feature might have been some type of Chinese crematorium.

Excavations of the rock feature recovered only a handful of cow bones from the surface of the units, with nothing but charcoal and wood debris in lower levels (Fredlund et al. 1991:93). While the lack of cultural remains within the feature could support a charcoaling function, the lack of artifacts could also indicate cremation, with complete removal of bones and associated artifacts. Further research should help determine more detail about this mysterious facet of Locality 30 and German Gulch.

**Figure 3.10:** Overview of Locality 48 and current Forest service access road, facing east, 2009. Chinese businesses found by GCM are located on the right side of the road, and the pipe mender on the creek side (left side of road). Photo by Author.



Locality 48 (Figure 3.10) is probably associated with Lower Town, with the main part of the original historical settlement located a few hundred yards downstream. However, re-mining after the abandonment of the Lower Town area near the confluence of German, Norton, and Beefstraight Creeks, has effectively destroyed the downtown section, leaving only this satellite part of town intact. Archaeological evidence from Locality 48 indicates that Chinese miners and entrepreneurs solely occupied this area and had a diverse variety of businesses located within its bounds. Road widening efforts in 1988 had the most direct effect on Locality 48, as the proposal was to destroy three to four features on the east side of the access road. As such, GCM crews attempted to fully

excavate three features in the direct path of development. The archaeological materials from two side-by-side features indicate that the excavators might have encountered a Chinese business section. The two depression features shared a common sill log that extended a length of nearly 15 meters, and even uncovered intact floorboards (Fredlund et al. 1991:98-101). One feature near the two business depressions has the collapsed remains of a rock hearth noted in a u-shape, and is similar in style and construction to the hearths in Cedar Creek.

Artifacts encountered at these two features and an adjacent trash dump further support the conclusion that this area served as a business district, as there were large thick-walled globular jar fragments, scales and scale weights for measuring goods and gold, and a wide variety of Chinese ceramics, opium cans and other assorted imported materials (Fredlund et al. 1991:104). As noted in the Cedar Creek discussion above archaeologists discovered no Chinese thick-walled stoneware vessels there; hence their presence at German Gulch suggests a more substantial and important Chinese store and import business. Even the extensive excavations at Butte's Chinatown recovered no thick-walled stoneware jars (Rossillon 2008). The floral and faunal remains at the trash scatter adjacent to the two business features included commonly found on historical archaeological sites domestic species (pig, cow, chicken), but also wild game (snowshoe hare, grouse, deer) and imported species from China (sheephead fish, Chinese olives, flounder). This is the most diverse faunal assemblage found in any of the Chinese sites from Montana across all temporal periods, with even the substantial Big Timber and Butte Chinatown collections (discussed in Chapter 5) more limited.

On the opposite, north side of the road from the Chinese business area, GCM archaeologists carried out less intensive excavations at several features to determine their function and association with the rest of the site. At one feature archaeologists discovered a trash scatter containing a dense accumulation of opium pipe paraphernalia, leading to an interpretation of the area as a pipe mender's home (Fredlund et al. 1991:104). Specifically, crews discovered an opium pipe saddle, opium pipe bowl fragments, five opium cans, and 11 opium pipe fittings, of which nine were inside one of the recovered opium cans. These artifacts were found with triangular files, and provide strong support for GCM's interpretations as a pipe mender's domicile.

It is clear that the archaeological deposits at German Gulch relate directly to the Chinese domination of the area in the 1870s into the 1880s. At all tested localities archaeologists encountered Chinese cultural materials. Of these artifacts some are mundane and common to nearly all Chinese sites in the American West, yet some, such as the sheephead fish and even half a coconut, provide some clues to the depth of German Gulch's connection to a world system of trade and commerce. The close access of German Gulch's Chinese population to ethnic import markets in Deer Lodge and Virginia City, and their proximity to the major trade routes coming from Utah and the trans-continental railroad likely accounts for the diversity of this assemblage. In addition to German Gulch's proximity to such transportation opportunities, it is also probable that the Chinese storeowners actively took advantage of these opportunities to provide more variety to their consumers than merchants did—or were able to do—at other encampments in Montana Territory. Whatever the case, it is remarkable to imagine a globular jar full of dried or pickled sheephead fish traveling by sailing vessel from China

to San Francisco, then by rail to Corinne Utah Territory, and finally delivered over 400 miles away in German Gulch by freight wagons hauled by oxen, mules or horses.

While Fredlund et al.'s (1991) report was excellent and thorough for its time, they did not attempt basic intra-site analyses. In particular, they organized the collection by material class instead of excavation unit or even feature, providing little means of intra-feature comparisons. Garren Meyer (2001) made the German Gulch collection the subject of his master's thesis, though with mixed success. Meyer (2001) focused his research on an ambitious and ground-breaking attempt to discern ethnic differences within the Chinese community of German Gulch. However, there is far too little information in the literature to determine if there would even be any material culture differences within the Chinese community based on ethnicity. Ultimately, Meyer's analysis lacked sufficient archaeological or historical data to support his hypothesis, but the attempt provides a beginning point for future analyses. It is also quite apparent that Meyer did not revisit or reanalyze the collection, save for the extensive shell casings assemblage, as evidenced by the poor condition of the materials observed in 2008.

University of Montana students and Passport in Time volunteers reanalyzed the collection during the spring of 2010, and Bill Norman will use the materials for his thesis with a scheduled completion date of spring 2011. This research is expected to provide data that will support research goals including an intra-site analysis, as well as an analysis that integrates class, gender, and ethnicity. A revisit to the site in 2009 allowed researchers to observe that the road widening was actually more extensive than originally planned and destroyed several more features adjacent to the ones excavated by GCM in 1988. Thus, the materials in the extant collection are the last vestiges of this part of



Locality 48 and are valuable for the research goals noted above. Moreover, the overall research potential of the collection is priceless to current and future researchers.

With Pegasus Gold, Inc. filing for bankruptcy in 1998 after retrieving over \$400 million in gold from the German Gulch operation, the future of German Gulch's archaeological features remains unclear. The retention pond holding back metric tons of contaminated water from the cyanide operations lies along a geologic fault line susceptible to tremors (*Montana Standard* 2009:1). Pegasus Inc.'s bankruptcy effectively forces the State of Montana to handle the reclamation of the mine site, which might adversely affect several archaeological features relating to the Chinese heritage of German Gulch. If this is the case, there may be future CRM-related opportunities to return to the site to collect more archaeological data.

### *3.5.6: Blackfoot City*

Similar to German Gulch, Blackfoot City on Ophir Creek started out dominated by Euro-American miners in the 1860s, but by the early 1870s mining opportunities attracted Chinese workers. As noted in the 1870 census, Chinese accounted for 22% (111 of 499) of Blackfoot City's population. In June 1870 Chinese workers from the Central Pacific Railroad began to enter the Blackfoot District, and even reportedly, "the [Chinese] interpreter says one of the principal merchants is now on the road from San Francisco with \$100,000 to invest in mining ground around Blackfoot" (*New Northwest* 1870b:3). In 1871 Chinese miners owned two miles of Ophir Creek below Blackfoot City, and a reporter observed that their intents to purchase more property confirms that "they are truly called a curse to camp and country" (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871d:3). By summer of 1872 estimates placed the total population of areas in and around Blackfoot

City at 600, split evenly between Chinese and Euro-Americans (*New Northwest* 1872e:3).

The rapid settlement of Chinese in the Blackfoot City area led one reporter to state,

“Blackfoot, as an American camp, is doomed and damned” (*New Northwest* 1870b:3).

Some reports indicate that Blackfoot City had several Chinese stores, including a grocery that imported rice and other goods by way of freighters from Corinne to Helena, and finally to Ophir Gulch (Wolle 1983:115).

### ***3.5.7: Cave Gulch & Chinaman’s Cove***

The final major archaeological investigations summarized for Montana’s Chinese between 1862-1880 examines both material goods and the physical manifestations of mining processes. Located on the northern end of the modern Canyon Ferry Reservoir in the Big Belt Mountains, Cave and Chinaman’s Gulches contain archaeological habitations of Chinese workers and a palimpsest of mining features. A year after discovery of placer gold in Last Chance Gulch and nearby Confederate Gulch, non-Chinese prospectors hit paydirt in Cave Gulch in 1865 (Mineral Survey Notes, 1877). Rossillon (2002:12) noted that the original discovery was in 1866, but this date should be taken back to 1865 as shown in the Mineral Survey Notes. Settlements of Cavetown, Springtown, and Cashville existed from near the mouth of Cave Gulch along the Missouri River up the gulch for at least a few miles. Today, most of Cavetown and possibly Springtown are located beneath the waters of the Canyon Ferry Reservoir created in the 1950s. Thousands of acres of forest lands in the Big Belt Mountains, including Cave Gulch, burned during a destructive series of fires in 2000. The Helena National Forest, which manages most of the land affected by the fire, hired Renewable Technologies Inc. (RTI) out of Butte to perform post-fire pedestrian survey and archaeological testing in

2001 and 2002. As part of their testing and recording regimen RTI located two archaeological sites in Cave Gulch with Chinese materials. In conjunction with the previously recorded remains of Chinaman's Cove, directly north and adjacent to Cave Gulch, a complete picture of mining and Chinese occupation of this area emerges.

Similar to most other mining regions in Montana Territory, and the West in general, Chinese miners moved into the Cave Gulch vicinity during the early years of the 1870s after the production of the placers began to decline. As early as 1874, there were several dozen Chinese miners at work along Cave Gulch (Rossillon 2002:16), and probably also in Chinaman's Cove. The federal 1880 census listed 15 Chinese in Cave Gulch, 13 male miners, 1 male cook and 1 woman "about town" suggesting prostitution. The next gulch north of Chinaman's Cove, Cooper Creek, had an additional 9 Chinese miners with 12 more miners and storeowners north of Cooper in Oregon and York Gulches. Taken as a whole, the pockets of Chinese miners on the northern end of Canyon Ferry comprise a moderate population of nearly 40 (Federal Census Bureau 1880), and these counts likely underestimate the true numbers.

RTI's investigations of sites in Cave Gulch in 2001-2002 discovered two areas of Chinese occupation. Located just within the boundaries of Forest Service land, a small settlement of several house pads and cellar features (24LC1711) provided the first Chinese artifacts encountered in RTI's excavations. This site is located adjacent to Cave Creek, next to a mining claim originally located in 1865, abandoned in 1868, and located again in 1874 (Mineral Survey Notes 1877). In 1877 the claim adjacent to 24LC1711 consisted of a 3000' long bedrock flume, and 9 shafts with no mention of occupations. The presence of Chinese occupations and the associated cultural materials suggests that

during the abandonment period, 1868 and 1874, Chinese miners worked the claims. It is also possible that the area encompassed by 24LC1711 was a small satellite community associated with Cavetown, only a few hundred yards below the site. These interpretations of the site are distinctly different from those of RTI (Rossillon 2002,2003), and are products of my reanalysis of the report and associated historical documents. In addition, reexamination of the site in 2008 by University of Montana and Helena National Forest employees discovered several additional features that RTI did not map or record. This suggests that the ground visibility was not conducive to discovery of these features when RTI worked in the area in 2001 and 2002.

RTI recovered a number of Chinese artifacts from two building depressions and a trash scatter located at 24LC1711. The artifact assemblage indicates that Chinese miners occupied the two depression features sometime during the 1870s and 1880s. However, a distinct lack of temporally diagnostic artifacts at one location prevents full chronological interpretations. The most common Chinese artifact class found at these occupations included stoneware liquor jar fragments representing at least four vessels (Rossillon 2003:37, 43). Other Chinese stoneware vessels included one wide-mouth or spouted jar, a green-glazed jar lid and a straight-sided ginger jar (Rossillon 2003:42-43). The straight-sided Chinese ginger jar included a trademark of *Xin Company, Yi He* Brand. Excavators also uncovered several celadon body fragments and a rim fragment of a “Four Seasons” style dinner plate (Rossillon 2003:44). In addition, excavators located opium can and pipe bowl fragments in a trash scatter near the building depression. The faunal assemblage recovered indicates a predominance of pig, with lesser amounts of cow and other domestic species. Rossillon (2003:43, 47) also notes that excavators discovered

fish bones and musselshell remains, and 24LC1711 was the only site in Cave Gulch to have these items. 24LC1711's artifact assemblage is remarkably similar to that of Louiseville in Cedar Creek. The domination of Chinese stoneware, yet the absence of the thick-walled globular jars, suggests a small-scale occupation relying on easily portable goods. Of the three excavated features at this site, there were few European or American ceramic fragments, which is also reminiscent of Louiseville's assemblage.

The second Chinese site (24LC1723) located in Cave Gulch is over two miles upstream from 24LC1711, and is possibly some type of water control station for mining operations in lower Cave and Chinaman's Gulch. According to Rossillon (2003:108), historical records indicate that residents considered Upper Cave Gulch as "Chinatown" during the late 1870s, probably alluding to the presence of Chinese miners owning most claims in the area. 24LC1723 includes a number of house pads and associated features, and artifacts recovered from both excavations and surface collection indicate a series of occupations by both Euro-American and Chinese populations. Excavators located several fragments of a stoneware mineral water bottle, likely a German or Austrian import (Rossillon 2003:120), in an area close to a nearly complete Chinese brown-glazed wide-mouthed stoneware jar (Rossillon 2003:117). Rossillon (2003:122) notes that the Euro-American and Chinese occupations were not contemporaneous. Artifacts associated with the Chinese features date to the latter parts of the 1870s while non-Chinese materials date before and after that period.

However, the artifact assemblage of 24LC1723 is the not the most significant facet of the site. RTI recorded an earthen dam that extended across the bottom of Cave Gulch in 2002, only 450 yards from the Chinese and non-Chinese features. At this

location Cave Gulch narrows to a rocky cut that allows for easy control of water for downstream operations. In addition, Rossillon (2002:47) notes that miners apparently lined the walls of the creek with stacked rock, providing better control of water flow and sufficient protection against flooding or damage. Heavy floods after the 2000 wildfire destroyed many of the features recorded by Rossillon (2002; 2003) and revisits in 2008 did not locate the earthen berm, retaining walls, or even some house pits near the creek. It appears that at least one or two feet of sediment washed into the bottom of the gulch since 2000.

The last significant site recorded in the Cave Gulch vicinity that relates directly to Chinese occupation of the area is Chinaman's Cove Recreation Area (24LC0712), managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Chinaman's Cove consists almost completely of physical landscape features relating to mineral exploitation of the area; any historic occupation is now located under the waters of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. In the late 1860s through the 1870s miners, Chinese and non-Chinese, used hydraulic mining equipment to blast away the gold-bearing gravels along Chinaman's Gulch (Figure 3.11). While there is no supporting historic documentation to indicate a Chinese operation at this location, the presence of a Chinese coin discovered just below water line on-site several years ago is suggestive of some association. With Chinese companies working in Cooper and Cave Gulch, on the northwest and east sides Chinaman's Cove, respectively, the likelihood of that they were working within the site boundary itself seems logical. Chinaman's Cove is a current recreation area with campsites, toilets and boat launch set within the scars left by hydraulic mining. Other than a single length of metal hydraulic mining pipe and the Chinese coin, the site is devoid of artifacts, though it is probable that historic occupation

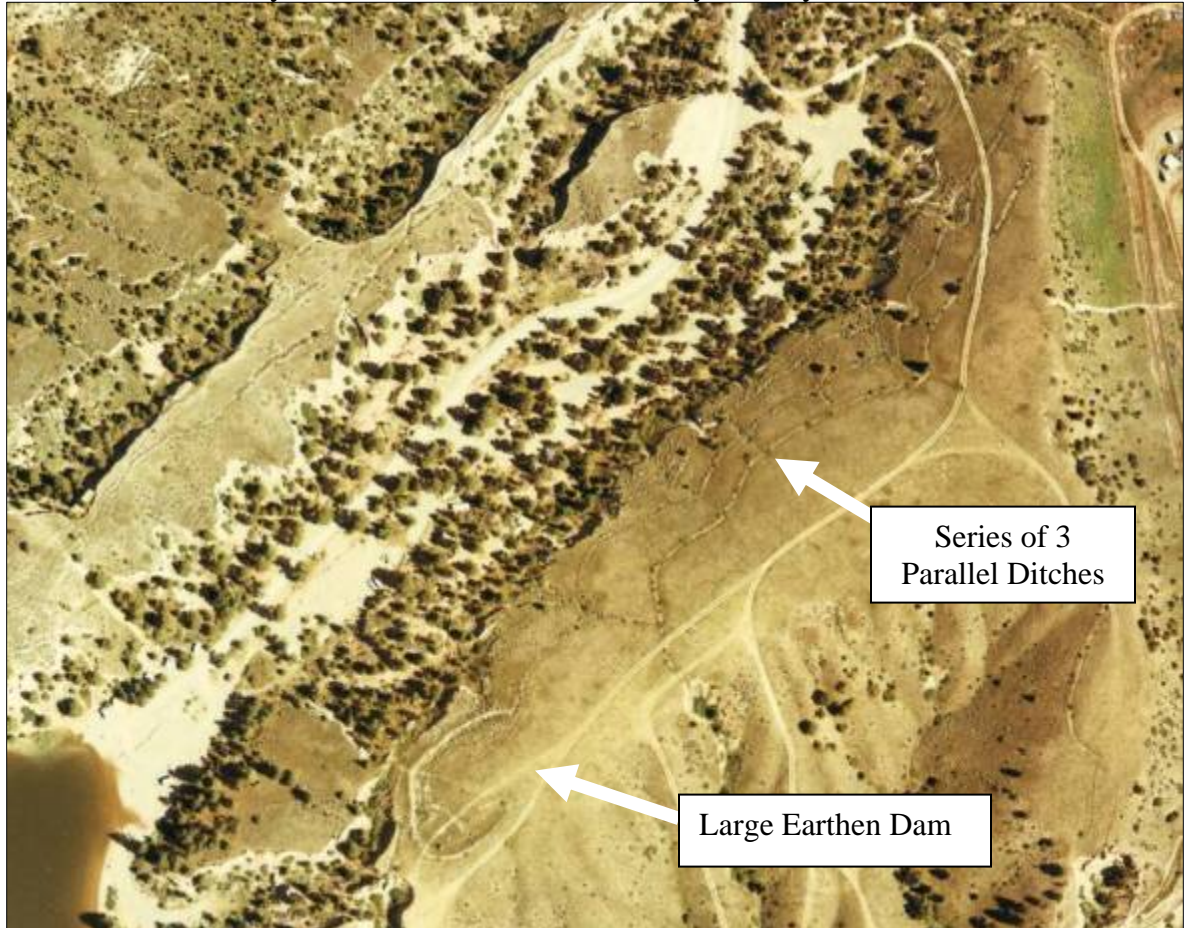
now lies at least ten meters underwater if not washed out and destroyed by the mining efforts.

Whereas German Gulch provides an excellent example of a placer mining archaeological landscape, Chinaman's Cove contains all the components of a hydraulic mining landscape. Aerial photographs and surface surveys reveal the location of at least four ditches entering Chinaman's Cove area from the northeast, or Cave Gulch side of the ridge (Figure 3.12). In addition, at the end of the ridge overlooking the east side of Chinaman's Cove, there is a large water retention dam constructed of an earthen berm. Hydraulic mining required substantial amounts of water and a large drop, or 'head', to create force enough to blast out of a monitor or 'giant' nozzle to wash the gravels. A retention dam at the top of the ridge provides a significant pool to tap and then divert to hydraulic operations on several flanks of Chinaman's Cove. As gold-bearing placers existed in the center and mouth of Chinaman's Gulch, the ridges never experienced mining and are one of the best-preserved hydraulic mining landscapes in Montana.



**Figure 3.11:** Chinaman's Cove showing hydraulic mining-created gully, photo facing southwest. Photo by author, 2008.

**Figure 3.12:** Aerial Photograph of Chinaman’s Cove area, focusing on mining features, 1980. Photo courtesy of Bureau of Reclamation, Canyon Ferry District Office.



In order to fully understand the story of the Chinese in Cave Gulch, and their mining operations, a complete look at the landscape is necessary. Starting at Chinaman’s Cove (24LC0716), which is the end-result of the mining operations, and moving north there is an area managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Helena National Forest exhibiting significant placer and hydraulic mining scars. In this area, and extending onto the ridge separating Cooper and Cave Gulch, at the head of the shorter Chinaman’s Gulch, there are piles of placer tailings, ditches, and more earthen dams. The water flowing into Chinaman’s Cove passed through this area before descending. Located just below and east of the ridge is 24LC1711, the Chinese miners’ encampment



along Cave Gulch, which possibly housed the labor that constructed or maintained the ditches and dams. Finally, 24LC1723 sits at a point where ditches connected to Cave Creek and brought necessary water to hydraulic or placer operations in Chinaman's Cove and lower Cave Gulch. While the artifact assemblages of the Chinese sites in the Cave Gulch area are important, the primary significance of these three sites is their illustration of an entire mining system for the exploitation and modification of the physical landscape.

### *3.5.8: Last Chance, Pike's Peak, Big Prickly Pear, Garnet Range, and Old Lincoln*

As promising placer mining deposits waned, other districts shared histories similar to those of German and Ophir Gulch, with Euro-American miners moving on while the Chinese lingered to carve out a living. For example, by the summer of 1872, Chinese companies were the only mining groups working the lower parts of Last Chance Gulch in Helena (Rossiter 1873:282). In some districts like Pike's Peak, northwest of Deer Lodge, Chinese were the only crews at work in the drainages, and Raymond (1873:274) notes that "wages in this place are about \$50 per month [and] they are exclusively employed by their own countrymen." By 1871 Chinese miners represented the bulk of the population working on the Big Prickly Pear mines near Montana City, and by 1872 the area was devoid of all but a handful of Euro-American miners (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871h:3; Raymond 1873:288). In Bannack, which had long-since passed from the front pages of Montana Territory's newspapers, three Chinese companies had about 50 men working below town along Grasshopper Creek (Raymond 1873:262). Declining districts in the Garnet Range, east of Missoula, began a demographic transition to almost exclusive Chinese occupations of placer camps in the mid-1870s, as evidenced by the

town of Yreka in 1876: “the China town is larger than the white burg” (*Helena Independent* 1876a:3). However, some mining districts like Old Lincoln (Didriksen and Didriksen 1994) had a small Chinese population in the mid-1870s but never coalesced into a substantial population as in other areas.

### *3.5.9: Yogo Town & End of an Era*

The last major placer gold rush of Montana Territory occurred in 1878 along Yogo Creek in the Little Belt Mountains southeast of Great Falls. With news of the strike thousands of Euro-American miners stampeded to the workings along Yogo Creek, though by 1880 the area was largely abandoned (Voynick 1985:10). It is unclear how many Chinese also came to the area in the rush, though it is possible to extrapolate by the previous patterns that at least a few dozen likely attempted to work claims. The 1880 Federal Census noted two Chinese laundrymen in Yogo Town, significant because the town had only a population of a few dozen by this time (Federal Census Bureau 1880). Yogo Town (24JT0075) was recorded in the early 1980s by the Lewis & Clark National Forest. During surveys in 2008, archaeologists discovered a hand-stacked rock hearth similar in size and shape to those discovered at China Gulch (24MN0262) and Mary Anne Gulch (24MO0332). Excavations of the hearth and associated dugout at Yogo Town in the summer of 2009 recovered no ethnic markers associated with the Chinese (Merritt and Mogstad 2009:50).

Yogo Town’s rapid boom and bust was indicative of a major shift that had occurred in Montana Territory during the 1870s. Consolidation of existing claims and intensification of mining works of previously placered gulches and streams was the perpetual pattern in 1870s Montana Territory for both Euro-American and Chinese

miners. By the latter part of the 1870s miners had removed most of the easily recovered placer gold deposits throughout Montana Territory. Employment of new techniques, such as hydraulic mining as early as the 1860s, allowed further exploitation of many mining districts whose superficial deposits had been played out by earlier miners. Chinese found widespread employment in hydraulic operations owned by Euro-Americans or their own companies (Rohe 1995). As mentioned earlier, Chinese miners worked hydraulic operations in German Gulch in the early to mid-1870s, and performed similar activities in Confederate and Cave Gulches east of Helena, along Elk, Bear, Gold, and Pike's Peak Creeks northwest of Deer Lodge; finally they were involved in widespread hydraulicking along Alder Creek near Virginia City. Dredging and other re-mining after 1900 destroyed most physical evidence of Chinese hydraulicking, except in German and Cave Gulches. The transition to these heavily capitalized ventures in the 1870s began to force Chinese miners out of Montana's mining districts and into more service-based industries. However, mining capitalization and transition were not the only factors affecting the economic livelihood of Montana's earliest Chinese residents.

### **3.6: Montana Territory's Legal Attack on the Chinese**

The first legal attempt to specifically exclude the Chinese was fueled by competition in the laundry business in the mid-1860s. Reacting towards the construction of several Chinese laundries in downtown Helena, a group of Euro-American washerwomen purchased editorial space calling for the boycott of those businesses in 1866. A few weeks after the call for boycott, a group of Chinese laundrymen wrote an editorial stating that they were "Good Chinamen" and "ask that the good people of Montana may let us earn an honest living by the sweat of our brow" (*Montana Radiator*

1866:1 as cited in Wunder 1980:20). It appears that the initial calls for boycott fell on deaf ears in 1866, but in 1867 a similar dispute occurred in Diamond City, 40 miles east of Helena (Flynn 2006:108; Stoner 2007:30). Charlie Lee, a Chinese man, constructed the first laundry in Diamond City in 1866 and by the mid-1870s three Chinese laundries operated in the town (Flynn 2006:53; Stoner 2007:31). Growing negative sentiment towards Chinese laundries led to a restrictive tax levied on all “male-owned” establishments of that kind in Montana Territory. The initial tax provision specifically stated that the law only applied to Chinese laundries, but the Territorial Supreme Court struck down the law as it focused on one ethnic group. A re-worked tax provision that changed the wording to “male-owned” laundries passed the Territorial Government in 1869 and remained on the books into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Spence 1978:199-200; Wunder 1980:26).

Over 25% of the Chinese laundry operator’s budget was subsumed to this tax, though the enforcement and collection of this tax seems to be relatively variable (Bernstein 1999:23). In two court cases in the 1890s the State Supreme Court upheld the laundry tax as constitutional on the basis that the Chinese litigants were not American citizens, and that the act was a fee and thus did not require equanimity to all ethnic groups (Wunder 1980:26). Wunder (1980:27) notes that one possible reason for the Supreme Court’s opinion was the potential financial loss to the state if they judged the tax as unconstitutional. As restrictive and harmful as the tax seemed to be for Chinese operators, the number of Chinese laundries grew rapidly throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Effectively the laundry tax ended enforcement after 1913 when Quong Wing of Helena won a case on a district-level but lost in the Supreme Court (Goldstein 1988:96). Even

with the act upheld by the Supreme Court, the state of Montana ceased collection of taxes of laundries in the late 1910s (Wynne 1978:63).

With Chinese companies and individuals purchasing placer ground in nearly every mining district in Montana Territory during the early 1870s, public sentiment shifted towards exclusion of this population by means of legal restrictions. More than one newspaper report during this period noted that the purchase of placer ground by Chinese miners was throwing American citizens out of employment, even though federal mining reports suggested otherwise (Raymond 1869:141, 1870:260, 1873:292). Indeed, it appears that the Territorial legislation perpetrated injustice against the Chinese, not the reverse.

For instance, in November of 1871 two Chinese individuals purchased lode claims in the Elkhorn Mountains southeast of Helena. Ah Chong and Ah Song purchased placer and lode claims from W.D. McIntyre and V. Simmons for \$3,000 in 1871. This property was located on the “main branch of Crow Creek, also known as Wilson Creek” located in the “Warren Mining District” in an area that would become known as Ruddville (Jefferson County Courthouse 1871:247). However, further research of the mining claim records indicated that V. Simmons purchased and consolidated all the claims in Wilson Gulch on September 25, 1871 from James L. Wood, A. Campbell, A.J. Sanders, Robert Holcomb, Charles Huse, and Joseph Harvey for a sum of only \$100 (Jefferson County Courthouse 1871:199). Then, less than two months later he, in partnership with W.D. McIntyre, resold all the claims in bulk to the aforementioned Chinese for \$3,000, a significant profit. This pattern was repeated countless times across the state. Even though the Euro-American majority profited from the Chinese, they

continued to rail against those living and working in Montana Territory's mining districts. Boswell (1986) best describes the situation as he states that when the economy contracts, as it did in the 1870s, there is a significant increase in discrimination. Anti-Chinese sentiment led to major attempts to subject Chinese to exclusionary laws on local, state, and federal levels.

The 1868 Burlingame Treaty between the governments of China and the United States promoted the immigration of thousands of Chinese laborers to America to fill the need for cheap labor in various industries including manufacturing and the railroads. However, additional provisions within the Burlingame Treaty prohibited the naturalization of Chinese for American citizenship (Department of State 1902:114). This legal precedent would have serious repercussions for the Chinese residents of the United States, and would play out in Montana Territory's legislature and court system in the 1870s.

During December of 1871, Seth Bullock, a member of the Montana Territorial Congress from Lewis and Clark County introduced a rough bill that would, "exclude all Chinamen from acquiring any right, title or interest in mineral lands, by discovery, possession, purchase or lease, within the limits of the Territory" (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1871b:2). Bullock's proposed bill was nearly the same in language as those already enacted in California, Idaho, and remarkably similar to those proposed in North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota around the same time (Ross 1909:176). The bill followed on the heels of miner's meetings in a handful of Montana's mining districts which sought to exclude the Chinese from ownership of claims and any form of real property, though no sanctions were ever successfully passed. For example, miners in

Cedar Creek Mining District in the western part of Montana Territory failed to pass a resolution expelling the Chinese from the area. Most opponents of the Cedar Creek measure stated that they had sold equipment and goods on credit to the Chinese, and expelling the population would bankrupt local merchants (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1870b:3, 1870c:2).

In late December 1871, Bullock formally introduced a bill to the Upper House of the Territorial Legislature under the title of “To Prevent Chinese from Acquiring Mining Ground in Montana.” With the submission of this proposal a surprisingly vigorous debate, given the prevailing attitudes towards Chinese labor in the United States, erupted between rival newspapers and editors. The editorial board of the *Helena Daily Herald* fully supported the bill, and went even further in providing some recommendations for revisions that they hoped would garner better support from the various political factions. Specifically, in a December 27, 1871 editorial the *Helena Daily Herald* first berates the *New Northwest* out of Deer Lodge for its “inability to discern” the necessity for such a bill, but also suggests that Bullock and supporters should alter the bill’s language (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871j:3). As it stood, Bullock’s bill focused purely on the Chinese. It originally stated, “That from and after the passage of this act, no subject of the Empire of China shall acquire or hold any real estate, placer or quartz mines.” The *Helena Daily Herald* editorial staff suggested a more broad application with an amended section, “That from and after the passage of this act, no subject of the Empire of China, the Empire of Japan, or other alien, who, by laws or treaties of the United States, are prohibited from becoming citizens thereof, shall acquire, possess, or hold any interest in or to real estate, mining claims” (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871e:3). Thus, the proposed new language more

closely followed the stipulations of the Burlingame Act of 1868 in reference to the Chinese, but also provided future protection of real property from sale to any alien party.

In January of 1872 W.W. Dixon of Deer Lodge introduced a modified version of Bullock's bill to the House of Montana Territory. The second version of the bill was slightly different than Bullock's original with the main changes including, 1) amending language to prohibit all aliens not just Chinese from owning property, following the editorial suggestion by the *Helena Daily Herald*, and, 2) the only property specifically addressed for prohibition of ownership by aliens was placer claims. In a telling editorial on the proposed bill, the *Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* purported that the provisions of the bill were a humanitarian endeavor to protect the Chinese from the pervasive violence in Montana's mining camps (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer*1872a:2):

In the interest of humanity, order and law, Mr. Dixon takes the earliest opportunity to allay this feeling of discontent and to protect the Chinamen from mob violence, by introducing this bill, which protects the citizen and those who may become such in their 'rightful heritage,' and removes *the cause* which has fed to mob violence and summary execution of Chinamen.

In addition, the same editorial states that the proposed bill would effectively force the Chinese to leave Montana for good, and congratulates the Montana Territorial Legislature for its "bloodless solution" to the Chinese question. Finally, under the bill's provisions, any placer claims held or purchased after passage of the Act would be forfeited to the Territory of Montana to then be re-sold at cost to legal citizens of the United States.

After some apparent change in opinion since the 1871 editorial by the *Helena Daily Herald*, the editors of the *New Northwest* issued a statement in 1872 that explicitly supported the Alien Bill or Law, as it was now termed, and furthered public opinion that:



The placers are the filled coffers of wealth to sustain Montana till her acres are tilled. We have been permitting them to be robbed by those who have, and will have, no interest in common with “Republican America.” We desire that this shall cease. As for the Chinaman, we bear him no malice. As he got into Montana so let him get out. (*The New Northwest* 1872b:4)

In the same newspaper edition as the above editorial rallying support for the Alien Bill, a response letter voiced a dissenting view on the issue. A letter by “Ursa Minor,” a pseudonym of some unknown author in Little Bear Gulch, disparaged the attitude of expelling the Chinese, and instead saw this as an opportunity for good Christian Montanans to embrace these individuals. Ursa Minor specifically points to the opportunity for educating the Chinese currently in Montana in American governmental and religious ideals, and thus spread ideas of democracy back to China. Ursa Minor believed that it would be better if all the Euro-Americans in Montana were forced out of placer mining enterprises and instead focused their attentions on farming, as “that one dollar made tilling the soil is worth ten dollars made at mining” (*New Northwest* 1872c:4). Unfortunately, however, there were few opponents to the Alien Law in the government, and the measure successfully passed the Montana Territorial Legislature in January of 1872.

There is but a trace of evidence on how the Alien Law played out in Montana Territory during the first few years. A report by Rossiter W. Raymond, President of the American Institute of Mining Engineers in 1873, noted that he could locate only “two or three instances of actually perpetrated injustice” towards the Chinese as a result of the Alien Law (Raymond 1873:292). However, at least one newspaper account mentions that Chinese companies of German Gulch were nervous to purchase more mining claims, “unless [the Chinese] can be guaranteed uninterrupted possession, which no one is

willing to do at present” (*New Northwest* 1872h:3). Another example of the impact of the Alien Law comes from Horse Prairie where two Chinese miners who purchased \$70,000 worth of mining ground from the Yearian Brothers, reportedly filed papers to become American citizens to avoid the law’s penalties (*New Northwest* 1872k:3). Even with the passage of the Alien Law and the apparently small effect it had on Chinese purchasing habits, some in the press wanted even more restrictions. According to those wanting more stringent restrictions, the action was required so that “we can so completely despoil them in one year’s time that they will curse the country, shake the dust from their coattails, and leave for ‘Their own, their native land’” (*The New Northwest* 1872k:3).

In the report by Rossiter W. Raymond (1873), supplied to the Secretary of the Treasury for the United States, he expressed his disgust, calling the bill, “outrageous,” a “ludicrous illustration of human stupidity,” and a “rank dishonesty” (Raymond 1873:292). The crux of Raymond’s opposition to the bill was that it seemed a folly to him that Euro-American miners would want to exclude Chinese from purchasing what he saw as second-class or previously worked claims. Raymond viewed the exclusion of Chinese from purchasing claims as a position that would not only hurt the Chinese, but also the Euro-American miners who were trying to offload low-paying claims. Finally, Raymond offered a warning to the potential abuse of Chinese by unscrupulous Euro-American individuals that would “by virtue of laws of their own manufacture, excluding foreigners from rights of original location, get the land in the beginning for nothing, and then, after having skimmed it of its richest treasure, sell it at their own price [to the Chinese], and pocket the money of the purchaser,” and then potentially revoke the title

under the provisions of the Alien Law and be able to re-sell the land yet again for profit (Raymond 1873:292).

In 1874, Montana Territorial District Attorneys Henry N. Blake and J.C. Robinson lodged a formal action under the Alien Law against Fauk Lee, a Chinese mine owner from Deer Lodge County, who had recently purchased 3,000 feet of placer claims from a Euro-American individual (Blake and Hedges 1877:126). The lawsuit was potentially a collusion between the district attorneys and Chinese parties to test the legality of the Alien Law, as Blake had defended Chinese clients before (Wunder 1980:24). Regardless, Blake and Robinson successfully argued their case on the lower court level in Montana, with the result that “judgment was rendered for the plaintiff, that the mining ground described in the complaint be forfeited to the Territory, and sold in pursuance of the provisions of the [Alien Law]” (Blake and Hedges 1877:126-127). It is a marked possibility that this lawsuit against Fauk Lee, was a direct result of actions by leaders of the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco, who in May of 1873 instructed their subordinates in Pioneer, and probably other mining camps in Montana, “to buy all the mining ground they can at whatever figures they consider it worth, and the San Francisco head men will contest the Montana Alien Law if their title is disputed” (*New Northwest* 1873a:4). The full extent of Six Company involvement in the Fauk Lee case is undetermined, though the mining property at stake was a short distance from Pioneer. There is a distinct yet indeterminate possibility, as suggested by Wunder (1980:24), that the Chinese Six Companies or some other Chinese party paid Blake to lodge the lawsuit against Fauk Lee so they could legally challenge the Alien Law in court.

After losing their fight in the District Court, Fauk Lee and his attorneys filed an appeal to the Montana Territorial Supreme Court and the final verdict was rendered by Judge Knowles. Specifically, the Territorial Supreme Court justices considered: 1) the rights of aliens within the Territory; 2) whether the Territorial Legislature had the authority to create such law; and 3) whether the Alien Law conflicted with the Organic Act that created Montana Territory in 1864 (Blake and Hedges 1877:127). Under the analysis of alien rights, the Supreme Court's majority opinion found that under the Burlingame Act with China, Chinese individual rights as a most-favored country protected their ownership of such claims (Blake and Hedges 1877:129). Second, the court found that the Territory did not have the authority to enact the Alien Law in the first place as the Organic Act of Montana Territory provided no specific sovereignty rights that would be necessary to enact legislation affecting aliens to the United States as a whole (Blake and Hedges 1877:134; Wunder 1980:24). Lastly, the Supreme Court's opinion stated that the Territorial Alien Law was in conflict with the 1872 Hard Rock Mining Law that the United States Government had passed, affecting all mineral lands in the country (Blake and Hedges 1877:138). This finding successfully destroyed the effectiveness of Montana Territory's Alien Law, and protected one of the main economic opportunities for the Chinese. The success of the appeal by Fauk Lee is truly remarkable as the finding occurred during one of the most severe economic depressions in American history (Spence 1974:34), which led to even further fomenting of anti-Chinese sentiment among the working classes and efforts to further exclude them from the workforce (McLain 1994:96).

Even though Fauk Lee successfully defended his and all Chinese rights to owning mineral claims in Montana, the federal 1872 Hard-Rock Mining Laws effectively kept Chinese ownership off the official books. According to Hartman (1992:142), the 1872 Hard Rock law's "proscription against location of claims by aliens is enforceable only at the instance of the United States." Thus, on a local level mining claims and deeds could be purchased and sold by aliens, in this case Chinese, without fear of private parties attempting to challenge valid ownership. The restrictions in the law thus allowed ownership of unpatented claims by the Chinese, but never patented claims as the United States would then challenge the rights of the alien claimant (Hartman 1992:142). This legal reality led to omission of hundreds of Chinese claims from being included in official records, creating even more holes in the documentary record of the Chinese in Montana.

### **3.7: Violence and Death in the Montana Territory Chinese Communities**

Death and violence in the Chinese communities of Montana Territory were no more severe or different from patterns evidenced in the Euro-American majority. This noted, however, there was a difference in the manner Chinese immigrants dealt with violent and domestic problems within the community. As observed by Raymond (1869:140), "their mutual quarrels seldom or never require arbitrament [sic] of the courts." The Chinese method of self-regulation of disputes was unique in Montana Territory, and other areas of America. It appears that most self-regulation occurred in domestic disputes over money, or non-fatal confrontations between Chinese individuals or companies. An incident in 1867 Helena illustrates the self-regulation of the Chinese

population by a type of group consensus, though the true inner workings of the trial system remain unclear.

On the night of November 20, 1867, Na Lung supposedly doused an old shirt with coal oil and placed the incendiary in a wood pile behind the Jing, Sing & Co. store on Cutler Street (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867a:2). Apparently, Na Hung was immediately suspected of the attempted arson due to community knowledge of an existing grudge towards the owners of Jing, Sing & Co., and the Chinese community convened a type of anonymous trial by jury the following Sunday. During this trial, Chinese community members anonymously placed papers with the name of who they believed started the fire into a box, and the votes were tallied. Voters convicted Na Lung of arson and sentenced him to hang at the earliest opportunity. It is not known what happened to Na Lung, as he apparently disappeared, and Jing Sing & Co. offered a \$500 reward for his capture (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867b:2).

In the period between 1862 and 1880, there were several acts of violence, murder, and dishonesty within the Chinese community, though few spilled over into Montana Territory's legal system. Violence against the Chinese in Montana Territory was similar to that in other states and Territories in the United States, and included lynching and random acts of violence. Some of the violence towards the Chinese stemmed from vigilante justice which pervaded territorial Montana in the 1860s and 1870s (i.e. Dimsdale 1977; Allen 2004; Thompson and Owens 2004). For instance, the first and only known lynching in the mining community of Henderson, north of Philipsburg, and the first recorded in Granite County, was of a Chinese individual accused of stealing \$400. According to accounts, the Chinese man broke into the store of Caplice & Co. and

robbed the till. Miners arrested the Chinese individual during his exit from the store, and a citizen's trial found him guilty and sentenced to hang by a vote of 19 to 18. The sentence was carried out immediately, and though the newspaper editorial condemned the hanging and called for an investigation, no further mention of the incident appeared in newspaper accounts (*New Northwest* 1871h:3). In Beartown, a Chinese man was hung, or "choked" as euphemistically reported by the *New Northwest*, for the reported theft of 350 pounds of flour from a store (*New Northwest* 1874e:4). Even after the preceding lynching the newspaper reporter noted that the Chiense, "immunity from punishment is justly looked upon as a great calamity to the expansion of good morals, and is only excusable on the ground of a scarcity of cheap labor in Beartown" (*New Northwest* 1874e:3). In another instance of apparent vigilante justice, hunters discovered a Chinese man hanging from a tree two miles east of Helena. In this case, investigators did not locate a motive or perpetrators, and it appeared the body had been hanging for several weeks or months (*Helena Daily Herald* 1870i:4).

The most notable violent encounter between Chinese and Euro-Americans in Cedar Creek was during 1872 when someone broke into a store in Forest City, two miles above Louiseville, and stole a safe containing \$4,000 dollars in gold (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1872b:2). Four Chinese men were immediately suspected of the crime, and a posse under Sheriff Ed Warren began to pursue the individuals. During the initial excitement a mob burst into the cabin of a Chinese couple on the outskirts of town and:

They attempted to make the couple confess by putting ropes around their necks and running the ropes over a rafter in the cabin, pulling them up and letting them down. After nearly choking the two to death the mob decided

they knew nothing of the robbery and shamefacedly left them alone. Later no one liked to admit any part in the incident (Hahn 1986:31).

A few weeks later Ed Warren and the two posse members returned to Forest City with the money and a tale. At this point the story diverges into several scenarios, each reported as fact, though all different in substance. According to the initial reports, Ed Warren and his posse encountered the Chinese men on a trail heading through the Couer d'Alene Mountains, approximately 40 miles northwest of Cedar Creek. The story continued that the Chinese refused to surrender, at which point the posse fired and wounded several of the Chinese, who still managed to escape with the money (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1872c:2). A second version states that Ed Warren and crew encountered the Chinese in their camp, surprising them while nude and washing their clothes. In this version, perhaps concocted for its humorous and humane nature, the Chinese still unclothed ran into the woods leaving the money behind (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* 1872d:2). Another version noted that there were only two Chinese men involved with the robbery, and Warren shot and killed one and arrested the second (*New Northwest* 1872g:4). A few months after the incident, and with no other party locating the fugitive Chinese thieves, the guilty conscience of a posse member leaked that Ed Warren and others murdered the Chinese during the arrest and dumped their bodies into the Clark Fork or DeBorgia River. Later, a second party found the badly decomposed bodies on the riverbank and burned the remains over a large bonfire (Hahn 1986:31).

Another instance of violence against the Chinese in Montana Territory—which was not that dissimilar to the lynchings in Helena and Henderson or the summary execution near Cedar Creek— occurred in 1873 Rocker City near Butte and received far more press and legal condemnation than the other incidents. In early July of 1873, two



Euro-American men living on Silver Bow Creek, just outside Rucker, supposedly believed that a Chinese man stole a ring and watch from their cabin. The two men, Daniel Haffey and John McLaughlin, captured the supposed thief and enacted their version of vigilante justice (*New Northwest* 1873d:3). Another source mentioned that Haffey and McLaughlin went into Butte and Rucker City boasting of the deed (Warren 1896:69). A newspaper report carried the gory details, “[w]hen found his feet were on the ground, and a heavy blow on his head with a six-shooter or some other heavy weapon indicated that he was struck after he was strung up and, swooning away, strangled to death” (*New Northwest* 1873d:3). After multiple attempts by both Euro-Americans and Chinese living in the area to cut down the body met with threats of violence from Haffey and McLaughlin, word was sent to Sheriff Warren of Deer Lodge. When Sheriff Warren arrived at the location the Chinese body was still hanging from the noose, and both Haffey and McLaughlin had fled the scene. On one grisly note, Sheriff Warren discovered that the eyes of the murdered Chinese man were gone due to decomposition and the work of flies. The notation of the missing eyes is important, as a later report stated that no Chinese miners wished to return to the area as “the dead man is looking at them,” possibly an expression of traditional superstition (*New Northwest* 1873e:3).

Newspapers condemned the murder, and a coroner’s inquest proved that the Chinese man did not steal any of the objects stated by Haffey and McLaughlin. Sheriff Warren set a \$100 reward for the capture of the two men, and within a week citizens captured McLaughlin attempting to leave the county (*New Northwest* 1873d:3). Under further review, Sheriff Warren determined that McLaughlin was the same man who under the alias of William Terry, accosted a Chinese doctor and broke out windows of a

Chinese store in Deer Lodge one month before the hanging incident. In that incident it appears that a drunken McLaughlin accosted a Chinese doctor and merchant and then broke windows of the Chinese store with his fists and rocks before being arrested. The judge sentenced McLaughlin, who lived in Bannack at the time under the alias of William Terry, to \$25 and costs of court and one month in jail on May 31, 1873.

It would appear that only a few days after his release from a one-month jail sentence he took his possible resentment out on the first Chinese individual he came across with support of Haffey (*New Northwest* 1873b:3). It is interesting to note that the *New Northwest* reporter handled the initial assault and battery in Deer Lodge in May as more a joke than an unfortunate crime, but that tone changed after the murder. For example, after the murderous lynching the paper stated the Chinese man was “entitled under our laws and the humanities of a civilized people to the same protection in life and property as through his skin had been white and his God our God, and his murder is a stain and humiliation upon all Montana” (*New Northwest* 1873d:3). However, even in the face of this crime the reporter had to couch their condemnation with: “[w]e wish there was not a Chinaman in Montana; believe them to be a blight upon the country, but they are here by lawful authority” (*New Northwest* 1873d:3).

There was never any mention in historical accounts of the capture of Daniel Haffey, as John McLaughlin (a.k.a William Terry or John Collins) was the only person tried of the crime. Judge Knowles of Deer Lodge found John Collins guilty of murder in the second degree and sentenced him to life imprisonment, the first such verdict in Montana Territorial history though prosecutors pushed for the death penalty. Again, reporters expressing their agreement with the punishment could not pass up the

opportunity to denigrate the victim of the crime: “however objectionable as an element of population, are still under the protection of our laws, entitled to every right of person and property that we are, and who by very reason of their helplessness and inferiority should be exempt from personal violence” (*New Northwest* 1873f:4). Even in murder situations, reporters, and the Euro-American citizens of Montana, could not undermine their own racial bias towards the Chinese. Nine years later, in 1882, Judge Knowles granted a full pardon for John Collins due to a petition by 200 Deer Lodge County citizens and two jurors on the original murder trial (one of which was the prison warden in 1882). Judge Knowles reanalyzed the case, and believed the claim that Collins was under the influence of alcohol and remembered nothing of the crime and thus released him on the stipulation that “he would forever abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors” (*Helena Independent* 1882c:2). Collins, upon release, went to San Francisco and immediately went to sea, ending one of the most unfortunate chapters in Montana Chinese history.

The last major violent episode between Chinese and Euro-American Montanans during the initial period occurred at Blackfoot City in 1871, and the resulting trial had repercussions across the territory and the West. Blackfoot City, known as *Dien Bien Phu* or “entrance to the valley or where the valley begins” to the Chinese residents (Avon Get Together Club 1977:411 cited in Foster 1992:37), had a substantial population of both Euro-Americans and Chinese during the early 1870s. During March of 1871, a significant clash occurred between a Euro-American miner, John Martell, and nearly all the Chinese mining companies working for three miles below Blackfoot City. The dispute began apparently over access to water flowing through a ditch constructed in 1866 from Ophir Creek downstream to the workings of Martell and his partner Kimerly

(*New Northwest* 1871:3). While the exact location of Martell and Kimerly's claim is not included in the report, the distance, 3 miles below Blackfoot City, would indicate that they were working near the confluence of Ophir and Carpenter Creeks.

From the reports, it appears that Martell hiked up Ophir Gulch to the location of the dam for the ditch, which was on a claim owned by a Chinese company; and apparently an altercation ensued in which one Chinese man was shot and killed. Since the Chinese company purchased the claim from a Euro-American miner the previous year, there was an ongoing dispute regarding who owned the 'prior right' to the water which precipitated the affair (*New Northwest* 1871a:3). It is unclear who the aggressor was in the altercation, but Martell fired his pistol and instantly killed Ah Sing, foreman of the Chinese company, with a single shot to the head. Martell contended that the Chinese miners were planning on breaching the ditch, and drew their weapons to scare him away, at which time he defended himself killing Ah Sing (*New Northwest* 1871a:3; *Helena Daily Herald* 1871a:3). After firing several more shots Martell took off on foot towards Blackfoot City, a few more miles up the gulch. The Chinese company, possibly totaling a dozen men, chased after Martell firing as they pursued (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871a:3). A second Chinese company who owned the next claim upstream from where the altercation occurred, heard the commotion and joined the pursuit of Martell (*New Northwest* 1871a:3). By the time Martell reached Blackfoot City, divested of his work boots during the pursuit, the estimated 20 Chinese miners fired 30-40 rounds. The sheriff in Blackfoot City arrested not only Martell, but also 10-12 Chinese who had followed him into town (*New Northwest* 1871a:3).

Upon an initial hearing the next day, the judge refused bail for Martell while releasing the Chinese prisoners on a \$1,500 bond, which “causes general indignation on the part of the whites” of Blackfoot City (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871b:3). To the reporters, it seemed most egregious that refusal of bail was made only on “the fact that none other than Chinese evidence was adduced against him” (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871b:3). It appeared that the single most problematic part of this whole episode in Montana Territorial history was the lack of trust placed in Chinese testimony by Euro-American Montanans. During jury selection for the manslaughter trial of Martell, attorneys interviewed over 100 Euro-American men as potential jurors, but none stated that they would believe the testimony of a Chinese witness (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871f:3; 1871g:3).

A major public trial of its day, the defense team consisted of high profile attorneys William Claggett, a future Territorial Supreme Court Justice, and William Dickson. The prosecution in contrast consisted of District Attorney McMurtry, Colonel Brown and Colonel Chadwick, all notable names in early Montana Territorial History. Due to all prosecution witnesses being Chinese, the court used J.H. Oliver, a former sailor aboard ships trading with China, of Blackfoot City as interpreter due to his basic knowledge of the foreign language (*Helena Daily Herald* 1871f:3). The trial lasted roughly a month which was longer than most due to the problems securing jurors and the slow interpretation of testimony. On May 18, 1871 Judge Knowles acquitted John Martelle of all charges. While most reports supported the decision, an editorial in the *Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* stated their “inference that the people of Deer Lodge approve of shooting Chinaman for a pastime” (*Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer*

1871:2). The position of the *Missoula and Cedar Creek Pioneer* editorial staff was more likely dependent upon a political rivalry with the *New Northwest* and *Helena Independent* than on the welfare and support of the Chinese population of Montana Territory, though it is hard to fully translate the argument. However, the true legacy of the Martelle trial lies in the admission of Chinese testimony against a Euro-American defendant. Precedents in California declared that Chinese could not testify against Euro-American men, similar to the ante-bellum laws of the American South in regards to African Americans. Specifically, the *New Northwest* ran a story detailing the robbery of Chinese miners by Euro-American men in California, but as Chinese could not provide testimony the court dismissed the case (*New Northwest* 1871e:3).

### **3.8: Chinese Women**

While few primary sources and scholarly literature have focused on the Chinese experience in Montana Territory during the 1860s and 1870s, there is even less discussion of the female component of that population (Figure 3.13). In 1870 the Federal Census enumerated 128 Chinese women, largely located in Deer Lodge and Lewis & Clark Counties. Of these 128 Chinese women the majority, 57, kept house, 53 engaged in prostitution, and the remaining 17 fell into various occupational categories. By the time of the 1880 Federal Census the female population of Montana Territory's Chinese fell to 78. The large disparity between male and female Chinese ratios (14.23 Male:Female in 1870 and 20.51 Male:Female in 1880) had severe widespread repercussions to the immigrant community. In comparison, the sex ratio for the entire population of Montana Territory was 4.2 males to females in 1870, and 2.5 males to females in 1880.

**Figure 3.13:** Chinese women in Deer Lodge, Sun Pearl Gallery. Unknown date. Courtesy Jakoby Lowney.



As noted by Hsu (2003), the largely male Chinese populations created a homosocial community where the primary relationships formed between men. While there is no clear evidence for homosexual activity among the Montana Territory Chinese in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the limited options for female companionship possibly produced such arrangements. Hsu (2003:232) also correctly notes that the bachelor communities of Chinese in the United States created further opposition to the mainstream norms of 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian or Progressive America which focused on family. Thus, the restrictive immigration laws of the United States created communities of Chinese that were even further from normality, which fueled restrictions and a perpetual cycle of otherness. Further, Chinese men generally performed tasks associated with female gendered roles such as laundry, cooking, and domestic servitude, further polarizing Euro-American perspectives of Chinese distinctions from American norms.

Most of the stories regarding Chinese women in Montana Territory during this initial period focused on prostitution, murder, and struggles over marriage. The first significant mention of women in Montana Territory's communities revolves around a murder mystery in Helena during 1867. In early September 1867, investigators found China Mary, an apparently notorious Chinese prostitute in Helena's Chinatown, dead in her cabin on corner of Water and Cutler Streets. At the time of her murder, China Mary was in preparation to leave Helena for California with approximately \$1500 in gold and currency. In addition, she was heading to California with her fiancé, an African-American male unnamed in reports.

On an early Sunday morning, the unnamed African-American man went to China Mary's cabin to help with preparations for the trip which was scheduled to begin that morning. When he arrived at the cabin he found China Mary engaged in conversation with another man, and left the area to return later. Upon returning to the cabin a few hours later he discovered China Mary dead on the floor, with her underwear twisted around her neck. After alerting the authorities a coroner's inquest indicated that she had indeed died of asphyxiation by, at first, hands and then finished by the underwear. The investigation could not locate any of China Mary's accumulated wealth, thus they deemed robbery as the motive for the crime. Even the local newspapers understood the lack of effort shown by authorities: "there is little likelihood of our energetic and wide awake officials making any great effort to ferret him out" (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867a:3).

The next week the Chinese community performed a traditional burial ceremony with several major exceptions. According to reports, the male Chinese community



refused to go to her funeral as she apparently “disowned her country and claimed Japanese nativity, and refused to have anything to do with them, or to conform to their ‘company’ arrangements” (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867b:3). Thus, only four Chinese women comprised the funeral party. The Chinese women conducted all the major funeral rites, including preparing and transporting the body from her home to the Helena Cemetery. The remainder of China Mary’s personal effects and money were sent to her children in Weaverville, California.

In remarkable and exacting detail the *Helena Herald* reporters analyzed the funeral proceedings, providing an excellent glimpse into the reflection of traditional burial rites in Montana Territory. At a location known as a private hospital on West Main in Helena, mourners prepared China Mary’s body and soul for the afterworld. The four Chinese women that served as mourners laid out an elaborate buffet of traditional treats at the head of the coffin at the hospital including, “pears, peaches, nuts, candy, sugar, flour and boquets [sic], and at her feet was placed rice, pork steaks, eggs, onions and a glass of brandy” (*Helena Weekly Herald* 1867b:4). They also placed playing cards, dice, and paper money in the coffin, and reportedly \$40 of gold coins into the mouth of China Mary. In addition, mourners burned incense and paper money in the hospital room before packing up the coffin for transport to the cemetery (*Helena Weekly Herald* 1867b:4).

At the cemetery mourners threw silver coins, rice, beans, and other foodstuffs into the coffin before it was lowered into the grave shaft. Apparently, the reporters believed that the Chinese used silver coins to help preserve the woman’s body for disinterment in the future, though this hypothesis is unsubstantiated. The *Helena Herald* staff did have

an interesting observation as they believed, “that the bodies of women are seldom removed, especially those of such women as the one whose funeral we are describing” (*Helena Weekly Herald* 1867b:4). The last rites performed by the Chinese women mourners were to first burn all of China Mary’s clothing and then to place a final offering in her home comprised of food on a silver platter. Following traditional practices they attempted to convince the landlord of China Mary’s home to board it up and not allow anyone to live in it over their concern for bad spirits (*Helena Weekly Herald* 1867b:4). Leeson (1885:718) believes that China Mary was the first Chinese individual buried in Helena’s cemetery.

The murder of China Mary, while making for good story-telling, touches on several themes within the study of Chinese experiences in Montana. First, the murder was barely investigated by Euro-American authorities, which highlights the low rank Chinese women held in Territorial society. It is likely that investigators would have investigated the murder of any male regardless of ethnicity, whereas there was never a suspect in China Mary’s murder. Interestingly, in Helena only one month after China Mary’s murder, a Chinese man, Ah Weng, attempted to murder by strangulation a prostitute by the name of Chinese Susie. Chinese Susie successfully called for assistance and Ah Weng disappeared, only to be found a few hours later hiding underneath Susie’s bed. This time Sheriff Warfield arrested Ah Weng and placed him in jail, though at no time did anyone seem to connect this incident with the murder of China Mary (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867b:3).

Second, China Mary’s story illustrates her isolation within the traditional Chinese community of Montana Territory. The lack of male funeral participants and the apparent

preclusion of interaction of the Chinese companies and tongs, suggests the depth of China Mary's social ostracism. Third, China Mary's interaction with the unnamed African-American man and the apparent future marriage of the two once reaching California indicates at least some interaction between ethnic groups in 1860s Montana Territory. Finally, the existence of her children in Weaverville, California provides an example of how Chinese individuals' had familial connections across the United States, information not found in other existing historical documents.

As mentioned earlier, the federal censuses of 1870 and 1880 recorded a large proportion of Chinese women as prostitutes. Thus, many of the known stories involving the Chinese women of Montana Territory revolved around prostitutes or prostitution. For instance, the first mention of Chinese women in Missoula related to a prostitute who "attempted to build a fire on the floor of her domicile using a piece of tin for a stove" (*Helena Daily Herald* 1870d:3). In another instance, a Chinese woman residing in Helena, reportedly a prostitute, broke out the window of a neighbor's residence, badly lacerating the occupant (*Helena Independent* 1877c:3). Other stories relating to Chinese prostitutes during this early period include the death of Die How in Helena by natural causes and her subsequent burial (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867e:3). However, it appears that suicide was the most common cause of death in the Chinese prostitute community and this likely reflects the harsh conditions of their lives. In early 1871, two Chinese women committed suicide in Deer Lodge by consuming large quantities of an unknown poison or opium (*New Northwest* 1871d:3). There was another attempted suicide by a Chinese prostitute in Deer Lodge during 1872, and the newspaper noted that this behavior

was not that uncommon among the Euro-American prostitutes as well (*New Northwest* 1872a:3).

In the early 1870s, Deer Lodge city commissioners perceived problems with the presence of Chinese prostitutes along Main Street. Even though the 1870 Federal Census recorded two Chinese women living in Deer Lodge, a complaint making its way into the Territorial Grand Jury in 1870 stated that an alley perpendicular to Main Street was “inhabited and densely crowded with China women of ‘ill repute.’ It is charged that the neighborhood is disturbed (many times during the entire night) by the great noise, rowdyism [sic], and firing of pistols” (*Helena Daily Herald* 1870b:3). It is unclear whether many of the Chinese women were missed by the census takers, or if the report was greatly exaggerated, but it seems the former is a more likely scenario.

An incident in 1869 illustrated the Deer Lodge city’s complaint whereas non-Chinese antagonists threw rocks at a Chinese bagnio, or prostitution house, on Main Street. The female Chinese occupant returned the favor with discharge of a pistol, though no one on either side was injured. However, the *New Northwest* noted that the Chinese prostitutes on Main Street were a nuisance, and even noted that the Euro-American prostitutes of Deer Lodge had at least moved to less busy thoroughfares (*New Northwest* 1869a:3). While the complaint in the Montana Territorial Court had little effect on the placement of Chinese prostitutes in Deer Lodge, it did lead to the analysis of failures of the census bureau to accurately record the number of Chinese women in that city. As such the *Helena Daily Herald* (1870b:3) wondered whether “the Grand Jury of Deer Lodge county have not confined themselves to facts in their report, or Deputy Marshal Jones has unaccountably blundered in his census record of Mongolian [sic] female

residents of his county.” This single example suggests that the numbers of Chinese women in Montana Territory were underestimated, a problem that plagues interpretations of historical Chinese demographics across the United States. A similar omission of Chinese women in the 1870 census records was found in other areas of the American West including Virginia City, Nevada (James 1998:96).

With so few Chinese women in Montana Territory, stories of weddings were rare, yet heavily covered in contemporary newspapers. The first such Chinese wedding likely recorded in Montana Territory occurred in 1870 Deer Lodge. In early 1870 it appears that Wah Lee purchased the rights to a Chinese woman for \$600, and imported her to Deer Lodge. Jo, a Chinese laundry employee, sought to marry the woman but needed to raise the resale price of \$950. Jo was unable to acquire the required amount, and Wah Lee started the woman on a trip to the Cedar Creek mines, likely for use as forced prostitute. Upon hearing from a Euro-American that all he needed to do was to marry her according to American law, Jo set out after the woman and Wah Lee. Jo overtook Wah Lee with the assistance of a law officer, and married the woman without paying the agreed-upon price (*New Northwest* 1870a:3). In 1871, the year after the initial excitement, the Chinese wife of Jo gave birth to a son, the first recorded Chinese birth in Deer Lodge County and perhaps Montana Territory (*New Northwest* 1871b:3).

It appears that the next two years produced another child for Jo and his wife. However, in 1873 a Chinese suitor approached Jo’s wife and they disappeared together to nearby Pioneer. After Jo discovered that his wife left with \$1,000 and her wedding gifts, he apparently contacted the local Chinese community leader and dispatched a call for their arrest. Upon arriving in Pioneer, Jo found his wife full of opium and whisky with

the Chinese suitor disappearing with all the money and gifts. In her intoxicated condition she fought against Jo and his efforts to return her to Deer Lodge, but eventually both made it back to their town (*New Northwest* 1873c:3). After returning to Deer Lodge, the couple appeared to have settled their differences and they disappeared from the historical record.

Throughout the 1870s there were other instances of violence and legal fights over Chinese women in Montana Territory. In 1872 a Chinese man robbed a fellow countryman in Pioneer of \$750 in cash and a woman and headed for Deer Lodge. After eluding the owner of the Chinese woman for several days, the pair finally managed to sneak out of Deer Lodge and leave the Territory (*New Northwest* 1872i:3). A month later in Philipsburg, two Chinese men gambled over the ownership of a woman which led to a deadly resolution. After several hours of gambling the first Chinese man, who lived in Philipsburg, put up the woman as part of the bet, and lost her. The second individual, a Chinese man of Pioneer, took the woman back with him to that settlement as part of his winnings. A few days later the Chinese man from Philipsburg went to Pioneer, used a knife to murder the woman, and then disappeared onto a stage heading out of the Territory (*New Northwest* 1872j:3). It is unclear if the Chinese man from Pioneer is the same in both of the above stories, though it is possible.

In yet another story of the apparent commodity role of Chinese women played in early Montana Territory, a Chinese restaurateur used his wife as the collateral for a loan. Charlie, a Chinese man living in Yreka, used his wife of five years as a \$1,000 security deposit for purchasing a large stock of goods from Quong Lee of Pioneer. After a slow year on the Elk Creek mines, Charlie was unable to pay the debts owed to Quong Lee and

the wife transferred hands. After changing hands, Charlie's wife pleaded with Euro-American miners in Pioneer to secure her release as her new role was likely as a prostitute in the camps. At last report in 1874, the miners were in negotiations with Quong Lee to secure the Chinese woman's release and employ her as a domestic servant with a family in Deer Lodge (*New Northwest* 1874c:3).

By the late 1870s, Gem Kee, who owned and operated the large Kem Lung Chung store in Deer Lodge, was wealthy enough to purchase a wife from China. The 1880 federal census listed Gem Kee (Gimgee in the rolls), as a single 32 year-old merchant living with several other Chinese men, including his married business partner Buck Gim (Federal Census Bureau 1880). In late fall of 1880, after the census enumeration, Gem Kee expanded the Kem Chung Lung building in Deer Lodge with a second floor solely for the purpose of housing his new wife. Gem Kee left for San Francisco in October of 1880 to marry a "Little Footed," or bound foot, Chinese woman. The *New Northwest* noted that Gem's wife might have been the first bound foot woman brought to Montana Territory (*New Northwest* 1880c:3), and they both arrived back in Deer Lodge in November of 1880 (*New Northwest* 1880d:3).

In late November 1880, Gem Kee sent out 400 invitations to the Euro-American and Chinese population of Deer Lodge and vicinity to meet his new wife. J.H. Oliver, the same Euro-American individual who translated for the Chinese witnesses in the Martell manslaughter trial in Blackfoot City in 1871, served as the party's interpreter. According to the *New Northwest* reporter who was also invited, over 100 Chinese residents of Deer Lodge and vicinity came to the party with gifts including gold watches and bracelets. Apparently, when Gem Kee arrived in San Francisco to marry the betrothed woman, she

refused to wed due to the harsh climate of Montana Territory and the lengthy travel. However, Gem Kee found a replacement and married a 20-year old Chinese woman by the name of Ida. According to Oliver, Ida was a member of a wealthy and elite family in Canton Province. As was the fascination with all Euro-American guests, they measured Ida's foot out at 3 ½" long by 1 ¼" wide at the instep. To attend to the limited mobility of Ida, Gem Kee employed several servants to assist with her chores and walking (*New Northwest* 1880e). In December of 1880, Gem Kee's business partner, Buck Gim, headed to California to acquire a similar bound foot wife (*New Northwest* 1880f:3), though the census record already noted that he was married.

There is far more to the lives of Chinese women in early Montana Territory than prostitution and fights over ownership and marriage, though due to the biased nature of the Euro-American majority those stories are lost. A marriage between a Euro-American man and Chinese woman in Blackfoot City illustrates the true depths of racial bias. In 1873, Benjamin Harris married Ah Fu in Blackfoot City, while using J.H. Oliver as translator and marriage officer. The marriage led to the *New Northwest* to pass judgment on why an "intelligent, respectable, American citizen" would marry "one of the miserable creatures known as Chinawomen, the lowest, most degraded of the race, precluded maternity and dedicated to shame" (*New Northwest* 1873g:3). In addition, the reporters suggested that "the ceremony...is therefore illegal and void...and it would be better course...to renounce the unholy, unnatural alliance, and leave the pagan to her kind" (*New Northwest* 1873g:3). It is apparent that if finding positive stories of Chinese men were rare in Montana Territory, then discovering an unbiased position on women is nearly impossible. Thus, when discussing the Chinese women of Montana Territory it is



important to remember that few of the positive aspects of their experiences made it into the historical record. Moreover, there appear to be no sources that provide a female perspective—whether positive or negative—on life in early Montana Territory.

### **3.9: Population Growth but Legal Storms on the Horizon**

During the nearly two decades since Montana became a Territory, the Chinese population spread throughout all the major and minor mining districts and townships. Having a Chinese population within a town or settlement boundary was by far the rule and not the exception. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s Chinese immigrants moved into placer gold districts across the Territory, seeking their fortune in large and small groups. In many districts, the Chinese population was significant enough to support several stores dedicated to the importation of their goods direct from China. It is unclear how much gold in Montana Territory Chinese miners recovered, but guarded estimates would place it in the \$8-\$15 million range. It is clear that the early Chinese population met severe social and legal discrimination, yet overcame all challenges to create a vibrant community supporting traditional values. Distinctly, the initial period of the Chinese in Montana is marked by unsuccessful attempts to legally exclude the population from the mining and laundry enterprises. However, growing anti-Chinese sentiment across the United States was about to boil over and begin the systematic exclusion of this population. In this new period the failed anti-Chinese policies of the 1860s and 1870s would find new vitality, and would have dire consequences for the immigrants fighting to stay atop *Gum San*.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESTRICTION AND LEGAL ATTACKS (1880-1900)**

### **4.1: The 1880s-1900**

Historical documents from the 1880-1900 period of Montana Chinese history provide more substantial information than the previous period discussed. Overall, there was an increased visibility of the Chinese of Montana in the historical records during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but much of the material still focuses on mundane facts of leases, deeds and mineral claims, and anecdotal stories in newspapers.

Archaeological studies of sites within this second period of Montana Chinese history provide an additional source of evidence of the lives of these pioneers. There are currently 33 confirmed archaeological sites recorded in Montana that are associated with the Chinese during this period (Table 4.1). Fifteen of these 34 sites are continuations from the first period, as the arbitrary temporal boundaries used in this dissertation do not neatly fit the occupational history of some areas. For instance, most of the Chinese occupation and mining in German Gulch occurred in the 1870s but populations continued to work and live in the area throughout the 1880s and 1890s. In addition, there are 12 other sites that might provide archaeological association with the Chinese but are as-of-yet unproven or undocumented (Table 4.1).

For the Chinese in Montana, the period between 1880 and 1900 included some of the most significant accomplishments and some of the vilest acts of racial depredation against a single ethnic group in U.S. history. In the 1860s and 1870s the Chinese, while persecuted, had a level of legal protection governed by the rule of law that often went in their favor such as the Montana Territory's Alien Law that passed in 1872 but was struck down by 1874. However, by the end of the United States' economic

**Table 4.1:** Chinese archaeological sites in Montana relating to the 1880-1900 period.

<b>Confirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Owner</i>
24BE0169	<i>Bannack</i>	1862-1880s	State of MT
24BE0187	<i>Glendale</i>	1870-1900	Private/BLM
24BE0807	<i>Lion City</i>	1870-1880s	University of MS
24BE1381	<i>French Creek Cabins</i>	1870-1880s	USFS
24BE2186**	<i>Blue-Eyed Annie</i>	1895-1901	USFS
24BW0497	<i>Lombard</i>	1890-1910	BLM
24GN0363	<i>Granite</i>	1880-1893	USFS/Private
24GN0377	<i>Sierra Mine Site</i>	1870s-1910s	BLM/Private
24GN0540	<i>Garnet</i>	1880s-1930s	BLM/Private
24LC0712	<i>Chinaman's Cove</i>	1860s-1880s	BOR
24LC1083	<i>Marysville</i>	1870s-1900s	Private
24LC1711	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	1868-1880s	USFS
24LC1723	<i>Upper Cave Gulch</i>	1870s-1890s	USFS
24MA0723	<i>Virginia City</i>	1863-1890s	Private/State
24MN0249	<i>Louiseville</i>	1870-1890s	USFS
24MN0332*	<i>Rowley Chinese Hearths</i>	1870-1890s	USFS
24MO0110	<i>Montreal or "Old Town"</i>	1874-1890s	USFS
24MO0172	<i>Coloma</i>	1880s-1910s	BLM/Private
24MO0266	<i>Fort Missoula</i>	1877-present	County/USFS/Private
24PA1330*	<i>Huckleberry Camp</i>	1897-1900	USFS
24PW1021	<i>Blackfoot City</i>	1865-1880s	Private/BLM/USFS
24SA0155	<i>Weeksville</i>	1881-1883	Private
24SA0591*	<i>West Noxon Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0592*	<i>Submerged Noxon Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private (Avista Corp.)
24SA0593*	<i>Thompson River Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0594*	<i>East Eddy Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0595*	<i>East Weeksville Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0596*	<i>"Last Chance" Railroad Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0597*	<i>"Fu Sang" Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0598*	<i>"Taklamakan" Chinese RR Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SA0599*	<i>Perma Bridge Railroad Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SB0212	<i>German Gulch</i>	1865-1900	USFS/Private
24SW0738	<i>Big Timber</i>	1882-1940	Private
<b>Potential or Unconfirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
24BE0806	<i>Hecla</i>	1870s-1880s	University of MS
24BE2003	<i>Cow Creek Cabins</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
24GN0894	<i>Bedrock Flume or "China Diggings"</i>	1860s-1890s	Private/BLM
24JF0290	<i>Chinese Diggings</i>	1870s-1880s	Private
24LC0467	<i>Old Lincoln</i>	1865-1880s	USFS
24LC1112	<i>Austin Mining District</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS/Private
24LC1716	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	1870s-1880s	USFS
24MO0179	<i>Yreka</i>	1860s-1890s	State/UM/Private
24PW0183	<i>Reynold's City</i>	1860s-1890s	BLM/Private
24SA0105	<i>China Ditch</i>	1885	USFS
24SA0348	<i>NPRR Eddy/Weeksville</i>	1881-1883	Private
24SA0568	<i>White Pine</i>	1881-1910	Private

\* = New Site Discovered in Summer of 2008 \*\* = New Site in 2008, No Chinese Artifacts

recession of the 1870s, the climate of the legal system changed and the passage of Montana's Opium Law in 1880 and the federal Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 helped lead to the eventual collapse of the state's Chinese population. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the best years experienced by the Chinese population of Montana ended, and the future held little financial or social promise.

By the 1880s the Chinese in Montana Territory had established significant centers of trade and commerce in central settlements like Helena, Deer Lodge, Butte and Fort Benton. In the outlying mining districts, the Chinese population became established and created vibrant, mostly-male, communities by successfully purchasing and working previously worked claims. However, the boom years of Montana's placer camps had long since passed into the state's history, and the Chinese now working these claims were on borrowed time of financially prosperous mining endeavors. As demonstrated in the 1880 Federal Census of Montana Territory discussed later, there was a decided shift occurring from mineral exploration to service industries such as laundries and restaurants.

#### **4.2: Demographics in 1880**

The 1880 Montana census enumerated 1,763 Chinese in 10 counties (Table 4.2). Swartout (1988:48) notes that there were 1,765 Chinese enumerated in the 1880 census, but careful transcription by the author discovered that two individuals were actually listed twice in separate areas of the same county making the correct total 1,763. From 1870 to 1880 the recorded Chinese population dropped by 184, most likely the direct result of the recession that hit the United States in the 1870s and a shift away from placer mining. Lewis and Clark County has the most substantial decrease in Chinese population dropping by over 50% during the preceding decade. This is a result of Helena and

surrounding mining districts passing their peak production and shifts towards heavily capitalized lode-mining. Montana counties (Table 4.2) with substantial mining endeavors still possessed the largest Chinese populations including, Deer Lodge (709), Lewis and Clark (359), Madison (265), and Beaverhead (130). In addition, Missoula County, with Cedar Creek mining operations continuing, increased Chinese population from 44 in 1870 to 149 in 1880. Similar to 1870, Deer Lodge County was the largest center of Chinese population in Montana. Before 1881, Deer Lodge County incorporated a significant swath of southwest Montana’s mining communities including German Gulch, Butte, Silver Bow, Rocker, Blackfoot City, and the Pioneer and Gold Creek workings, which explains the high number of Chinese residents. Due to the decline of placer mining opportunities in Helena and Virginia City vicinities, Deer Lodge County’s Chinese population went from 18% of the state’s total in 1870 to over 40%. Even with Missoula County’s substantial increase, nearly 89% of the Chinese population was still centered in the mining districts of southwest Montana, though employment was shifting away from mineral exploitation.

**Table 4.2:** Montana Territory Chinese Population by County, 1880 Federal Census.

<b>County</b>	<b>Chinese Population</b>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Beaverhead	124	6	130
Choteau	18	0	18
Custer	2	0	2
Deer Lodge	678	31	719
Gallatin	27	1	28
Jefferson	52	0	52
Lewis and Clark	329	30	359
Madison	258	7	265
Meagher	50	2	52
Missoula	144	5	149
<b>Totals</b>	1,682	82	1,764

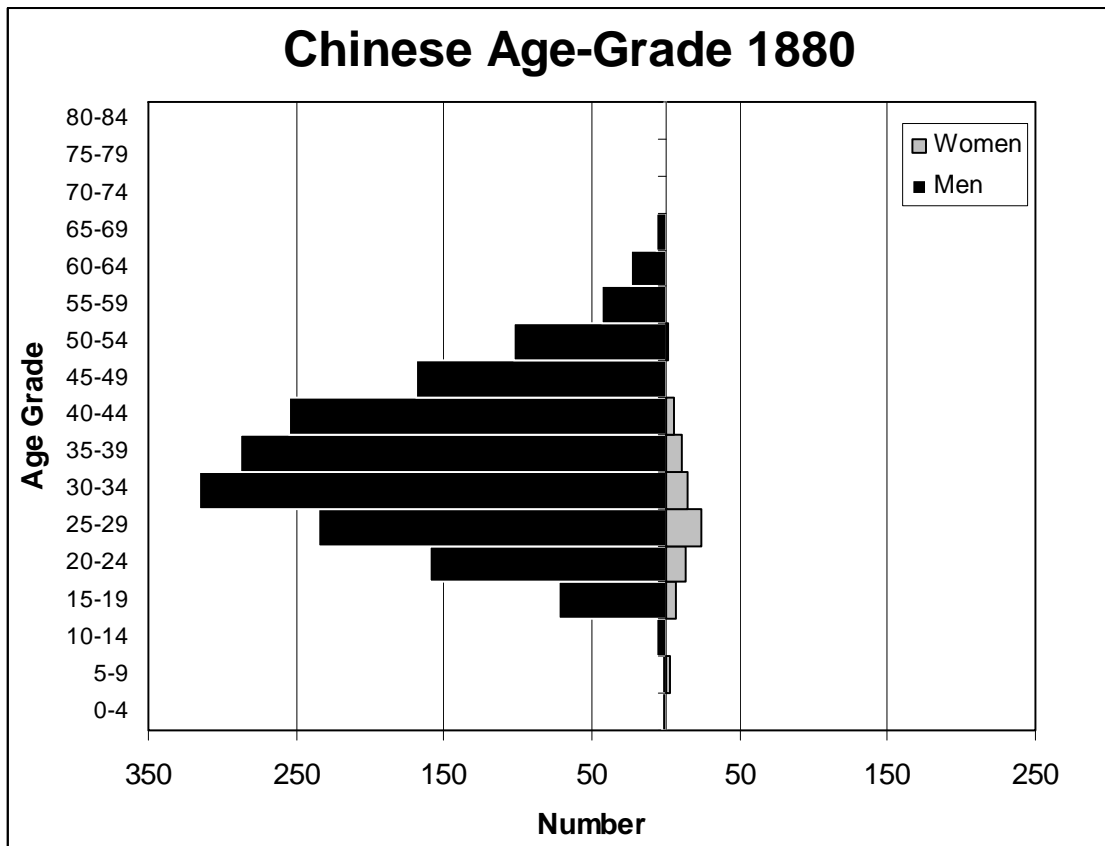
In individual locations (Table 4.3) Butte, Alder Gulch and Virginia City, Pioneer and Cedar Creek dominated the population numbers with all areas having over 100 Chinese residents, with the highest in Helena at 287. However, smaller yet substantial populations of Chinese existed in other distinct settlements like Deer Lodge and Bozeman, or in areas without formal townships like German and French Gulches or Elk and Silver Bow creeks. As evidenced by both German Gulch and Cedar Creek settlements discussed in the previous chapter, the dispersed settlements in 1880 probably had a relatively high degree of autonomy and independence within the larger Euro-American population of Montana Territory. More significantly for understanding the Montana Chinese experience, there was a proliferation of small populations moving into more dispersed settlements where there were little or no placer mining opportunities. In 1870 there were 37 settlements or enumeration districts with Chinese populations or individuals, but by 1880 there were 88. In rural communities like New Chicago, White Sulphur Springs, and Hamilton, the economy focused more on commercial or agricultural interests, and Chinese pioneers seized on the opportunity to establish laundry and restaurant businesses.

**Table 4.3: Montana Territory Chinese Population by Location, 1880 Federal Census.**

<b>Location</b>	<b># Chinese</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b># Chinese</b>
Helena	287	Silver Bow	4
Butte City	178	Confederate Gulch	4
Alder Gulch	166	Ten Mile/Greenhorn	4
Pioneer City	123	Bearmouth	4
Cedar Creek	117	Hamilton	4
Virginia City	91	Bitterroot Valley	4
Beaverhead River	90	Frenchtown	4
Deer Lodge	50	Diamond City	3
Ophir Gulch	45	Park City	3
Elk Creek	44	Vestal	3
German Gulch	39	Fort Logan	3
French Gulch	38	Clancy	3
German & Silver Bow	37	Ft. Missoula	3
Flint Creek Valley	32	Dewey's Flat	2
Bozeman	25	Timber	2
Glendale	24	New Chicago	2
Yam Hill	21	New York Gulch	2
Prickley Pear	21	Yogo Gulch	2
Georgetown	18	White Sulphur Springs	2
Belmont	18	Gloster	2
Washington Gulch	17	Smith River Valley	2
Fort Benton	16	Mitchell Gulch	2
Missoula	16	West Gallatin Valley	2
Hasmarck	15	Trapper Gulch	1
Cave Gulch	15	Quartz Hill	1
Snowshoe Gulch	14	Big Hole	1
Boulder	13	Upper Teton River	1
Lion's City	12	Fort Belknap	1
Oregon Gulch	10	Miles City	1
Cooper Gulch	9	Junction City	1
Beartown	9	Laurin	1
Saint Louis	8	Sheridan	1
Grizzly Gulch	8	Adobetown	1
Philipsburg	7	Silver City	1
Walkerville	6	Mount Pleasant	1
Wickes	6	Radersburg	1
Ruby Valley	6	Crow Creek Valley	1
Rocker	5	Blue Cloud	1
Sun River	5	Soap Gulch	1
Fort Shaw	5	Upper Highland	1
Pipestone	5	Comet Mines	1
Jefferson City	5	Hellgate/Little Blackfoot	1
Dry Gulch	5	Browne's Gulch	1
Trinity Creek	5	Frenchtown & Six Mile	1

The 1880 census provides the first indication of some major shifts in Chinese demographics in Montana Territory including age (Figure 4.1) and employment. Back in 1870 the average age of a Chinese immigrant, regardless of sex, was 30, but by 1880 it had increased to 35. The average ages of Chinese men and women increased from 1870 to 1880 as well. In 1870 the average age of men was 30 while women were a bit lower at 25. In 1880 the average ages increased to 35.4 and 28.4 for men and women respectively. A married couple living in Virginia City named La Won and Sing Choy had the two youngest Chinese children in the Territory. Both children were born in Montana Territory and were aged 1 for the boy, and 8 for the girl. An 83-year old placer miner living in Cedar Creek accounted for the oldest man, while two 50-year-old females were the oldest women.

**Figure 4.1:** Population Pyramid for Chinese in Montana, 1880.





In 1870, 83% of all Chinese living in Montana Territory were engaged in mining operations. Over the course of the next 10 years the number of placer booms dwindled, and the economy shifted towards more stable lode-mining or into the agricultural and ranching sectors. Because of this economic transition, the Chinese population also began to shift towards a more service-based orientation. However, employment associated with mining still accounted for 59.6% of male occupations. Employment in cooking and laundry situations accounted for the most substantial growth for the Chinese in Montana Territory. Employment as cooks in private homes, sawmills, mines, hotels or restaurants accounted for 14% of Chinese male employment, an increase from only 2% of the workforce in 1870. Chinese working in the laundry business accounted for 10% of occupations, up from 6% ten years prior. The increase of employment as cooks, laundries, or servants from 1870 to 1880 foreshadows trends that continued during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Likely a result of more accurate census enumeration, there appears to be a diversification of more specialized labor categories (Table 4.4). Some notable Chinese jobs enumerated in the 1880 census include butcher, barber, cheesemaker, druggist, tailor, acrobat, and stock raiser. As in 1870, Helena had two Chinese doctors in 1880 but they appear to be different individuals. Most notably, the acrobat and stock raiser stand out as unique categories. The acrobat was listed as Ung Gay, a 20 year-old man, living in Helena. It is likely that Ung Gay was the member of a traveling theater group operated by non-Chinese, but it is hard to substantiate. Tommy Haw was actually recorded twice in Beaverhead County as a stock raiser, probably a result of him moving to various properties he owned in the area. Haw and his interesting life history is discussed in more

detail later in this chapter. Similar to Tommy Haw, enumerators listed George Taylor twice in the 1880 census, both times as a cook.

**Table 4.4:** Montana Territory Employment Categories of Chinese Men, 1880 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Mining	1,002
Cook*	237
Laundry	174
Unknown	42
Gambler	38
Laborer	31
Loafer	30
Servant	25
Merchant/Store Keeper	22
Gardener	20
Wood Chopper	11
Barber	7
Restaurant	6
Butcher	4
Dishwasher	4
Doctor	3
Prisoner	3
Baker	2
Grocer	2
Priest/Clergy	2
Teamster	2
Acrobat	1
At Home	1
At School	1
Blacksmith	1
Bookkeeper	1
Cheese Maker	1
Chore Boy	1
Druggist	1
Engineer	1
Gambling House Keeper	1
Stock Raiser **	1
Store Clerk	1
Tailor	1
Waiter	1

\* George Taylor, cook, was recorded twice in the 1880 Census

\*\*Tommy Haw, a stock raiser, was recorded twice in the 1880 Census

**Table 4.5:** Montana Territory Employment of Chinese Women, 1880 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Prostitute	61
Keeping House	8
Unknown	8
House-Keeper	2
Washing	2
Servant	1

Between 1870 and 1880, Montana Territory's Chinese female population declined from 125 to 82. Swartout (1988:48) states that there were only 80 Chinese women Montana Territory at this time, and this discrepancy is likely from miscalculation by the census bureau. Most of the drop in women's numbers occurred in the large Chinese population centers in Deer Lodge and Lewis and Clark counties. As noted in Chapter 3 the sex ratio in 1870 was a significantly high 14.23 males per female, but by 1880 the situation worsened with a dramatic rise to a ratio of 20.51 males per female. In contrast, the total proportion of men to women, regardless of ethnicity, in Montana Territory was 4.2 in 1870 and 2.5 in 1880. Chinese women had fewer employment opportunities than their male counterparts in 1880 (Table 4.5). In 1870, prostitution and a vague category of "Keeping House" were the two largest employment categories for Chinese women. This pattern continued in 1880, though prostitution increased its proportion of the employment category from 44.5% in 1870 to 74.4%. The problems with how census enumerators determined women's role as prostitutes were already discussed in Chapter 3. Keeping house, however, declined from 41.4% of Chinese female employment to only 9.8%. Most of the Chinese women engaged in "Keeping House" were married or widowed.

### **4.3: Montana's Opium Law**

As population centers of Chinese immigrants spread across Montana Territory, the use and abuse of opium followed them. Across the United States, thousands of Chinese and non-Chinese became addicted to opium, either in its smoking or medicinal (liquid) form. Opium smoking was as ubiquitous within the Chinese community as alcoholism was in the neighboring Euro-American households. Even newspaper accounts of the period indicate the similarity between alcohol abuse in Euro-American populations compared with the Chinese use of opium (*Helena Independent* 1880a:3). It is highly likely that the first Chinese immigrants who came to Montana Territory following the gold bonanzas of the early 1860s brought with them the tools and supplies for the smoking of opium. The reasons for the use of opium by the Overseas Chinese populations are a well-trodden area of historical and archaeological research (Ritchie 1986; Wegars 1993; Ahmad 2005). Recently some Chinese-American scholars have attacked the historical and archaeological focus on opium smoking as merely perpetuating long-standing racial stereotypes and prejudices against these immigrants (Fong 2007).

Regardless of modern political correctness (e.g., Fong 2007), opium smoking was a common recreational activity in the rural and urban populations of Montana Territory, but not only by the Chinese. Some estimates state that only 20% of the opium imported into the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was actually used by the Chinese, with the remaining 80% being used in popular Euro-American medicinal concoctions such as laudanum (Wylie and Fike 1993:258). The use and abuse of the medicinal variety, opium mixed with alcohol, was pervasive in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century white middle-class

America, primarily in the form of laudanum (Goldberg 2006:7-8). Consumers even used an opium derivative to soothe the aching gums of teething babies (Goldberg 2006:6). Many Euro-Americans, from both the working and upper classes, also smoked opium recreationally and even became addicted (Wylie and Fike 1993:258).

Regardless of the user, the smoking of opium generally occurred within a Chinese establishment. It appears that there were rarely entire establishments in Montana Territory devoted to the use of opium; rather, people often smoked opium in a communal setting within a building used as a laundry, restaurant, saloon, or gambling house. Archaeological work at a Chinese laundry and restaurant in Big Timber, Montana discovered a density of opium-related artifacts in a small addition to the rear of the structure (Moschelle 2009). In addition, a police report indicates there was a raid on another Chinese restaurant in Big Timber due to its dual role as an opium smoking establishment (Moschelle 2009:24-25). While historical maps and records do not indicate the use of the building as an opium smoking establishment, the density of materials suggest that at least this small addition served that function. In another instance, recollections by Davis (1967:2) of the Virginia City Chinese suggest that at least in that community they smoked opium on the ground floor of the Chinese Temple located on Main Street.

A detailed expose on Chinese opium smoking in Helena, provides some description of the physical layout and accoutrements of a 'den', and are similar to those in other areas (Ritchie 1986; Wylie and Fike 1993). The following lengthy description of an opium den in Helena provides some context and is similar to an account by Davis (1967:2) of the den in Virginia City, Montana:

The door admits you to a main front room, generally lighted by two windows, one at either side of the entrance. There is generally no other windows in the buildings, except sometimes there is one in the rear of the building. From the front room running clear to the rear is a hall or passageway lined on either side by small rooms not unlike staterooms on steamers—except in the meagerness and plainness of their appointments—and each containing two or four bunks like the berths in an ocean vessel. On the bottom of each berth is a clean matting and along the back runs a common pillow. Rather an uninviting couch for a comfortable snooze, but the Chinamen pass most of their time upon these pallets, and by the magic aid of their opium pipes, not only forget their present cares, but are transported to scenes of transcendent loveliness, which would not make them exchange their humble lot for the throne of a king or the crown of an emperor. The lamp over which the pipes are lighted stands in the middle of the berth and the smoker curls up at one end (*Helena Independent* 1880a:3).

The editorial continues by noting how deleterious the smoking of opium is to human health by discussing both the physical and mental toll habitual use extolled. Finally, the editorial provides some context for the financial cost of the drug habit, noting opium purchased from a Chinese store in Helena cost approximately \$15 to \$17 per can, an increase of several dollars over the preceding year. Wylie and Fike (1993:262) note that in the 1870s the cost for a five-ounce can of opium ranged from \$5-\$9 on the West Coast, and by the early 1880s the price was up to \$10 in Tucson, Arizona. Thus the 1880 prices in Montana were higher than either locale, likely a result of long-distance shipment and the lack of a main transportation network like an east/west railroad. To put these prices into context, the average Chinese placer miner brought in only several dollars a week during the 1870s, thus making the purchase of opium a substantial drain on financial resources. Today, cost of a can of opium indexed to 1880 Helena prices would cost \$325-\$370 when accounting for inflation (Williamson 2010).

Archaeological investigations of Chinese sites in Montana have generally discovered artifacts relating to the smoking of opium (Table 4.6). Nearly all localities within German Gulch produced significant artifacts relating to opium smoking, including ceramic pipe bowls, brass saddles and fittings, and brass cans that held opium imported from China or Taiwan (Fredlund et al. 1991). As mentioned in Chapter 3, archaeologists discovered a density of opium paraphernalia at a single feature suggesting a pipe mender's house, or perhaps a communal smoking structure, or opium den. Other archaeological sites including Louiseville, China Gulch, and Cave Gulch had similar deposits of opium smoking paraphernalia (Merritt 2007, 2009; Rossillon et al. 2002), thus highlighting the ubiquitous nature of this recreational practice among the Chinese in Montana.

**Table 4.6:** Chinese archaeological sites and opium paraphernalia discovered.

<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Pipe Bowls</i>	<i>Opium Cans</i>	<i>Fittings</i>	<i>Saddle</i>
24LC1083	<i>Marysville</i>	X	X	X	--
24LC1711	<i>Upper Cave Town</i>	X	X	--	--
24LC1723	<i>Upper Cave Gulch</i>	X	X	--	--
24MA0723	<i>Virginia City</i>	X	X	--	X
24MN0249	<i>Louiseville</i>	X	X	--	--
24MO0110	<i>Montreal or "Old Town"</i>	--	X	--	--
24PW1021	<i>Blackfoot City</i>	X	X	--	--
24SA0155	<i>Weeksville</i>	--	X	--	--
24SA0591	<i>West Noxon</i>	X	X	--	--
24SA0592	<i>Submerged Noxon</i>	X	X	--	--
24SA0593*	<i>Thompson River</i>	X	X	--	X
24SA0594	<i>East Eddy</i>	--	X	--	--
24SA0595	<i>East Weeksville</i>	--	X	--	--
24SA0596*	<i>"Last Chance"</i>	X	X	--	X
24SA0597*	<i>"Fu Sang"</i>	X	X	--	X
24SA0598*	<i>"Taklamakan"</i>	X	X	--	X
24SA0599	<i>Perma Bridge</i>	X	X	--	--
24SB0212	<i>German Gulch</i>	X	X	X	X
24SW0738*	<i>Big Timber</i>	X	X	X	X

\*= Artifacts also include some opium lamp parts such as the cage, glass, wick supports.

While there was opium smoking in Montana throughout the 1860s and 1870s, as evidenced by some newspaper accounts and the archaeological assemblage, a wave of anti-opium agitation and legislation occurred in the Territory in 1880. Before 1880 there were only a handful of newspaper stories discussing the use of opium within the Chinese and surrounding communities, and most merely described the use of opium. Opium use seemed to almost appear out of nowhere in the newspaper accounts of the early 1880s, as if Montana citizens were faced with a sudden and before-unknown epidemic. Some Montanans even substituted the restriction of opium as a substitute for the inability to force the Chinese to leave the Territory, and extolled “If the Chinese can’t be made to go, the opium must” (*Helena Independent* 1882a:3).

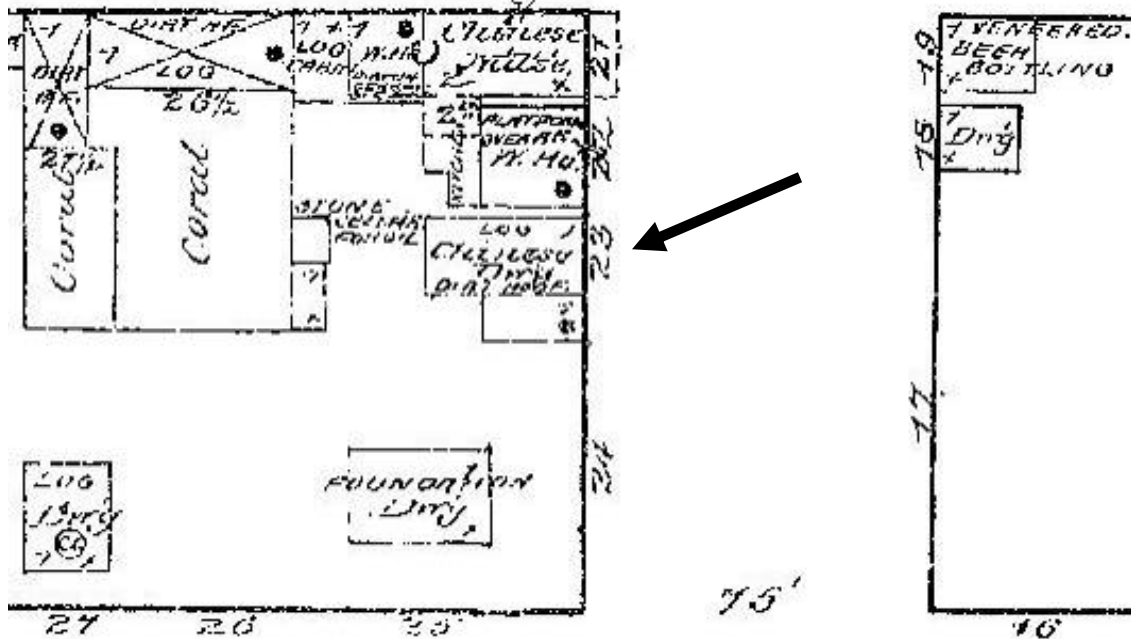
An 1880 newspaper article in Deer Lodge illustrates the apparent novelty of opium use in Montana. The article listed all the modern conveniences that Deer Lodge lacked, including “no steam fire engine; no ‘Great Expectations’; no mineral springs; no ‘boom’”, but they did have an “opium den” (*New Northwest* 1880a:3). According to the report the den was located a few doors down from the Chinese store in Deer Lodge, likely the Kung Chung Lung Company store operated by Gem Kee (Figure 4.2). While the presence of an opium den in Deer Lodge was remarkable to the newspaper editors of the time, it is likely that the establishment, or one similar, had operated in the town since the late 1860s without much notice. So what changed? The newspaper provides an answer that “some of the less reputable persons...and even white women are alleged to have haunted its shades and reveled in the fumes of the noxious drug until midnight passed” (*New Northwest* 1880a:3). According to a Mr. Spooner, a night watchman for



Deer Lodge, on a single night fourteen individuals used the den, and they came from a mixed age, sex, and ethnic backgrounds.

Deer Lodge was not the only community to have non-Chinese individuals partaking in the smoking of opium; instead, it was quite a common occurrence throughout Montana in the 1870s and 1880s, and into the 1900s. In the fall of 1880, “some of the white women of questionable character are beginning to practice the evil habit, and other respectable white people occasionally visit the dens and are in a fair way to become slaves to the terrible habit” (*Helena Independent* 1880:3). Under Butte’s city ordinance, police raided a suspected opium den in Chinatown and arrested several people, including John Norton, a well-respected member of a minstrel and acting troupe out of Helena and Butte (*New Northwest* 1880b:3).

**Figure 4.2:** Arrow denotes location of discussed opium den in Deer Lodge, Montana. Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map, 1884. Note the Chinese store, shown as “Chinese Mdse” two doors to the north, was likely the Ken Chung Lung Co. Store.



In another instance, John Dunn, a resident of Jefferson City south of Helena, committed suicide by means of overdosing on opium. In this case Dunn was denied morphine from a store and in response went to a nearby Chinese washhouse where he smoked two pipes of opium before dying in the street outside the establishment (*New Northwest* 1881b:3). According to a subsequent coroner's inquest, Dunn was most likely placed outside the washhouse by the proprietors in a sitting position, and in his opium-induced coma his head dropped cutting off the flow of air, effectively causing death by self-strangulation (*Helena Independent* 1881d:3).

Perhaps as an impetus for the Montana Opium Law proposed several months later, the *New Northwest* editors suggest that the Territorial Legislature pass an act that could protect unincorporated settlements from the vice for the common good of the citizenry's health (*New Northwest* 1880a:3). It is somewhat understood that many reasons for the push towards opium legislation was the need protect the non-Chinese citizens of Montana Territory from the "horrible and revolting vice of opium eating and smoking," as it, "is spreading and rapidly undermining the health and happiness of the young and inexperienced of both sexes" (*Helena Independent* 1883b:3). Ahmad (2007:40) notes that between 1881 and 1900, the Warm Springs Asylum housed eight Chinese men that likely were committed for opium-related mental ailments.

It is unclear what exactly precipitated the passage of Montana's Opium Law in the winter of 1880-1881, but it is likely a diffusion of similar legislation from other states and territories in the American West around that same time. Nevada passed an anti-opium law in 1877 and by 1900 several other western states had followed suit (Erlen and Spillane 2004:11). It appears that local ordinances were also the first vestiges of the

upcoming Territorial opium law in 1880. For instance, Helena and Butte's city councils sponsored ordinances making the operation and distribution of opium illegal in the incorporated city limits in 1879 (Ahmad 2005:58). Attempts by the Chinese to overturn the local ordinances failed as demonstrated by the case of China Joe. He was arrested for opium smoking in 1880, acquired Euro-American legal counsel to fight the local anti-opium ordinance but lost the case and was still fined \$50 (Ahmad 2005:65)..

On February 22, 1881 the Montana Territorial Legislature passed the Opium Act as a means of suppressing the operation of opium dens (Ahmad 2005:59), and became effective on the first day of May of that same year (*New Northwest* 1881a:3). Several Territorial newspapers including the *New Northwest* carried the full text of the Opium Act. Montana's Opium Act did not specifically make opium an illegal drug; rather the provisions focused on closing opium smoking establishments. Section 1 of the Opium Act states made it illegal to use a private property, "for the purpose of indulging in the use of opium, or any preparation containing opium, by smoking or otherwise, or who shall sell opium for such purpose" (*New Northwest* 1881a:3). Sections 2 through 5 of the Opium Act discussed the punitive repercussions for being caught in the smoking of opium, including liens being applied to owned property and forfeiture of leases. Finally, Section 6 set the maximum fine for conviction under the Opium Act at \$500 and/or imprisonment not to exceed six months (*New Northwest* 1881a:3).

After enacting the Opium Act on May 1, 1881, there were numerous stories detailing the accounts of raids on opium dens or joints by officers in various Montana communities. Before passage of the Opium Act, there were but a few raids on opium dens under the auspices of local ordinances as discussed earlier. However, in the next

few years law enforcement officers arrested dozens of Chinese and whites in places such as Butte, Helena, Fort Benton, and Missoula (*Helena Independent* 1881:3, 1883c:3; *Weekly Missoulian* 1882:3).

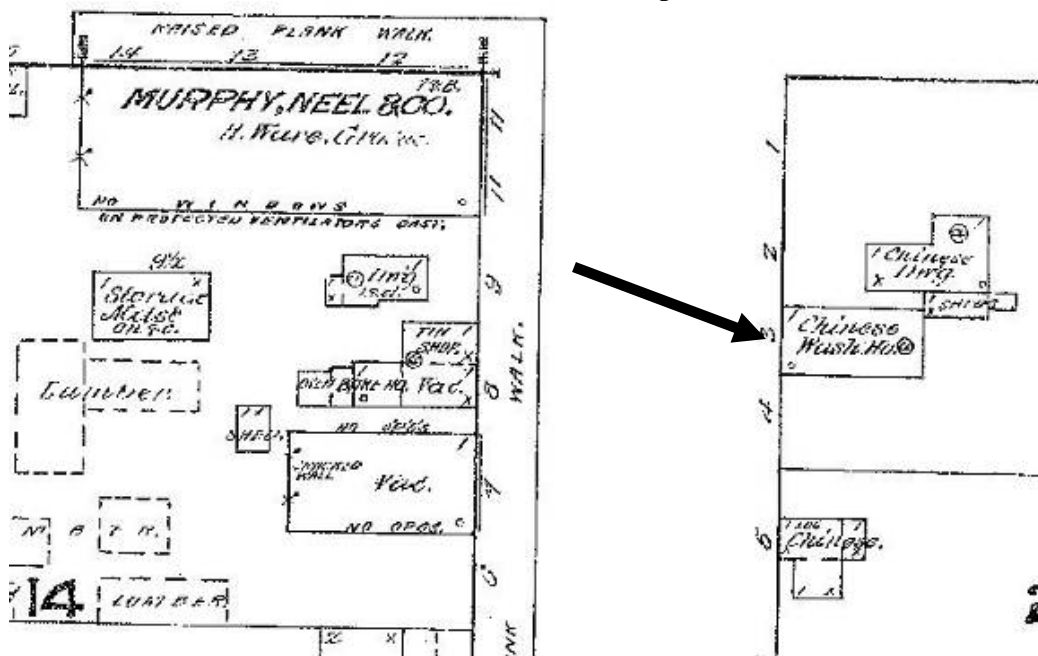
It would be necessary to analyze the criminal records of these settlements to determine the exact number of individuals prosecuted under the new Opium Act, though that was outside the scope of this project. However, a cursory survey of the *Helena Independent* between 1881 and 1884 discovered 27 confirmed arrests in Butte, Helena, and Livingston alone. Some opium smokers were released without going to trial based on lack of evidence which also affects the proper counts (*Helena Independent* 1881k:3). The single largest bust of opium smokers under the Opium Act occurred in the railroad boomtown of Livingston where police arrested 10 Chinese and Euro-Americans (*Helena Independent* 1883c:3). An April 1882 raid on an opium den in Missoula captured nine Chinese men including the operator of the establishment (*Weekly Missoulian* 1882:3).

Perhaps no other locale of similarly-sized population prosecuted the opium law with such apparent vigor as Fort Benton (see Robison 2009b). Located on the Missouri River and with its share of rough and rowdy individuals, many non-Chinese shared in the practice of opium smoking. During Chinese New Years festivities in Fort Benton in February of 1880 it appears that some Euro-Americans partook in the activities. For Example, the *Benton Record* noted, “How many opium dens those ladies graced with their presence, I am unable to say, but presume that their curiosity was satisfied to the fullest extent” (*Benton Record* 1880:2). Even after passage of the Opium Act, editorials ran in local newspapers noting that Euro-Americans of rough and genteel natures shared

in the practices of opium smoking in Fort Benton's Chinese quarter (*Fort Benton River Press* 1881b:2).

Beginning in January of 1881, a month before the Opium Act even passed the Territorial Legislature, there were reports that the sheriff in Fort Benton was already watching Chinese businesses and homes for clues to opium use (*Fort Benton River Press* 1881a:2). On June 16, 1881, only a month and half after the Opium Act took effect, the sheriff in Fort Benton raided his first opium den. In this case, similar to that discovered by archaeologists at Big Timber, the opium den was located within a Chinese laundry on Front Street (Figure 4.3). After conducting surveillance on the laundry for three days, the sheriff, with news reporter in tow, raided the establishment and arrested four Chinese men, including the owner of the building, Ah Gow. Three of the four Chinese men claimed that they did not actually smoke opium, though one of them was found with the pipe still in hand during the raid (*Benton Record* 1881a:2).

**Figure 4.3:** Arrow denotes location of discussed opium den within Chinese washhouse in Fort Benton, Montana. Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map, 1884.



**Figure 4.4:** Opium can recovered from German Gulch, scale in mm. Photo by author.



During the subsequent search of the building the sheriff discovered accoutrements that provide a glimpse into the materials found at a Montana opium den and included a dozen ceramic opium pipe bowls, three brass stems, opium lamps, weighing scales, two ‘tins’ of opium weighing a pound each (Figure 4.4), a glass jar and several small glass bottles also full of opium (*Benton Record* 1881a:2). Using the prevailing costs of opium from Helena at \$15-\$17 per pound, the seized opium probably amounted to well over \$40 retail, a substantial drug bust in 1880s Montana. According to the report Ah Gow was charging about .50 cents per smoke of opium, twice as high than prices reported in Wylie and Fike (1993:262).

It also appears that the opium seized by the sheriff had bypassed the duty tax during importation, adding to the charges and costs assessed to the Chinese men (*Benton Record* 1881b:2). After several days in Fort Benton’s jail the four Chinese men were

arraigned before Judge Tattan. The three customers of the opium den were uniformly fined \$5 and costs, but the proprietor was charged \$50 or up to two months in jail. One of the Chinese men arrested refused to pay his fine, as he “has a sore hand and can’t do any washing anyway, so he thinks it a matter of economy to board with the county a few weeks. But he misses his opium and suffers terribly in the consequence” (*Benton Record* 1881d:2).

Fines associated with these cases ranged based on costs of the court. Butte City Court fined Oolong, a Chinese man arrested for opium smoking in 1881, \$35 (*Helena Independent* 1881g:3), while an unnamed Chinese man and woman in Butte the same year received fines of \$30 each (*Helena Independent* 1881i:3). In December of 1884, raids on several supposed opium dens in Virginia City netted four Chinese opium smokers and they were convicted and assessed a fine of \$22 each (*New Northwest* 1884:3). The operator of an opium den in Missoula arrested in April of 1882 received a fine of \$15, while the eight others served jail time in lieu of a fine (*Weekly Missoulian* 1882:3). In Fort Benton, three convicted Chinese opium smokers received a fine of only \$5 each as punishment (*Benton Record* 1881a:2). The sale of confiscated opium smoking paraphernalia was also a normal part of prosecuting of these cases (*Helena Independent* 1881g:3; 1882f:3). However, it is odd that cities such as Butte and Helena would re-sell opium smoking paraphernalia, as it seemed that only other opium smokers would purchase such accoutrements.

If the arrested individual was unable to pay the assessed fine and court costs, they were lodged in jail for a set amount of time (*Helena Independent* 1882b:3; 1882d:3; 1882f:3; *New Northwest* 1884a:3). Stays in jail by the convicted party would vary by the

assessed fine and community of the committed crime. Three Helena Chinese convicted of smoking opium in February of 1882, were unable to pay their fines and spent 14 days in jail (*Helena Independent* 1882d:3). In another instance, the sale of confiscated paraphernalia of another convicted Helena Chinese opium smoker cut his stay to only five days in jail (*Helena Independent* 1882g:3). In a clear abuse of the Montana Territorial legal system five unnamed men in Livingston “were summoned as witnesses in the preliminary trial of a Chinaman for keeping an opium joint, swore that they knew all about it, their object being to be held in jail as witnesses till the next term of court, three months hence” (*Helena Independent* 1884a:3). As they were unable to pay bail and were held for free room and board for the three months, and accrued over \$900 in witness fees.

The assessed success of the Opium Act and its prosecution varied between location. In the waning months of 1881, editors believed that the Chinese were still unaware that opium smoking was illegal, and that in Butte they were intentionally defying the law (*Helena Independent* 1881f:3; 1881k:3). A reporter writing about the Helena Chinatown in 1881 noted that “there are no opium dens as of old, or if there are, the fact is kept secret” (*Helena Independent* 1881e:3). This article likely demonstrates a shift in the open-door policy towards the Euro-American population by the Helena Chinese and their opium smoking establishments to avoid criminal prosecution. Moreover, this pattern is supported by accounts from Fort Benton (*Benton Record* 1881a:2). By the spring of 1882 reporters noted that opium-related arrests continued, but at an occasional or less frequent rate than previous years. However, they note that sufficient time passed for the Chinese to make the practice more secretive and that “no



law has yet been framed authorizing a forcible entrance into a dwelling, even though it be known that the place is frequented by persons addicted to the pernicious, soul destroying habit in question” (*New Northwest* 1882a:3).

As pointed out by the *New Northwest* (1882a:3) there was little law enforcement could do to enter homes without significant evidence or actually seeing some business transaction within the public sphere. This legal issue spilled over into debates regarding Helena’s City Charter in 1881. There was a cross-town difference of opinion between the *Helena Herald* and the *Helena Independent*. Apparently the *Helena Herald* staff supported a clause in the City Charter that would allow the raiding of suspected Chinese opium dens and the prosecution of Chinese individuals smoking in their own home (*Helena Independent* 1881c:3), which is in fact the essence of the Opium Act. However, the *Helena Independent* staff felt that opium smoking was part of the Chinese culture and opium is as “beer is of the German, wine of the Frenchman, and whisky of the American” and its regulation was not the purview of a city (*Helena Independent* 1881b:3).

Effectively, the arguments centered on the private versus public consumption of opium. The *Helena Herald* editors appeared to support a mandate to protect the Chinese from the perceived evils of opium, while the *Helena Independent* editors focused on the sale of opium and related paraphernalia as the only true crime. While the argument focused on a single topic within the Helena City Charter, the debate itself illustrates the differing opinion on opium legislation and the effect of the drug on Montana society.

Montana’s Opium Act provided a tool for prosecuting opium users in the Territory. Similar to many local and national drug enforcement laws in historical times and the modern period, the biggest effect of the Opium Act was merely suppression of

the public use of the drug while clandestine use continued. Opium-related arrests continued in Fort Benton into the 1890s, and in 1900 a reporter described the large opium den within a restaurant on Front Street in Missoula (*Fort Benton River Press* 1890:2; *Daily Missoulian* 1900:3). Even rural communities like Whitefish in northwest Montana had arrests tied to the smoking of opium as late as 1923 (*Whitefish Pilot* 1923:2). In some cases the operation of opium dens was used as justification to force Chinese to leave the community, as was attempted in Livingston in 1887 (*Glendive Independent* 1887:2). As noted by Ahmad (2005:67) the failure of local and state anti-opium legislation spurred support for federal laws to more adequately combat the narcotic issue.

Perhaps the most important point to take away from Montana's passing of the Opium Act and irregular enforcement was that for the first time in the Territory's history, a law specifically targeting the Chinese passed, was enforced, and failed to be overturned by legal challenges. The failure of anti-Chinese legislation in Montana, such as the Alien Law in the early 1870s or the poorly enforced male-owned laundry tax, had little overall impact on the Chinese community. While the law might not have fulfilled the desire of progressive Euro-American Montanans to exterminate the opium habit, the Opium Act and the virulent debate surrounding it forever changed the tone of anti-Chinese legislation. Earlier legislation like the Alien Law and Laundry Tax specifically targeted the economic causes of Chinese immigration, but now the discussion shifted to the negative social impacts these immigrants caused to Montana and surrounding states through the use and sale of opium. This shift in public discourse would lead directly to the overwhelming support of federal anti-Chinese legislation in the year following the Opium Act's passage.

#### **4.4: Northern Pacific Railroad**

The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) to Montana Territory in the fall of 1882 and spring of 1883 was nearly 30 years in the making. Discussion of a northern railroad route connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans began in the early 1850s with the Mullan Road survey of the lands to become Montana Territory a decade later (Renz 1980:13). The first mention of a NPRR appeared in 1857, but the company was not established until 1864 when lands were granted for its construction (Renz 1980:15). Signed by law in 1864, by President Abraham Lincoln, the United States federal government granted the Northern Pacific Railroad Company nearly 60 million acres of land, the largest such allotment in the nation's history for railroad constructions (Smalley 1883:116; Renz 1980:19).

The proposed route from the NPRR would begin just west of Duluth, Minnesota and stretch to Puget Sound in Washington, following the plan established by Governor Isaac Stevens and supported by evidence by Lt. John Mullan (Smalley 1883:77-84; Daniels 2000:55). Over the next 15 years there was sporadic activity on the physical construction of the NPRR due to mismanagement and a bad national economy in the 1870s. Even with the hurdles the NPRR extended from Minneapolis to Bismarck by 1873 with the Pacific Division from Kalama to Tacoma completed that same year (Smalley 1883:196; Daniels 2000:55). In the mid-1870s the eastern end of the NPRR slowed, and was only 18 miles west of Bismarck at the beginning of 1879, though crews quickly pushed that number to 100 by years' end (Renz 1980:65).

Under the direction of President Frederick Billings from 1879 to 1881, the NPRR planned the main routes to be used for the completion of the transcontinental line. More

significantly, the Chinese side of the NPRR story began in earnest in 1879 with the final selection of a route from the confluence of the Snake and Columbia Rivers northwards to Lake Pend O'Reille (Renz 1980:63). This section would become the Pend d'Oreille Division of the NPRR, and had 300 Chinese grading near Ainsworth, Washington by late 1879 (Lewty 1987:52). Many of the initial Chinese laborers at work for the NPRR and ancillary lines in Washington State were veteran railroad workers from the Central Pacific Railroad line completed ten years prior in 1869. While there were Chinese laborers on the NPRR's eastern half, the majority of their activity went from Missoula westward to the Pacific coast.

In early 1881, Henry Villard, head of the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company, successfully achieved a hostile takeover of the NPRR, which led to the resignation of former President Billings (Renz 1980:75-77). By late 1881, Henry Villard had become the new president of the NPRR (Renz 1980:78), and the next two years saw the finalization of the transcontinental line in an unprecedented expenditure of labor and capital. Villard weighed the needs of completing the line in a timely fashion with the current labor pool, and subsequently began an aggressive campaign to import large numbers of Chinese workers from other areas of the United States and Canada and even directly from China, successfully circumventing the Chinese Exclusion Act through powerful friends in the Federal Government. Over a decade earlier the Central Pacific Railroad hired thousands of Chinese laborers, effectively cutting labor costs by a third (Wroblewski 1996:6). An editorial in the *New York Times* encapsulates the need for Chinese laborers as, "it is impossible to build railroads here without them, and the failure to secure as many as can be used....makes it difficult to push work as fast as railroad

managers wish” (*New York Times* 1882:3). In a speech to Philadelphia investors in May of 1882, Villard placed full credit for the recent prolific progression the NPRR firmly on the backs of Chinese labor (Renz 1980:89).

The NPRR generally paid the Chinese fifty cents less than their Euro-American counterparts, with the going rates at \$1.00 and \$1.50 per day, respectively (Lewty 1987:150). Swartout (1988:47) states that Euro-American workers received twice that of the Chinese on the NPRR, though it is likely the numbers varied by location, tasks performed, and skills required. In a particularly unpleasant dry and dangerous section of the western half of the NPRR, managed by a subsidiary called the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company, Chinese laborers won a labor strike for an additional fifty cents, to raise their pay to \$1.50 in 1882. The main reason the Chinese won their strike was that the area was so inhospitable that the contractor could not find enough willing Euro-Americans to complete the work (Lewty 1987:117).

More significantly for the Chinese perhaps, was the growth of the credit-ticket system that sponsored their immigration. Throughout the mid-1870s American entrepreneurs traveled to China to secure cheap labor for the railroads, including the Northern Pacific. To facilitate this immigration, Chinese societies, both legal and illegal, sponsored the immigration of laborers but on the condition of repayment to the debt accrued for travel. Sadowski-Smith (2008:783-784) notes that this created the appearance of unfree-labor, or even slavery, and helped to spur even more restrictive legislation on Chinese immigration, phrased for the benefit of protecting these workers. Regardless, at the rates of wages the NPRR was paying the Chinese laborers, it would have taken a substantial time to work off the travel debt as part of the credit-ticket

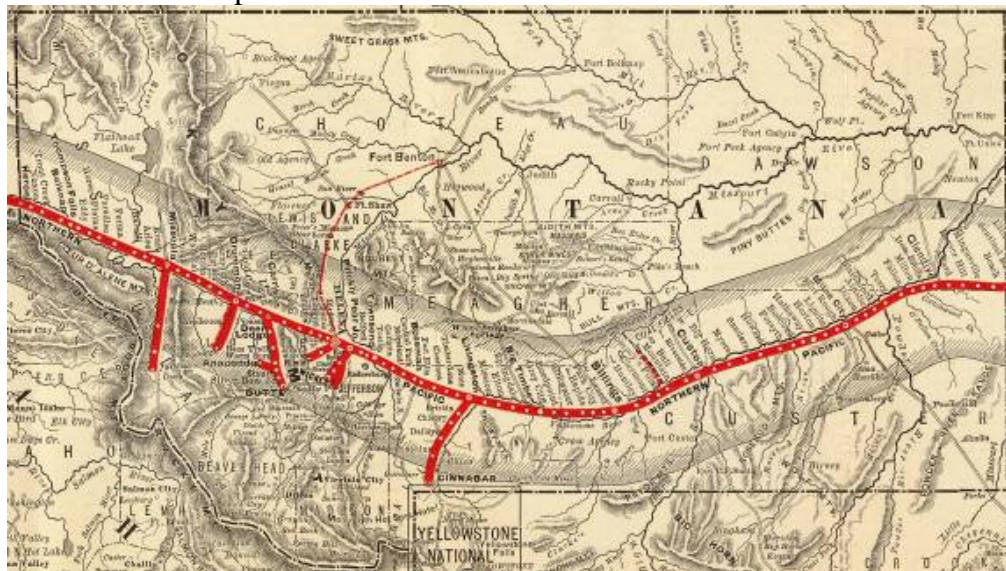
system. With upwards of 135 Chinese was loaded into freight cars and hauled to the front towns, there the low status of the laborers within the NPRR fostered the growing public opinion that these immigrants were chattel property of the railroad and rich Chinese merchants (Lewty 1987:96).

As the western half of the NPRR moved towards the Montana border, the number of Chinese working on the grade continued to rise dramatically. Some estimates place 1,200 Chinese laborers on the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company grade along The Dalles in Washington in June of 1881 (Lewty 1987:84). The transition to a heavy dominance of Chinese laborer continued through late fall of 1881 and into 1882. For example, of the 917 laborers on the grade between Spokane Falls, Washington and Lake Pend d'Oreille in Idaho, 656 of them were Chinese, which comprised over 71.5% of the total workforce. According to the labor statistics, in this section of the grading there were 635 Chinese laborers under the direction of 21 Chinese foremen, for a rough estimate of about 30 graders per supervisor (Renz 1980:82). These numbers do not take into account any Chinese crews overseen by Euro-American foremen. However, these numbers pale in comparison to the laborers required to undertake construction of arguably the most difficult section of the NPRR stretching from Cabinet, Idaho to Helena, Montana.

The section of the railroad between Lake Pend d'Oreille eastward to Helena (Figure 4.5) was named the Clark's Fork Division (Renz 1980:98). Between 1879 and early 1882 only the stretch of grade from Sandpoint, Idaho to Perma Bridge in Montana was considered the Clark's Fork Division, but after determination was made to run the NPRR through Helena instead of Butte in 1882, the remainder of the line became that designation (Smalley 1883:415). J.L. Hallett was named the division boss in late 1881,

and oversaw final engineering and survey work along the Clark Fork River from Idaho to Perma, Montana. During the winter of 1881-1882, the railroad camp at Cabinet Landing became the lead of the construction effort. There was significant blasting and tunneling required to pass eastward out of Cabinet Landing and into Montana Territory, and most of this work was done by Chinese laborers. Almost overnight Cabinet Landing became a boomtown with hundreds of dwellings, 35 saloons, two Chinese laundries, and a store supplying goods for the Chinese laborers but operated by a Euro-American commissary (Renz 1980:83-84). Incredibly, during the late winter of 1881 and early spring of 1882, Cabinet Landing supported 2,600 Chinese laborers and 1,400 Euro-Americans (Renz 1980:84). Lewty's (1987:93) estimates put the population at Cabinet Landing slightly lower with 2,300 Chinese and 1,250 Euro-Americans. Regardless, to put these numbers into context, the Chinese population of Cabinet Landing alone was several hundred higher than the entire Chinese population of Montana Territory at the same time. This large aggregation of railroad workers became euphemistically known as Hallett's Army by the Montana press.

**Figure 4.5:** Main and spur lines of the NPPR in Montana. 1887 NPPR Timetable Map.



By July 1882 Cabinet Landing crews abandoned the area with newer settlements in Montana springing up at the advancing front of Hallett's Army. According to Renz (1980:84), "these front towns were even more transient than the mining camps." In 1881 crews completed a wagon road from Thompson River (just east of Thompson Falls, Montana) to Missoula (Renz 1980:84), and after the snow melt they finished the road from Thompson River to Cabinet Landing (Lewty 1980:93). This road served as the main route for supplying the front crews with provisions and construction supplies until the track caught up to the end of the line camps. In July of 1882 there was an estimated 3,900 to 4,000 Chinese laborers working between Noxon and Trout Creek, Montana (Figure 4.6), nearly twice that of the over-winter population in Idaho (*New Northwest* 1882b:3; Lewty 1987:94-95). Some newspaper estimates placed the total number of NPRR workers in Montana in August of 1881 at 10,000 (*Helena Independent* 1882h:3). A proportion of the new western front community moved from Cabinet Landing to Rock Island in Montana, though even by late summer this bustling settlement disappeared.

Montana's most northwestern Chinese railroad sites lie just outside the town of Noxon and southeast of Rock Island. The West Noxon Chinese camp (24SA0591) is located on the edge of the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir and near the old NPRR railroad grade, while the Submerged Chinese Camp (24SA0592) lies directly north of the town and under five-feet of water. Periodically, the waters of the reservoir are drawn down which exposes the site, which unfortunately leads to looting and the degradation of artifacts that were protected by the inundation. The two camps near Noxon, Montana were likely constructed in spring of 1882 and only occupied a short time before



**Figure 4.6:** Chinese laborers grading near Heron, Montana, 1881. Courtesy of Denver Public Library.



abandonment. It is likely that Chinese and Euro-American maintenance crews occupied these settlements into the 1890s, though it is hard to determine without further evidence.

Weisz (2003:135-138) noted and collected several types of Chinese-related artifacts from these two sites. However, due to environmental hazards related to the reservoir, there is a low probability of intact and significant archaeological deposits as indicated site revisits by the author in 2010. Artifacts from these sites include “Bamboo” and celadon ceramic vessels, and some brown-glazed stoneware storage vessels, opium pipe bowls, and railroad-specific tools. Wroblewski (1996:47) also noted the presence of “Bamboo” and celadon style ceramic vessels at Chinese railroad camps along the Virginia City & Truckee Railroad in Nevada constructed in 1869. At both Montana (Weisz 2003) and Nevada (Wroblewski 1996) camps, “Bamboo” wares dominated the ceramic tableware assemblages, as that style was cheaper than other available types

(Sando and Felton 1993:165) and is an indicator of the lower economic status of these railroad workers. Weisz (2003) also discovered a variety of Chinese and Vietnamese coins at both of these sites, though the Chinese examples were better preserved due to their higher copper content. It is significant to note that Chinese and Vietnamese coins share highly similar phenotypic characteristics, and likely served the same function in Chinese Overseas communities, in Montana and beyond. Chinese, and likely Vietnamese and Japanese coins of similar size and shape, served several functions in Chinese Overseas communities including gambling tokens, magical talismans, medicinal cures, and good luck charms (Akin 1992:64; see also Farris 1979; Olsen 1983).

Some of the most intensive work for the NPRR's western half in Montana occurred between Thompson Falls and Perma, Montana, with two river crossings and major blasting work west of Horse Plains. According to archaeological evidence there were substantial railroad settlements at the mouth of Thompson River (24SA0593), where it flows into the Clark Fork, and at least four additional camps east of Paradise (Weisz 2003). At the Thompson River Camp, also called Ashleyville, occupied during 1882 by the NPRR there were distinctly separate areas of Chinese and Euro-American encampments. Weisz (2003:) noted the presence of at least a dozen tent platforms in the Chinese section, and archaeological materials indicate that this was indeed a major camp for both groups. Another source notes the presence of several exhumed Chinese graves at the Thompson River Camp (Fullerton 1961). By late summer of 1882 the Thompson River camp was abandoned with front work heading towards Horse Plains and the NPRR towns of Eddy and Weeksville.

Between Thompson River and Weeksville was a large rock outcrop that extended into the north bank of the Clark Fork River, and the NPRR needed to remove this obstruction. Known as Bad Rock, this outcropping had obstructed easy human travel along the Clark Fork for centuries (Helterline 1984:3-4). According to Helterline (1984:33), Chinese did most of the blasting for the Bad Rock project and many died as a result of these efforts. Chinese laborers also worked on portions of the required blasting for the 1860s construction of the Central Pacific Railroad in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California (Dirlick and Yeung 2001:92). Even today, Bad Rock continues to be a problem for transportation as the Montana Department of Transportation had projects in 2005 and 2006 to blast additional sections of the outcropping without success.

As the NPRR front crews moved farther eastward, the ability to provide these crews with adequate supplies became more difficult. In October of 1882, the companies contracted to provide room and board for the NPRR crews at the grading front, raised their weekly charge from \$4 to \$5 (Lewty 1987:98). In response, Euro-American NPRR employees attempted to drive all the Chinese from the front camps in hopes of removing the competition for supplies. In addition, some of the Euro-American workers took control of the Auditor's Office in Montana Territory along the NPRR grade (*Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman* 1882:1). However, the NPRR quickly regained control of the situation and discharged several hundred of the Euro-American workers involved in the unrest (Lewty 1987:98).

Weeksville (24SA0155) was located approximately seven miles east of Bad Rock, and was a major front town for the NPRR. Weeksville received more historical attention in the newspaper accounts than most of the other temporary railroad camps during this

time, including Eddy (24SA0594), just two miles away. Both of these settlements had substantial Chinese populations as the railroad progressed through the Clark Fork Valley in the summer and fall of 1882. Weisz (2003:218) notes that archaeological evidence suggests that most of the Chinese section of the settlement was in what is colloquially known as East Weeksville (24SA0595), while the Euro-American workers and businesses were in the main part of town several hundred yards distant. It appears that Weeksville also boasted at least one Chinese laundry, as in 1883 it was robbed of money and clothing by a group of Euro-American thugs (Helterline 1984:30)

Weeksville and its occupants had a rough and tumble reputation, with at least several dozen saloons. First initiated as a logging town to supply ties to the NPRR construction sites, Weeksville became one of the main over-wintering spots of Hallett's Army as the tracks did not reach the town until January 1883. Locals nicknamed the town "Bloody Weeksville" due to the number of murders in late fall of 1882, but the organization of vigilance committees in December of that year quieted the roughest elements (Hagerman-Benton 2007:13). However, the vigilance committees, in pursuit of their mandates, lynched 10 men in February of 1883 to express the point of law and order (*New York Times* 1883:3). NPRR crews largely abandoned Weeksville in February 1883 as the front moved to Horse Plains and areas east towards the Flathead Indian Reservation (Helterline 1984:32).

As Hallett's Army approached the Flathead Indian Reservation from the west, the Indian Agent, Peter Ronan, sent an urgent telegram to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. While the NPRR had acquired permission to build the railroad through the Flathead Reservation, Agent Ronan feared that the less savory characters

traveling with Hallett's Army would wreak havoc on the alcohol-free reservation.

According to some reports there were 6,000 Chinese and 1,400 Euro-American laborers employed on Hallett's section, with "1,000 loose women and men hanging on as the ragged edges of this army" (*New Northwest* 1882c:3). In short order Agent Ronan was able to negotiate a settlement that put to work crews of Mormons on the reservation.

Hallett's Army continued the grading and tracklaying from Plains to the border of the Flathead Indian Reservation throughout the winter of 1882-1883. There is little historical documentation or reports for this section of the Clark's Fork Division of the NPRR, though archaeology can provide some illumination. Between Paradise and the third crossing at Perma, there were at least four NPRR camps occupied by the 6,000 Chinese and 1,400 Euro-American workers. The only one of these camps with a historically-known name was "Last Chance" (24SA0596), and was located on the banks of the Clark Fork River, just downstream from its confluence with the Flathead River. This location was the last chance for Hallett's Army to acquire liquor and prostitutes before moving too close the Flathead Indian Reservation, hence the camp's name (Renz 1980:95). Similar to Weeksville, Weisz (2003:) notes that the main part of the Chinese archaeological deposits at "Last Chance" were located on the eastern end of the site, with Euro-American materials clustering on the western end a few hundred yards away.

The three NPRR camps east of "Last Chance" to Perma, Montana consist of tent platforms and artifact scatters. Only two miles east of "Last Chance" camp was a small tent settlement comprised largely of Chinese railroad workers. Artifacts from "Fu Sang" (24SA0598), as Weisz (2003:) named the site, are similar in assemblage to the other eight known NPRR Chinese sites in Montana with domination by celadon and "Bamboo" style

ceramics and the presence of numerous opium cans. “Fu Sang” is a smaller encampment than “Last Chance,” and might relate to a small blasting crew that was in front of the main grading crews. Wroblewski (1996) discovered similar small satellite camps that were distant from larger aggregations along the Virginia City and Truckee Railroad in Nevada, and probably represent small maintenance or specialty crews. “Taklamakan” (24SA0598) is another small Chinese camp located just over three miles east of “Fu Sang.” According to Weisz (2003:287) “Taklamakan” is comprised of about 20 tent platforms, and had almost an exclusively Chinese artifact assemblage (Figure 4.7).

**Figure 4.7:** Selection of artifacts from “Taklamakan” site, including Chinese coins, opium cans, “Bamboo” and “Four Season” pottery. Photo by Gary Weisz, 2007.



Due to the site’s particular environmental conditions, artifacts are well-preserved to this day as told by Weisz (2003:291):

Many years ago when I first entered the Chinese camp at 'Taklamakan' it was reminiscent of a step back in time. Shovel blades, assorted metal scrap, and all manner of camp debris including Chinese ceramics were laying scattered, actually exposed on the surface of the ground or partially buried.

The last recorded NPRR construction camp recorded along the Clark's Fork Division is on a river terrace just before reaching the Perma Bridge (24SA0599) and contains both Euro-American and Chinese components. By April of 1883, Hallett's Army completed the grading, track laying, and bridge at the end of the line at Perma. On April 7, 1883 the NPRR discharged Hallett's Army, now shrunk to 900 Chinese and 800 Euro-American laborers, and most workers traveled to Oregon to complete additional spur lines (Renz 1980:96). What happened to the 6,000 Chinese that there were reportedly approaching the Flathead Indian Reservation in December of 1882 is unclear, but it is likely that the NPRR reassigned the bulk of the crews to more pressing areas for construction such as the Oregon spur lines, or even to the NPRR grades east of Missoula and west of Bozeman. According to Renz (1980:98), by June of 1883 Chinese crews were grading in the Hellgate Canyon east of Missoula, as the eastern half of the NPRR pulled into Helena.

Just west of Helena, NPRR crews worked tirelessly tunneling through Mullan Pass in the fall of 1882. Thirty years before, crews working for Lt. John Mullan surveyed and graded a military road over this same pass, and the path became one of the major transportation routes between eastern and western Montana Territory. Taylor and Taylor (2002) do not discuss the ethnic composition of the workforce engaged in constructing the Mullan Tunnel during 1882-1883, and the data behind Swartout's (1988:47) assertion for the role of Chinese labor in its construction remains undiscovered. Swartout

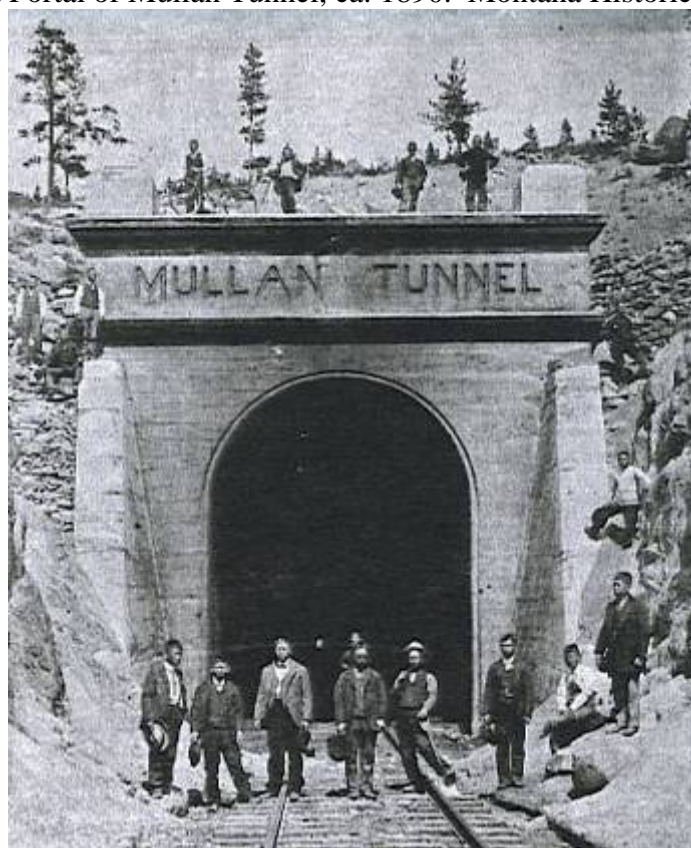
(2001:380) clarifies, however, that his evidence for the Chinese labor force on the Mullan Tunnel project came from correspondence within the NPRR. A famous photo (Figure 4.8) shows, what appear to be Chinese workers at the western face of the Mullan Tunnel, and is generally attributed to around the completion of the tunnel in 1882-1883.

However, according to historical documents the front façade that includes the “Mullan Tunnel” inscription was not added until the 1890s. Thus, the photograph likely dates from the 1890s through early 1910s and might indicate a reunion of workers as suggested by Taylor and Taylor (2002:41), or it may simply represent an advantageous photo opportunity by Chinese tourists. In the summer and fall of 2009 (Figure 4.9), Montana RailLink demolished both facades of the Mullan Tunnel in order to widen the existing borehole (Kidston 2009:1A).

While crews finished the boring of the Mullan Tunnel in the early fall of 1883, there was a race between the western crews led largely by Chinese workers, and the eastern branch comprised mostly of Irish and other Euro-American laborers, to the desired finish point near Gold Creek, Montana. Only 10 miles of the NPRR remained uncompleted in the morning of August 23, 1883. On a signal, crews from the west and east, each five miles from the finish flag, began the final grading and track laying. At 1:50 pm, the crew from the east reached the finish line with the western crew still nearly a mile away. Renz (1980) does not mention the ethnic makeup of the two construction crews during the August 23 race, though Renz’s (1980:98) indication of the western crew’s composition in June of 1883 suggests that at least some Chinese were involved in the final race.



**Figure 4.8:** West Portal of Mullan Tunnel, ca. 1890. Montana Historical Society.



**Figure 4.9:** West Portal, Mullan Tunnel. Photo by author, 2008.



Between August 23 and September 8, 1883 NPRR construction crews completed a bypass track around the spot of the final ceremonies. Once the bypass was completed, the crews tore up one mile of track around the newly constructed pavilion. Henry Villard and hundreds of invited guests arrived at Gold Creek, Montana to witness the driving of the final spike on September 8 (Renz 1980:267). According to a translation of a German journalist's reports on the day of the final spike ceremonies, a group of Chinese competed with a Euro-American laborers to finish the last mile (Lindau and Trautmann 1985:65).

The original narrative by the German reporter illustrates the excitement of the last race:

Who would finish first? Rails slammed onto ties, taking their places as if by magic, and were fastened with spikes hit in a violent rat-a-tat-tat. Suddenly a wild, feverish howl! Breathless and bathed in sweat, sunburned and dusty fellows reached the goal and screamed and yelled and waved their hats. Victory from the east-the Caucasians! The Chinese gained the spot five minutes later (Lindau and Trautmann 1985:65).

This is the only known mention of the ethnic composition of the construction crews at the final ceremonies, and at least provides some credit to the Chinese laborers, though in the end the Euro-Americans won the contest due to the delays caused by a derailed hand cart on the western half of the race (Renz 1980:267). Renz (1980:267) notes that J.L. Hallett was in charge of the western crews, and his heavy use of Chinese laborers in the NPRR construction efforts of Western Montana helps support the possibility that at least those crews had some Chinese.

Nolan (1983:9) notes that the final spike celebration had photographers and newspaper reporters in great number; though it appears none captured a single representative of the nearly 10,000 Chinese employed by the NPRR for its construction. The ethnic cleaning of the photographic and historical record of the NPRR is similar to the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869, where the Chinese were excluded

from the official photographs (Pegler-Gordon 2006:51). Pegler-Gordon (2006:51) asserts that the exclusion of the Chinese from the official documentary record of railroad construction is a microcosm of the treatment of that group's role in the history of the United States. A famous painting by Amedee Joullin, commissioned by the NPRR and prominently displayed at the Montana State Capitol, shows President Grant, Henry Villard, Crow Indians, and other dignitaries but pointedly omits the Irish and Chinese laborers that supplied the bulk of labor to the project (Lambert et al. 2002:50-52)

After the September 8, 1883 festivities the majority of the NPRR workmen were released from the main line and many of the laborers went to Washington and Oregon to assist with those sections. A year after the festivities the death toll of the NPRR's construction was tallied, as estimates placed the number of buried Chinese along the line at 1,000 (*Helena Independent* 1884b:3). NPRR construction work was difficult and deadly as evidenced by the death toll, and "Verily the road was built with Chinaman's bones" (*Helena Independent* 1884b:3). Lewty (1987:96) notes that as the backbone of the NPRR construction effort, the Chinese suffered most from the work as they were killed in falls, explosions, and some even from scurvy due to poor diet afforded them on the front. Some of the most dangerous work was the blasting of rock faces between Cabinet Landing, Idaho and Missoula, Montana (Hagerman-Benton 2007:13).

Helterline (1984:33) discusses several blasting incidents, including one that "hurled an entire point of rock into the coolies' campsite, killing and maiming upwards of 150 at one annihilating blow." In June of 1883, approximately 24 Chinese died and nearly 50 were injured when a construction train collided with a lumber train near Heron, MT (*Spokane Falls Review* 1883:1). According to the newspaper reports, over 80

Chinese laborers were sitting atop open flat-bed cars heading westbound towards Idaho when an unscheduled lumber train came around the corner, leading to a head-on collision. While graphic, the description of the incident highlights the harsh realities of NPRR construction as, “[m]en were torn to pieces, limbs were crushed to pulp, and bodies deformed beyond recognition” (*Spokane Falls Review* 1883:1).

The only officially recorded Chinese graves along the NPRR grade in Montana are within the boundaries of the Thompson River Camp (24SA0593). In 1961, local amateur historian Neil Fullerton interviewed several Noxon and Heron locals that provided some anecdotal stories about the Chinese, including the location of three grave sites east of Thompson Falls. Fullerton (1961) noted that rocks encircled all three graves, and their arrangement suggested disinterment. Two of the graves are oriented due north/south while the third grave, twenty-five feet away, is oriented east/west. The author’s attempts to relocate the graves in 2008 was inconclusive, though the dense undergrowth and heavy mosquito presence prevented detailed surface survey.

There are likely numerous other grave sites along the old NPRR grade, as evidenced by other local histories. According to Helterline (1984:33), there were numerous one-foot deep graves along the NPRR right-of-way. At Heron, most of the Chinese that died during construction were buried in an orchard, while at Noxon they were interred near the Clark Fork River. In the 1920s a local resident discovered several Chinese graves on a gravel bar on the north side of the NPRR line near Noxon. Just before completion of the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir in the 1950s, many Noxon residents exhumed Chinese bodies from a cottonwood-shaded plot near the NPRR depot, and reinterred them in the city cemetery on Pilgrim Creek (Leeson-Vanek 1996:117).

Besides the dangerous work of the construction, the construction camps were dangerous places as well. As already mentioned, Weeksville gained a quick reputation of a rough and rowdy town, including the robbery of a Chinese laundry in 1883. It appears that the Chinese were not docile victims of the harsh treatment by their Euro-American employers. In July of 1882, a Euro-American section foreman named Meagher, who was in charge of a Chinese work detail was found murdered in his tent. Without formal due process a gang of Meagher's friends enacted their vengeance upon the Chinese, killing six and wounding 13 without ascertaining their involvement (*Helena Independent* 1882f:3). A similar incident occurred a few months later in January of 1883 when Larry Herne, another Euro-American section foreman in charge of Chinese crews, was found dead in his tent at Weeksville. According to the newspaper accounts, it appeared that the Chinese under his charge disliked him and killed him with a hatchet while he slept (*Helena Independent* 1882j:3). While both of these stories rely on the accurate investigation and reporting of the crimes, it seems probable that the Chinese might have conducted these actions.

The last major recorded act of violence along the NPRR was committed within the Chinese community at Horse Plains in 1883. According to the newspaper reports two Chinese men killed a Chinese paymaster and robbed him of \$3,000 at Horse Plains, and during their flight injured another Chinese man who belonged to the Wing Sing Company (*Helena Independent* 1883a:3). Over the summer of 1883, three Chinese men captured the two assailants and after trial they were hung on August 16, 1883 in Missoula (*Helena Independent* 1883d:3).

There were a few Chinese settlements along the NPRR through the remainder of the 1800s and first two decades of the 1900s. Employed as track maintenance crews, the Chinese lived in wooden section houses at Noxon, Belknap and White Pine. Belknap, a small settlement established along the NPRR line in the 1880s, was completely destroyed by the great 1910 fire that scorched millions of acres of Montana and Idaho. During the mid-1880s, however, Belknap had a Chinese laundry (Draszt 1998:3). Fullerton (1961) collected an oral history that recounted the presence of Chinese section hands at the White Pine NPRR Depot through the 1910s, and other local accounts support this assertion (Draszt 1998:71). Recorded as 24SA0568, the White Pine mercantile and the remnant foundations of the depot and Chinese section hand shack are owned by private parties and might retain significant integrity.

In the mainstream history books on the NPRR's construction (Smalley 1883; Renz 1980; Lewty 1987; and Taylor and Taylor 1999, 2002), it is clear that the Chinese contribution has been largely ignored by scholars and the public. As noted by Pegler-Gordon (2006), there was an intentional historical omission of the Chinese contributions from the literature in the 1800s, and this attitude has not dramatically changed since. Over the four years of the NPRR's peak construction phase, 1879-1883, the Chinese contributed well over two-thirds of the labor on the entire line, potentially hitting a population of 10,000. It is clear that the NPRR was critical to the rapid economic development of Montana through the 1880s, and thousands of settlers used the rails over the next four decades to settle the state's expanses. After completion of the NPRR, many of the Chinese workers left for the Canadian Pacific Railroad completed in 1885. In the United States, much of the NPRR maintenance fell to Japanese laborers that were not

excluded by the Chinese Exclusion Act. For instance, Livingston, which served as the NPRR's major hub in south-central Montana, had three times the Japanese railroad workers in 1900 than their Chinese counterparts. The only remnants of the Chinese contribution left today are less than a dozen archaeological sites along the old NPRR grade west of Missoula to Idaho, and of course the grade, rails, and blasted rock faces that are a silent reminder to this forgotten history of thousands.

The next two trans-Montana railroads, the Great Northern and Milwaukee, used a majority of Japanese workers in their construction due to the effects of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Railroad companies required cheap labor for construction and maintenance, and with the inability to acquire Chinese workers many managers imported Japanese labor by the thousands. Between 1891 and 1907, labor contractors working for a variety of American businesses, including railroads, helped to import over 60,000 Japanese laborers (Ichioka 1980:326-327). Completed in the 1890s, the Great Northern Railroad went across Montana's northern boundary and employed several thousand Japanese laborers, some with Chinese foremen, in addition to a significant number of Irish and eastern Europeans. The Milwaukee Railroad, Montana's first electrified railroad, used significantly less Japanese laborers (Figure 4.10) than the Great Northern and was completed in the early 1900s (Ichioka 1980:325-326).

**Figure 4.10:** Japanese laborers on the Milwaukee Railroad, somewhere in Western Montana, ca. 1900. Courtesy Montana Historical Society.



#### **4.5: Exclusion and Montana's Boycott(s)**

At the peak construction of the NPRR, the United States Federal Government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 in response to mounting pressure from labor unions and western legislative bodies. This was the first law passed in the United States that directly excluded a particular nationality from immigration, and spurred additional anti-Chinese legislation in 1892 and 1902 (Gyory 1988:254). In its original 1882 form, the Chinese Exclusion Act banned any immigration of Chinese laborers into the United States for a period of ten years, and exempted any individuals already residing in the country before passage (Gyory 1988:261). This law effectively closed the doors to further Chinese immigration, which in turn precluded any potential of a robust and growing immigrant population in Montana. Yet in Montana during this period, the



Exclusion Act was covered in the local newspapers with little fanfare or vigor. The reason for this seemingly apathetic attitude remains unclear, but regardless, public sentiment had now fully turned against the Chinese of Montana. Similar to other western states after the passage of the Exclusion Act, Montana's Chinese experienced an increase in violence and economic restrictions.

After passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, there was an increase in anti-Chinese violence and boycotts across the western United States. During 1885, mobs swept through Rock Springs, Wyoming's Chinese quarter, resulting in several deaths and a forced exodus. By far some of the most brutal and horrific anti-Chinese violence occurred in Los Angeles, Denver, and Seattle and Tacoma between 1885 and 1886 (Schwantes 1982:373-376; Zhu 1997:146; see also Jew 2002 and Rusco 2002). Similar to Idaho (Zhu 1997:146), Montana did not witness such widespread or organized violence against the Chinese as in other parts of the American West. Zhu (1997:146) points out that in 11 anti-Chinese riots in Idaho from 1863 to 1900, 25 Chinese were killed with an additional 528 displaced. It seems that in Montana the violence was limited to only singular incidents of malice, with most efforts focused on boycotts and legal restrictions sponsored largely by labor unions and especially the Knights of Labor (Figure 4.11).

At the start of mid-1880s anti-Chinese agitation in Montana, unknown parties demolished a Chinese laundry in Anaconda, killing three (*New Northwest* 1885b:3; *New Northwest* 1885c:3). Since Anaconda was headquarters for the Knights of Labor's efforts to create state-wide boycotts, the event seems highly suspicious. According to newspaper reports, unknown parties placed two large powder charges underneath and adjacent to a

**Figure 4.11:** The anti-Chinese attitude of Montanans created an economic environment that favored those businesses that did not employ Chinese labor, as shown by this advertisement from a Butte Restaurant. *Butte Daily Miner*, January 12, 1883, page 2.



Chinese laundry on Main Street. The charges exploded at 3 am, destroying the laundry and shattering windows of businesses within 200' of the structure (*New Northwest* 1885c:3). The act was a clear signal to the Chinese, but who sent the message remains unclear, with no individual ever charged in the crime.

By the late summer of 1885, the anti-Chinese agitation in Montana reached its peak, feeding off the events in Rock Springs, Wyoming, Los Angeles, Tacoma, and Washington. In Butte, the *Miner* and *Inter-Mountain* newspaper offices barred their windows and prepared for a potential violent riot similar to those in other areas of the West (*New Northwest* 1885e:3). A Knights of Labor sponsored demonstration and rally in downtown Butte occurred in September 1885, with some estimates placing the crowd at 4,000 to 5,000 strong. At the rally many prominent local politicians spoke about the evils of Chinese labor depriving the working American of their wages and employment, pushing for a complete boycott of all Chinese-operated establishments and any business that employed them (*New Northwest* 1885f:3). In quick succession other Knights of Labor assemblies supported the boycott, and by the end of 1885, Dillon, Walkerville, and Garrison joined the effort (*New Northwest* 1885g:3; 1885h:3; 1885i:3).

The Knights of Labor set the tone of the boycott and in the September 1885 rally the leadership stated that they did not support the use of violence against the Chinese (*New Northwest* 1885f:3; 1885h:3), as they likely saw the drawbacks of such activity for garnering widespread and permanent support (Flaherty 1987:47). The Dillon Assembly of the Knights of Labor expressed their sentiment in a printed resolution that also addressed the Chinese:

To Chinese: Wishing you no harm personally, we advise you to listen to the voice of the people as heard in Oregon, Washington, California, Wyoming, Montana and other parts of the West, and consult your best interest in this matter. The Chinese must go (*New Northwest* 1885g:3).

It appears that in most instances, except perhaps the Anaconda laundry explosion and potentially unreported instances of violence, they were successful in sponsoring a mostly non-violent boycott of the Chinese. Other areas took the boycott further, as in 1885 Neihart, a hard-rock mining town in the Little Belt Mountains, passed an ordinance forcing the removal of Chinese from that community (*The River Press* 1885:2). Maiden another hard-rock camp followed suit in 1886 with another anti-Chinese ordinance, and Euro-American locals forcibly removed those Chinese that refused to leave (Robison 2009a). In 1887 Great Falls passed a similar ordinance that was still in effect in 1903 and involved the violent expulsion of some Chinese individuals including dumping them into the Missouri River in a burlap sack (*Great Falls Tribune Daily* 1903:10). Residents of Livingston also proclaimed that the Chinese must leave that community in 1887, though there was no physical violence reported (*Glendive Independent* 1887:3).

Not all of the local newspapers supported the boycott, as again the *New Northwest* stood up for the Chinese in their own peculiar way, noting that the presence of this population was an annoyance, but a “necessary evil” due to the lack of large pool of

cheap labor (*New Northwest* 1885f:3; 1885h:3). Editors of the paper continued that if the Chinese left under duress there would be no one to replace them in laundries, gardens, or domestic service (*New Northwest* 1885d:3). It appears that the *New Northwest* supported the Chinese only on the auspices of existing treaty rights, and the dangers of the spread boycotts against non-Chinese (*New Northwest* 1884h:3). In the *New Northwest*'s (1885h:3) opinion, "this is a dangerous encroachment on the personal and individual rights of the American citizen," and is, "unrepublican, undemocratic, un-American."

In fact, the *New Northwest*'s worry about the potential spillover effects of the boycott reached their own door in late October of 1885. Due to the editorial support of the Chinese in the *New Northwest*, the Garrison Assembly of the Knights of Labor sent flyers to other assemblies urging them to boycott the newspaper. Instead of retracting their statements, the editors ran a story urging any member of the Knights of Labor to pay up their outstanding debt and cancel their subscriptions, as "we have nailed our flag to the mast and ask no favors" (*New Northwest* 1885i:3). It appears that in the short-term, cooler heads prevailed and the anti-Chinese boycotts of the mid-1880s suffered from widespread apathy from Montanans, and the sporadic activity failed to generate large-scale change in the demographic composition of the state.

Even with concerted efforts to remove them, the official Chinese population in Montana peaked in 1890 (Table 4.7), with 2,532 recorded across 16 counties (Federal Census Bureau 1896:42). The Chinese Exclusion Act and repressive labor practices in various industries led to a slowing of population growth for this cultural group by cutting off the new flow of male migrants and continuing the prohibition against women. This total put Montana in position as having the 6<sup>th</sup> largest Chinese population in the United

States behind California, Oregon, Washington, New York, and Nevada (Table 4.8). Due to the loss of the 1890 census in a warehouse fire in the early 1900s, there is little historical evidence to determine the demographics of Chinese in Montana during this period.

In 1890 there were 107,475 Chinese in the United States, but by the end of the decade the population dropped by nearly 30,000 due to the strict enforcement of anti-immigration legislation. The proportion of Chinese to the total American population peaked in 1880 at 1.56%. By 1890 Chinese individuals only comprised 1.15% of the United States population (Federal Census Bureau 1892:52). In the United States, the 1890 census recorded a substantial decrease in Chinese population growth, at only 1.91% increase from 1880. The previous two population increases were 80.91% from 1860 to 1870 and 66.88% from 1870 to 1880. The significant drop of Chinese population in the United States from 1890 to 1900 was a direct result of the renewal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, with the new version named the Geary Act.

**Table 4.7:** Montana Chinese Population by County, 1890 Federal Census.

<b>County</b>	<b>Chinese Population</b>
Beaverhead	92
Cascade	23
Choteau	42
Custer	18
Dawson	4
Deer Lodge	438
Fergus	9
Gallatin	39
Jefferson	46
Lewis and Clark	602
Madison	155
Meagher	37
Missoula	405
Park	23
Silver Bow	584
Yellowstone	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,532</b>

**Table 4.8:** Chinese-Born population by State, top 6 population centers. 1890 Federal Census, Bulletin 199, Census Bureau.

<b>State</b>	<b># of Chinese</b>	<b>% of Total Chinese in U.S</b>
California	72,472	67.4
Oregon	9,540	8.9
Washington	3,260	3.0
New York	2,935	2.7
Nevada	2,833	2.6
<b>Montana</b>	<b>2,532</b>	<b>2.4</b>

When the Geary Act replaced the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1892, the new restrictions placed on the Chinese in Montana received substantial coverage in the local presses. The Geary Act not only renewed the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act, but created new requirements for Chinese already living in the United States. Specifically, within one year after passage of the Geary Act, all Chinese had to register with the collector of local revenue for the district and receive a certificate of identity with their name, age, local address, occupation, and photograph (Pfaelzer 2007:292). If a Chinese person refused, or could not register within that period they were arrested and deported (Pfaelzer 2007: 300-301).

The Chinese Six Companies, based out of San Francisco, forbade any Chinese to register for the Geary Act in 1893 as an effort to create a united front against what they saw as an unconstitutional law. In certain areas, the Six Companies enforced their will over other Chinese by promoting boycotts of merchants that registered, or by filing health complaints against restaurants and butcher shops (Pfaelzer 2007:300). By the original Geary Act deadline, only a fraction of the Chinese population registered with local agencies. After the failure of the original timeline, an amendment extended the deadline for registration. Many Chinese attempted to register due to this amendment, and the defeat of a Supreme Court challenge to the constitutionality of the Geary Act. However,

non-Chinese in hundreds of communities around the United States now attempted to stop their registration by force, leading to dozens of violent and deadly episodes in 1893-1894 (Pfaelzer 2007: 307-315). Some estimates state that less than ten percent of California's Chinese population ever complied with the registration for the Geary Act (Pfaelzer 2007:331).

In Montana, the initial period netted only a few Chinese registrants, though the extension of the Geary Act's deadline to May of 1894 was more successful. In January of 1894, the Chinese Six Companies, now accepting that they could not defeat the Geary Act, sent notices to all their branches and local leaders urging them to register in force (*Helena Independent* 1894b:3). By March of 1894, Montana newspapers circulated that 2,000 Chinese already registered with approximately another 2,000 yet to complete the process in the district (*Glendive Independent* 1894:2; *Helena Independent* 1894c:3). Montana, Idaho, and Utah comprised a single district with many Chinese forced to travel several hundred miles to the closest federal registration station (*Helena Independent* 1894d:3). Some reporters felt that the elder Chinese in Montana refused to register, as deportation provided a free means of returning to China; they noted that the oldest registrant was 72 and the average age of 38 (*Helena Independent* 1894d:3). It appears that most Chinese in Montana and Utah complied with the Geary Act, with most of the district's shortfall coming from Idaho, where reports indicate 1,000 failed to register (*Helena Independent* 1894d:3; 1894e:3). Fort Benton reported thoroughly on the number of Chinese registrants, and noted that a local photographer did at least 21 of the portraits for the applicants (*Fort Benton River Press* 1894a:1; 1894b:1). At least some of the

Chinese residents of Fort Benton used the studio of an African-American photographer, J.P. Ball in Helena (Figure 4.12).

**Figure 4.12:** Chinese man from Fort Benton photographed in Helena, ca. 1890-1900. This is likely a photograph taken in fulfillment of the Geary Act's provisions. Courtesy Overholser Historical Research Center, Fort Benton, Montana.





During deliberations over the renewal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1891, Missoula's citizens initiated an anti-Chinese boycott (Morris 1997:117). Using Missoula's efforts as a template, by 1892 others were starting boycotts against Chinese establishment and workers in Montana after passage of the Geary Act, centered mostly in Butte and Anaconda and sponsored by labor unions (Morris 1997:118-120). The new boycotts of the 1890s brought interest from outside the state, as the *Salt Lake Herald* carried a supportive editorial on the efforts of labor unions in Montana (*Salt Lake Herald* 1893b:1). However, the attempted boycotts of 1891-1893 failed again miserably, due to the lack of consistent support (Flaherty 1987:36). Boycott of the Chinese affected other non-union businesses that benefited from their labor, providing fertile ground for dissension. In contrast to the relative failures of the mid-1880s anti-Chinese agitation, the late 1890s brought a new vigor to these efforts and fomented the most successful boycott in Montana history, the Butte Union Boycott of 1896-1897.

There is no need to discuss in detail the 1896-1897 Butte Union Boycott against the Chinese, as other pertinent sources (Wunder 1980; Flaherty 1987; Schneider 2004) provide sufficient discussion. Not to be thwarted again, boycott organizers in Butte began a systematic and organized attempt in 1896 to drum up financial and moral support for the proposed efforts. By early 1897, the Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly officially supported the new boycotting efforts, bringing substantial finances and power to bear on the Chinese, and now, Japanese laborers in Butte (Flaherty 1987:38). The new Butte Boycott effectively strong-armed local businesses that employed Chinese labor, as even a small break in business could destroy a small operation like a boarding house or restaurant (Flaherty 1987:40-41). Chinese merchants like Dr. Huie Pock and Hum Fay

immediately felt the effect of the boycott, with their business sharply declining in the first months of 1897 (Flaherty 1987:41). Some estimates suggest that at least 350 Chinese left Butte during the boycott due to their inability to locate work or sell their wares (Flaherty 1987:41).

Without the immediate support of the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco, Dr. Huie Pock, Hum Fay, Dear Yick, and Hum Tong filed a lawsuit against 20 Butte businessmen active in the boycott (Flaherty 1987:41). The lawsuit specifically outlined that the defendants unlawfully deprived the Chinese of their ability to operate businesses, and created a double-standard in the legal protection of their ventures. Chinese plaintiffs hired William Fisk Sanders as their attorney, while the defendants employed Josiah and Melvin Wines. Interestingly, the judge for the Butte Boycott case was Judge Hiram Knowles, who was no stranger to dealing with Chinese-related cases and who himself employed a Chinese domestic servant in his home. Judge Knowles placed an immediate injunction to stop the Butte Boycott until after the completion of the trial, which did not begin until 1898 (Flaherty 1987:45).

In 1900, the case ended and Judge Knowles issued his determination that the boycott was unlawful and ordered the defendants to pay the Chinese legal fees accrued over the course of the trial (*Deseret Evening News* 1900:4; Flaherty 1987:46). The Chinese did not sue to recover any damages from the boycott, as they felt that such an undertaking would fail and would not end the efforts of the labor unions. After receiving the judgment from Knowles, the Chinese plaintiffs appealed to the United States federal government for payment of damages accrued between 1896 and 1900. Even with the

support of the Chinese consulate in Washington, D.C., the Secretary of State refused their plea and no damages were ever awarded (Flaherty 1987:46).

The widespread boycotting efforts throughout the 1880s and 1890s even influenced the selection of a state capital. In 1892, the Knights of Labor refused to back the proposal of Helena to become state capital due to the presence of Chinese labor unless the City Council supported the immigration restriction. The Helena City Council thus passed resolutions supporting the renewal of the Chinese Exclusion Act as proposed in the Geary Act (*The Record-Union* 1892:1). Newby (1987), discusses how supporters for Helena's rival for state capital, Anaconda, seized upon the continued tolerance of Chinese in the city as a major black mark for voting. The anti-Chinese efforts of labor unions found little support in Helena, due to the lack of substantial industries and related workers. Even African-Americans used the Chinese population of Helena as one reason for supporting Anaconda as state capital (*Colored Citizen* 1894:1). It is worthy of note that the *Colored Citizen* was edited by J.P. Ball Jr., son of the African-American photographer who took portraits of Chinese during the Geary Act period. Regardless, Helena still won the bid for state capital in 1894.

Illegal immigration and human smuggling remained one of the largest problems associated with the continued exclusion of Chinese. As early as 1892, Montana Governor Toole requested federal monies to bolster the weak efforts to police the border with Canada (*Salt Lake Herald* 1892:1; 1893:1). By the early 1900s there were constant sweeps of northern Montana communities to discover the location of illegal Chinese immigrants. In 1904, immigration inspector Alfred Hampton located six illegal Chinese spread through Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Cutbank, and Assiniboine (*Deseret Evening*

*News* 1904:1). In 1930, a Whitefish man remembered smuggling alcohol and Chinese immigrants across the Montana/Canada border during the 1910s and 1920s (*Whitefish Pilot* 1930:3).

There were a number of Chinese deportations after 1900 in small communities like Fort Benton (*Fort Benton River Press* 1901a:1; 1901b:1; 1902:1; 1906:1), but most centered in the larger towns of Butte and Helena (*Helena Independent* 1933a:3). An attempted deportation of a Chinese man from Missoula facilitated a significant change in the way the United States applied deportation rules. A judge ordered the deportation of Foo Duck, the 23-year old son of a Chinese merchant in Missoula (*United States v. Food Duck* 1909). Foo Duck joined his father in Missoula in 1901, and during that time he studied English and worked as a cook and servant. A United States Commissioner in Missoula deemed that Foo Duck was eligible to be deported due to his failure to have documentation under the Geary Act, and that he worked in the laboring class, which was the focus of the Chinese Exclusion Act. In appeal to the District Court, the judge found that Foo Duck could remain in the United States as he immigrated to join his father, and only worked as a cook and waiter after reaching adulthood (*United States v. Food Duck* 1909:490-491).

During 1902 and 1914, legislators renewed the Chinese Exclusion Act in its various incarnations, though in 1924 the prohibition against immigration extended to 99 years requiring no further renewals (Pfaelzer 2007:335). Chinese populations diminished in many Montana communities as a result of the boycotts, with all Chinese residents leaving some towns like Anaconda (Morris 1997:123). Immigration law and the exclusion of new Chinese into the United States and Montana forever changed the

direction of this cultural group's future. It was clear that the heyday of Montana's Chinese community had passed, and that the future held little promise for their economic and social prosperity. The changing economic and legal landscape of Montana starting in the 1870s affected and coincided with the shift of Chinese labor from mining to a diverse array of service-based occupations.

## **CHAPTER 5: DIVERSIFICATION, COLLAPSE, AGING (1900-1943)**

### **5.1: Chinese History and Archaeology 1900-1943**

With the decline of Chinese population statewide beginning in the 1890s, the historical record of this cultural group increased. Better record-keeping, and the efforts of state and national forces to register and enumerate the Chinese population created a better overall image of them during this later period. Unfortunately, the Chinese were entering the twilight period of their time in Montana. While the Chinese did not disappear in 1943, their population dwindled to a few hundred, leaving minimal impacts to the Montana's history after the World War II period. Similar to patterns in Idaho (Fee 1993), Australia (McGowan 2005) and New Zealand (Ritchie 1986), the decline of Montana's Chinese population reduced the economic and social threat imagined by the host community. In the 1900s, Montanans many times viewed the Chinese as humorous, exotic, and for nearly all cases, benign. While the warming of relationships between the Chinese and the other Montanans was a welcome change, the interactions still focused on the immigrants as a quaint reminder of earlier times in the state. Archaeological studies of sites within this third period of Chinese heritage provide detailed information on their integration into 20<sup>th</sup> century Montana. In particular, the most significant projects on 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese sites occurred in the last few years with Mitzi Rossillon's (2008) work in downtown Butte, and Justin Moschelle's (2009) excavation at Big Timber. There are currently 15 confirmed archaeological sites associated with this period, and an additional three possibilities (Table 5.1). In addition, the Poacher Gulch Terraces, excavated in 2006 and 2007, date to this third period and reflect more of modern Montana's mythic images of the Chinese experience than any actual historical or archaeological fact.

**Table 5.1:** Chinese archaeological sites in Montana relating to the 1900-1943 period.

<b>Confirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
<i>Site #</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Owner</i>
24BE2186**	<i>Blue-Eyed Annie</i>	1895-1901	USFS
24BW0497	<i>Lombard</i>	1890-1910	BLM
24GN0009	<i>Chinese Graves</i>	1900-1920	USFS
24GN0377	<i>Sierra Mine Site</i>	1870s-1910s	BLM/Private
24GN0540	<i>Garnet</i>	1880s-1930s	BLM/Private
24LC1032	<i>Forestvale Cemetery</i>	1898-1954	Private
24LC1083	<i>Marysville</i>	1870s-1900s	Private
24MO0172	<i>Coloma</i>	1880s-1910s	BLM/Private
24MO0266	<i>Fort Missoula</i>	1877-present	County/USFS/Private
24PA1330*	<i>Huckleberry Camp</i>	1897-1900	USFS
24SA0599*	<i>Perma Bridge Railroad Camp</i>	1881-1883	Private(MT Rail Link)
24SB0212	<i>German Gulch</i>	1865-1900	USFS/Private
24SW0738	<i>Big Timber</i>	1882-1940	Private
24SB0765	<i>Butte</i>	1864-1940s	Private
24SB0067	<i>Highland City</i>	1865-1870s	USFS
<b>Disproved Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
24SA0122	<i>Poacher Gulch Terraces</i>	1900-1920	USFS
<b>Potential or Unconfirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites</b>			
24FH0446	<i>China Basin Cabin</i>	1920s-1930s	USFS
24SA0568	<i>White Pine</i>	1881-1910	Private
24SB0742	<i>China Gulch Pads</i>	1870s-1920s	USFS

\* = New Site Summer of 2008    \*\* = New Site 2008, No Chinese Artifacts

A rapidly declining and aging population and an aggregation of populations away from smaller settlements and into larger urban centers defined the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of Chinese experience in Montana. The collapse of placer mining in the late 1800s also promoted the diversification of Chinese businesses in the first decades of the 1900s, and summarized at length in this chapter. The direct impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act and subsequent laws was the cessation of immigration, including the women and children needed to create a stable and growing population. The 1880s and 1890s signaled a significant change in the ways Chinese experienced the Montana frontier. Before the 1880 Opium Act, the legal efforts to limit the freedom of Chinese immigrants in Montana proved generally unsuccessful. Changes to immigration law through the Exclusion Act

did successfully stem the flow of new Chinese workers to Montana and effectively halted any potential for significant growth in families. Finally, the illegal boycotts in Butte and other areas of Montana deeply affected the ways in which the Chinese conducted their businesses. This final period ends with the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 for strategic purposes. While there the American government instituted a quota system for Chinese settlers in 1943, the tide of immigration had turned, and many social historians agree that this repeal signaled the start of a new era in Chinese-American history (Li 2006). Yet, even this action failed to revitalize the Chinese population of Montana, and the numbers declined to their lowest level ever in 1950. The Chinese “Joss House” and temple in Butte was torn down in 1943, and the last Chinese laundry closed in the early 1950s (Ciabattari 1976:16).

## **5.2: Butte’s Chinatown Excavations**

Excavations at Butte’s Chinatown (Rossillon 2008) cross-cuts several aspects of Montana Chinese history and archaeology, and represents the most comprehensive investigation of any site in Montana. In 2007, staff and volunteers excavated several features on a vacant lot adjacent to the Mai Wah Museum in Butte’s historic downtown. The Butte excavations touched on significant themes in research, including household composition, occupation, socio-economic class, and even community maintenance and performance. This block of Butte’s Chinatown illustrates the diversity of Chinese employment during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with merchants, laborers, civic leaders, and all other walks of life represented. Archaeologists discovered several



features relating to the household middens of Chinese families, and the Chinese Baptist Mission.

Butte's Chinese Baptist Mission was founded in this location by 1900 and served as a central means of promoting integration of this population into the rest of the town's metropolitan masses. At first the Baptist Mission focused on providing education in English writing and language for the Chinese community's children (Rossillon 2008:15-16). As the population of Chinese declined in Butte, the Mission's charge shifted towards acculturation, developing activities and organizations such as the first Chinese Boy Scout Troup in the 1930s (Rossillon 2009:16).

The Butte Chinatown excavations recovered nearly 60,000 artifacts, though only 28,000 were retained due to redundant or insignificant information (Rossillon 2008:22). It is clear that the Butte Chinatown excavations recovered the largest variety of Chinese ceramics of any site in Montana, with 160 different vessels discovered (Rossillon 2008:83). Chinese ceramics include ginger jars, spouted jars, straight-sided jars, liquor jars, "Four Flowers" dishes and bowls, "Eight Immortals" pattern bowl, and even examples of Japanese ceramics. The most significant absence of Chinese ceramic types from the Butte Chinatown collection are thick-walled stoneware vessels used for transport of dry or pickled goods (Rossillon 2008:86). As noted in Chapter 3, German Gulch contained several examples of these thick-walled vessels and recent excavations at Coloma (24MO0172) recovered some examples. The presence or absence of these thick-walled vessels might be an important indicator of Chinese merchant activity, or perhaps a temporal marker and warrants further investigation.

As noted by Rossillon (2008:71-72), there are differing levels of affluence associated with the trash middens in the Butte Chinatown block. The higher incidence of imported fruits, as evidenced by seed remains, and higher-priced Asian ceramics does support a socio-economic variation in households especially for the largest trash midden excavated in 2007. Rossillon focuses on the presence of expensive and unique or imported artifacts as signals of socio-economic status, though this perhaps masks some patterns within the assemblage. A more nuanced approach to the archaeological remains at Butte might uncover more appropriate gauges of affluence, as Van der Veen (2003) illustrates that quantity, as well as quality, of a good can demonstrate social and economic hierarchies.

Rossillon (2008:94) aptly compares the rural Chinese assemblages of sites excavated in German and Cave Gulches, and notes that there is a high degree of artifact diversity in the urban compared with rural contexts. This same pattern is also demonstrated in the study of Chinese assemblages in Arizona (Bockhorst 2003). However, market availability deeply affected the types and varieties of materials available to the Chinese—or anyone—living in urban settings. Rossillon's (2008:94) conclusion that the presence of a higher variety of goods at Butte compared with German Gulch reflects higher affluence does not account for site-specific formation processes, and places interpretive emphasis on equal market availability at both locales. In addition, there are some analytical problems as the German and Cave Gulch assemblages date to the 1870s-1890s, while most of the recovered materials in Butte relate to the 1910s or later.

Perhaps one of the most significant findings, and unique for Montana, was the location of a variety of domestic artifacts that suggest the presence of Chinese children in the area. As reported in the 1900-1930 federal censuses, Butte had the highest number of Chinese families in Montana, including the presence of children under the age of 10. Excavations recovered over 80 porcelain doll fragments, marbles, and even a small cup from a child's tea set. While excavations at Marysville tentatively suggested the presence of Chinese children (Hall et al. 2006), the Butte excavations firmly located evidence of this sometimes-hidden demographic. The work at Butte's Chinatown folds into a larger effort in historical archaeology towards the study of children and childhood (e.g. Baxter 2005), and information on Chinese youth seems highly significant to the discipline.

Due to the constraints to analysis and study found in a contracted mitigation project, the collections recovered during the Butte Chinatown excavations have research potential and could result in several theses or dissertations. However, the current understanding of the assemblage provides concrete data on urban Chinese populations in Montana, while also providing a glimpse at American organizations dedicated to acculturation, as shown by the remains of the Chinese Baptist Mission. In addition, the Butte Chinatown excavations located the first firm evidence for the presence of Chinese children, and some information on the socio-economic differentiation of Chinese households.

### **5.3: Diversification of the Workforce**

Chinese mining declined during throughout the 1880s and 1890s, due to changes in the availability of placer gold, restrictive legislation, and other societal factors. Most Chinese mining operations could not compete with the heavily capitalized ventures of

their Euro-American counterparts, and the restrictive Hard Rock Mining Law forbade them from undertaking any lode ventures. Thus, the few remaining Chinese placer miners were a rare sight in Montana during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their operations were usually small-scale and intermittent, worked by only a few individuals. University of Montana archaeologists discovered one such operation (24PA1330) in 2008 on the Gallatin National Forest (Merritt 2010). In 1897, Wong Chong, President of the Quong Chong Mining Company, purchased a claim along Emigrant Creek approximately 11 miles upstream from Chico Hot Springs. This camp was significantly isolated from other Chinese communities; the closest substantial population living in Livingston, 40 miles away. At the site archaeologists discovered a few Chinese artifacts, but non-Chinese materials dominated the assemblage. This does not suggest that the Chinese of Emigrant Creek were more assimilated; instead it is likely due to the fact that they lacked access to their traditional goods due to their isolation.

By the 1900 census the Chinese population of Montana felt the effects of restrictive immigration legislation, and the population declined from a high of 2,532 in 1890 to 1,721. Similar to the past three decades, the Chinese population of Montana still clustered in the large mining districts of Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, and Lewis & Clark counties. However, employment as miners accounted for only 7.3% of the workforce, down from the 59.6% in 1880. Other industries superseded the mining sector, as the number of Chinese employed in the laundry, gardening, and domestic servant/cook areas rose sharply in 1900 (Table 5.2). The number of Chinese women listed as prostitutes also dropped considerably by 1900, with more now recorded as wives or home-makers (Table 5.3). In addition, the legislation restricted the number of Chinese women in Montana,

declining from 78 in 1880 to only 36 by 1900, representing 4% and 2% of the total Chinese population, respectively. The male to female ratio increased throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with 14.23 in 1870, 20.51 in 1880, and an incredible 40.3 by 1900.

As evidenced by the expansion of occupations of Chinese recorded from the 1870 to 1900 censuses, there was a diversification of employment in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as seen elsewhere in the West (Lee 2005:5). While there were Chinese laundries, restaurants, cooks, and gardeners in the earliest days of territorial Montana, the proportion was relatively small in relation to placer mining. However, as Montana's mineral economy quickly transitioned away from placer mining districts to large-scale hardrock operations, there were perhaps even more job opportunities in these areas for the Chinese. These largely-male isolated hardrock mining camps required the services afforded by Chinese labor including laundrywork, cooking, and gardening. Even with the restrictive laundry taxes levied on Chinese operations, they flourished and were ubiquitous across Montana (Jung 2008:79-80).

Chinese restaurants were also common across the Montana frontier, and sometimes dominated the local dining choices of communities, as seen in Big Timber in the 1880s-1890s (Moschelle 2009:19). While laundries and restaurants were the most common Chinese business opportunity, smaller numbers engaged in gardening, medical care, tailoring, servant/cooks for private homes and businesses, and even stock raising. Chinese-owned general good stores were discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to German Gulch and Deer Lodge, and do not require reiteration in this section.

**Table 5.2:** Montana Employment Categories of Chinese Men, 1900 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Laundry	410
Cook	339
Gardener or Farmer	208
Day or General Laborer	182
Mining	126
Merchant or Store Keeper	110
Restaurant	80
RR Laborer	63
Servant	49
Restaurant Waiter	17
Unknown	13
Patient	12
Tailor	11
Doctor	9
Dishwasher	8
Barber	5
Salesman	5
At Home	3
At School	3
Janitor	3
Store Clerk	3
Shoe Maker	2
Prisoner	2
Hotel Keeper	2
Landlord	2
Herder or Rancher	2
Hauling Goods	2
Baker	1
Gambler	1
Housekeeper	1
Wood Chopper	1
Restaurant Bookkeeper	1
Scavenger	1
Capitalist	1
Interpreter	1
Ice Cream Peddler	1
Woolen Mills Laborer	1
Teamster	1
Lodging House Operator	1
Real Estate	1

**Table 5.3:** Montana Employment Categories of Chinese Women, 1900 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Wife/Daughter	14
Unknown	8
Prostitute/Sporting Women	7
Laundry	3
Keeping House	1
Restaurant	1
At Private School	1
Servant	1

Rose Hum Lee (1949:51) developed a model of Chinese employment succession in Butte during the late 1800s and early 1900s, based these changes on four factors: technological changes, discriminatory legislation and boycott actions, demographic changes, and finally intra-Chinese business competition. Lee (1949:50) notes that the Chinese in Butte, Montana formed an occupational structure that complemented that of the larger non-Chinese society by undertaking roles and tasks required but not fulfilled by others. Throughout the 1870s and early 1910s the non-mining business niches filled by Chinese laborers and entrepreneurs were profitable and opportunity abounded.

In her survey of Butte, Montana from 1890-1940, Lee (1949:51-55) created three Chinese business models that are relevant even in modern discussions of Chinese employment in Montana. The first type of business model was Chinese goods and services catering to an American clientele, which includes laundries, tailor shops, curio dealers, noodle parlors, and herb doctors (Lee 1949:51-52). A second type of Chinese business in Butte sold American goods primarily to Euro-Americans but had Chinese service workers, and these included restaurants, farms, and rooming/boarding houses (Lee 1949:54). The final type of Chinese business in Butte was owned and operated by the Chinese for a Chinese clientele and included traditional merchandise stores and

restaurants (Lee 1949:55). These categories are relevant in today's study of the Chinese in Montana and beyond, though James et al's. (1994) study of Chinese laundries in Virginia City suggests that this type of business should be placed in both the first and third of Lee's categories.

### *5.3.1 Chinese Laundries in Montana*

A visitor to Montana Territory in the late 1880s through the first decade of the 1900s would have been hard-pressed to find a settlement of any notable size that did not have at least one Chinese laundry or restaurant. By the 1870 Federal Census, there were Chinese laundries in many Montana communities, including at least one in Fort Benton (Robison 2009b). In 1880 there were 174 Chinese engaged in Montana's laundry business, with that number nearly tripling by 1900 to 410. Figure 5.1 illustrates the sheer number of Chinese laundries in operation in Butte, with 4 recorded in 1890, 18 in 1895 and rising to over 30 for the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In comparison, a perusal of Helena's 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map located 17 Chinese laundries, but dropped to only a handful by the early 1900s. Lee (1949:53) states that laundry businesses were one of the simplest way a Chinese individual could shift from a working class laborer to an entrepreneur, as it required little capital or excess labor and sustained a steady profit.

In some cases, local non-Chinese residents objected to the presence of Chinese laundries over perceived health issues. For instance, in Fort Benton the construction of a new Chinese laundry elicited an editorial claiming that Chinese had created a health hazard by digging a cesspool for laundry and excrement run-off (*Fort Benton River Press* 1883:2). In contrast, some Chinese laundries left a positive and indelible mark in the



**Figure 5.1:** Table of Chinese businesses in Butte, 1890-1945. From Lee (1949:53).

CHINESE BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN BUTTE, MONTANA, FROM 1890 TO 1945

YEAR	CHINESE GOODS AND SERVICES AMERICAN CLIENTELE					AMERICAN GOODS, CHINESE SERVICES, AMERICAN CLIENTELE			CHINESE GOODS AND SERVICES CHINESE CLIENTELE		TOTAL
	Curio Shops	Noodle Parlors	Tailor- Shops	Laun- dries	Herb Doctors	Cafes, Restau- rants	Truck Farms, Truck Vendors	Room- ing- Houses	Merchan- dise Stores	Restau- rants	
1890.....			1	4	1	1			4	2	13†
1895.....	3	1	3	18	3	2	2		5	3	40
1900.....	3	3	5	31	3	4	8		8	2	67
1905.....	3	7	8	31	5	4	2		7	2	69
1910.....	3	7	11	20	7	3	4	3	7	1	66
1915.....	1	6	7	21	6	3	5	4	7	1	60
1920.....	2	4	5	20	7	3	3	4	7	0	55
1925.....	2	4	2	11	7	3	2	5	6		42
1930.....	2	4	1	9	7	3	3	5	6		40
1935.....	1	4	1	8	4	3	2	5	5		32
1940.....	1	4		6	4	3		3	3		23
1945.....	1	3		3	2	3		2	1		14

\* Sources: *City Directory, Butte, Montana (1890-1942)*; *Silver Bow County Tax List (1889-1945)*.

† Data incomplete.

memory of some Montanans, including the story of Quong Lung Kee of Dillon. Children of the locally-prominent Orr family in Dillon remember receiving presents wrapped in their clean laundry when Quong Lee Kee returned it to the ranch. The standard and near-daily gifts included nuts, lily bulbs, incense, and firecrackers, with silver dollars and embroidered Chinese silk on holidays (BCHBA 1990[2]:153).

According to James et al. (1994:168) there were two basic business models for the Chinese laundries of Virginia City, Nevada, and these also apply to Montana. Elderly Chinese men catering only to the Chinese community operated the first type of laundry business. In contrast, the second economic model was younger Chinese men who catered to the entire local community, regardless of ethnic affiliation. James et al. (1994:168) note that the elderly Chinese men merely operated a laundry as a means of housing and security, while the younger males sought to have a broad clientele and accumulate substantial wealth. Thus, the first type of laundry was focused on a type of subsistence

economy, while the latter employed wage-earning labor and sought profit for material and social gain. As seen by the laundry tax and boycotts discussed earlier, it appears that the second type of Chinese laundry came under direct attack by the Montana community.

James et al. (1994:169) note that laundries catering to the Chinese community generally located in or adjacent to the Chinese part of town, while the second type was operated closer to non-Chinese domestic populations or boarding houses and hotels. This physical patterning is illustrated in Missoula, Montana where there were several laundries in the Chinese district of that community, with one established on the far end of downtown and surrounded by exclusively non-Chinese populations and businesses. In addition, the Chinese laundry apparently made use of the water canal (or race) of the Missoula Mills which flowed directly behind the structure. The laundry operating in this location of Missoula began in the late 1880s and was sold by 1900 to Euro-American entrepreneurs. Coupled with the loss of the 1890 census, it is impossible to determine the age of the laundry operators for this location, though they likely fit James et. al's (1994:168-169) model. According to the 1900 census, all 12 Chinese laundry employees and operators in Missoula fell below the age of 55, even those within the Chinese district on West Front Street.

There are numerous examples of historically-known Chinese laundries in dozens of Montana communities from the 1860s through the mid-1900s. Only three, however, have been the subject of systematic archaeological excavation—one at Big Timber and two in Marysville. The excavated Marysville Chinese laundries were constructed side-by-side near the main road into town and operated in the mid 1880s through the early 1900s. Big Timber's Chinese laundry was constructed sometime after completion of the

NPRR, and was not abandoned until the 1940s. Interestingly, the Big Timber Chinese establishment switched periodically between a laundry and restaurant during those six decades.

In 2005 and 2006, Western Cultural Inc. excavated several dozen units at the site of two Chinese laundries in Marysville, Montana, located approximately 25 miles northwest of Helena. Due to the scope of the mitigation work, excavations focused on the front of the two laundries, with no investigations of the backyard areas, which influenced the final interpretations. Thomas Cruse discovered the gold and silver lodes at Marysville in the 1870s, though the town did not boom until the early 1880s (Hall et al. 2006:22). Sometime during this period Chinese entrepreneurs moved into the town and established two laundries on the eastern outskirts of town, and even operated a garden on the north end that supplied fruit and vegetables to the miners (Hall et al. 2006:41-42). While the Chinese population of Marysville never reached appreciably significant numbers, they did provide badly needed services to the town's inhabitants.

Time constraints, coupled with limited funding, lead the conclusions of the Marysville excavation report (Hall et al. 2006) into a common pattern of discussing acculturation as evidenced by the domination of Euro-American ceramics and food choices. The persistence of this theoretical orientation in Historical Archaeology, particularly on research of the Overseas Chinese continues to limit the applicability and relevancy of these studies (see Voss 2005). Archaeological work at the site of the two laundries uncovered thousands of artifacts relating to the Chinese occupation of this area. In addition, due to the limitations of excavating only on the front parts of the laundry property, much of the potential domestic refuse from these occupations remain at the site

and may have affected the apparent foodways. Hall et al. (2006) note that the most likely location for the majority of domestic refuse would be behind the structures, in the unexcavated areas outside the scope of work. The crews located a handful of faunal remains that indicate pig and cow consumption.

Hall et al. (2006:156) notes that there is some evidence that supports James et al.'s (1994:168) model for laundry types at Marysville. For example, artifact distributions indicated more leisure and ethnic artifacts clustering around one of the two laundries, suggesting that the laundry catered to a Chinese population while the other served the non-Chinese residents (Hall et al. 2006:156). The leisure activities noted by Hall et al. (2006:156-157) include gambling in the form of poker chips, traditional game playing with glass "Go" pieces, and the smoking of opium.

There were several unique discoveries at the Marysville's Chinese laundries that defy easy interpretation. First, crews discovered four wood-backed lead letter presses with figural images that could have been used in newspaper or flyer printing. According to Hall et al. (2006:150), the two most likely explanations for these artifacts were the printing of handbills or flyers for advertising the services of the Chinese laundries or similar media used to announce the visit of a Chinese dignitary which did occur in the early 1900s. The second unusual artifact discovered at Marysville is a pewter pheasant figurine that closely matches another example found at the German Gulch site near Butte (Hall et al. 2006:169). Research into the significance of the pheasant in traditional Chinese culture provides little explanation for its association with these two sites, though Hall et al. (2006:169) suggest it might represent a symbol of office or authority. The final unusual discovery at the Marysville laundry was a nearly complete, articulated

skeleton of a cat on the broken half of an earthenware plate. The skeletal remains of the cat show no butchering marks, suggesting it was not consumed but perhaps buried or ritually offered and was located outside the building (Hall et al. 2006:66-67). A cat's articulated paw was also found at Big Timber's excavations in 2008 (Moschelle 2009).

The Big Timber Chinese laundry (24SW0738) excavation, occurring between 2007 and 2008, resulted in a professional paper for a Master's degree by Moschelle (2009) of the University of Montana. Big Timber formed in the early 1880s as a stop on the newly finished NPRR, and quickly grew into one of the leading wool-producing hubs in the United States (Moschelle 2009:15). By 1900 the Chinese population of Big Timber reached 17, with most residents engaging in cooking or laundry work. Because the same Chinese-owned structure switched periodically from laundry to restaurant from the 1880s through 1940s, Moschelle's (2009) work serves as a reminder of Chinese practices in Montana. In turn, such dynamic business changes should be considered in urban archaeological contexts.

During a three-week archaeological field school operated by the University of Montana, students and staff excavated a dozen units in and around the Chinese building foundation. It appears that only the northern and western foundation of the laundry/restaurant remained intact after nearly six decades of urban development since the abandonment of the area. In 1908, a fire starting from the NPRR line destroyed a large tract of Big Timber, which included this Chinese establishment (Moschelle 2009:36). Excavators located a series of intact and scorched floorboards at the bottom of a burn layer, and capped numerous significant and intact artifacts underneath.

After cataloging the 35,000 artifacts recovered from the Chinese laundry/restaurant at Big Timber, it appears that most of the assemblage relates to the use of the building as a restaurant, though there are several laundry indicators. The discussion of the site's restaurant-related materials is in the next section. There was also a cluster of opium-related artifacts located on the northeast portion of the building, in association with a small frame addition to the building. It appears that this small outbuilding was used partly as an opium-smoking establishment by the Big Timber Chinese (and perhaps non-Chinese) population. Opium-related artifacts discovered in this area of Big Timber include orange and burnished opium pipe bowls, opium cans, and possibly the remains of an opium lamp shade and wick support/base (see Wylie and Fike 1993:289). One opium can in particular had a Chinese character-embossed cartouche that translated as "Source of Beauty," and represents one of the most popular brands of opium during this period (Wylie and Fike 1993:287).

Laundry artifacts discovered at the site indicate the type of technology employed and the accoutrements of the business. Unlike the excavations at Marysville, crews at Big Timber recovered two nearly complete bluing balls and a severely deteriorated example from areas to the north and west of the laundry. There were also several bottle fragments with a blue discoloration indicating that they once held bluing balls for use in the laundry. Bluing balls (including powder and liquid forms) were used in domestic and commercial laundry operations throughout the 1800s and mid-1900s to make white fabrics appear whiter and thus cleaner (Sheppard 1909:50-51).

The only other laundry-related artifacts at the Big Timber excavation were several iron stove fragments, two of which relate specifically to a type of laundry stove that was

used to heat flat irons (see Figure 5.2). According to Sheppard (1909:72) these types of stoves work best in a situation where the laundry operator does not need the heat for another purpose, thus suggesting that the Chinese likely had at least two work stations within the building, one for ironing and the other for heating water for washing. These types of stove parts are linked directly to a commercial or subsistence laundry business, and were relatively cheap compared to cooking stoves as shown in the Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog from 1897 (Sears, Roebuck & Co. 1897:138).

By the late 1930s, Chinese laundries were an endangered business operation in Montana, though a few struggled through the 1940s. Boycotts and taxes since the mid-1860s failed to destroy the Chinese laundry economic sphere, but in the mid-1900s a shift to steam laundries and home appliances signaled the end to one of Montana's most salient Chinese businesses. By the 1930 census only 74 Chinese worked in the laundry industry, a decline from 430 recorded in 1900.

**Figure 5.2:** Fragments from a “Laundry” or “Iron” Stove recovered during excavations at Big Timber were like those found on this laundry stove. Photo by author 2009.



### *5.3.2 Chinese Restaurants*

The growth and operation of Chinese restaurants in Montana follow a similar pattern to that of laundries. Chinese-owned restaurants spread throughout Montana following the major booms of the mid-1860s, though they became far more prevalent during the latter parts of the 1880s and into the early 1910s. These restaurants fell into three basic categories determined by the types of food served, following the basic outline of Lee (1949:51-55). The first type of Chinese restaurant served traditional food and catered specifically to the Chinese community. A second type of restaurant served American and Americanized-Chinese food to a broader clientele with the target consumer as non-Chinese. The third type served a broad variety of food that catered to both consumer groups; most modern Chinese restaurants in the United States fall into this type of category. In some communities, as in Big Timber (Moschelle 2009:15), the Chinese dominated the restaurant industry.

In 1870, there was only one Chinese recorded as owning or operating a restaurant in Montana, increasing to six according to the 1880 census. While these numbers likely underestimated the number of Chinese owning restaurants, it is an indication of the focus on mining and laundry operations during the first two decades of Montana Territory. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, census records document several hundred Chinese cooks, with many finding employment in non-Chinese establishments and private homes as well as restaurants owned by fellow Chinese residents. By 1900, the number of Chinese owning or working in restaurants increased to 80. The Butte boycott of the 1890s attempted to bankrupt Chinese businesses like laundries and restaurants, but also included any business that employed Chinese laborers, such as American-owned cafes.



According to Moses and Whitmore (1987:253), the Chinese in the United States exhibited a “cultural and ethnic cohesion to the point of ethnocentricity among even the lowest citizens of the ‘Middle Kingdom’”, and, “was not unlike behavior of first generation ethnic immigrants in the United States today.” Many Chinese in the United States used traditional foodways as a means to reinforce their identity and to regulate their activities with non-Chinese practices (Moses and Whitmore 1987:254). In this way, preparation and consumption of food helped to strengthen social and cultural bonds between different classes of the Chinese immigrant population (Moses and Whitmore 1987:258). Other scholars note important trends in Chinese Overseas foodways, including the propensity for pork over beef (Diehl and Thiel 1998:32), and the use of traditional butchering techniques (Longenecker and Stapp 1993:118), though not in all cases (Gust 1993:208). The most important conclusion of Diehl and Thiel’s (1998:31-32) study was a determination that the Chinese gardener population of Tucson adapted to local conditions and prepared non-traditional foods in traditional ways.

There is little historical information on the interior workings of Chinese-owned restaurants in Montana, although archaeological work at Big Timber filled in some major gaps. As noted earlier, the Chinese business excavated at Big Timber by the University of Montana in 2007 and 2008 switched periodically between a restaurant and laundry over the course of five decades. The artifact distribution at the site does seem to suggest that the building served as a restaurant for a longer period than a laundry, though the variable depositional processes of those businesses might skew the results. Of the 35,000 artifacts recovered from the site, crews recorded 2,569 faunal remains with a remarkable diversity. Faunal remains indicate that the Chinese were exploiting a wide variety of

domestic and wild game for their restaurant and personal consumption. Represented animal species include cow, pig, goat/sheep, cat, rat, turtle, chicken, and grouse. Notably, crews failed to recover even a single fragment of fish remains, suggesting that the Chinese did not serve or consume this type of food even with their close proximity to the Yellowstone River.

A unique discovery at Big Timber was the recovery of 385 fragments of turtle shell (plastron and carapace) that likely relates to a locally procured species of painted or box turtle (Figure 5.3). Turtle was a common dish in traditional Chinese cuisine in both the homeland and diasporic communities, and was usually boiled into a soup. Benn (2002:128) states that turtle soup was a gourmet dish in traditional Chinese society, and might have reflected a higher-priced dish at the Big Timber establishment. Turtle might have been an exotic addition to the menu of the Chinese restaurant in Big Timber, or eaten solely by the proprietors and employees.

**Figure 5.3** Turtle plastron and carapace fragments recovered at Big Timber, Montana. Photo by author, and scale in centimeters.



Other archaeological materials at the Chinese building at Big Timber suggest that the proprietors catered to a broad clientele. Excavators located a broad variety of condiment-related materials, including a complete 1883 Heinz Ketchup bottle, Lea & Perrins' sauce stoppers, and possible mustard and pickle vessels. In addition, there were a significant number of alcohol bottles, including domestic and imported whiskey, beer, champagne, wine, and several Gordon's Dry Gin bottles imported from England. In keeping with Lee's (1949) model of Chinese businesses at Butte, it appears that the Chinese restaurant in Big Timber catered to a diverse population but likely served mostly American or Americanized-Chinese food to the local non-Chinese population.

Unlike their laundries, the Chinese restaurants never completely left the Montana landscape though their number dipped considerably statewide since 1900. Today, most Chinese restaurants in Montana focus their appeal to the dominant non-Chinese host community. In most cases Montana Chinese restaurants serve Americanized-Chinese food, though there are a few (e.g. Butte, Bozeman, Livingston, and Missoula) provide authentic Cantonese cuisine.

### *5.3.3 Chinese Gardens*

Many Chinese immigrants who left China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century came from an agricultural background, and these skills found use in isolated mining communities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States (Valentine 2002:44; Dirlick and Yeung 2003:81, 126). On the Montana mining frontier, fresh produce was a welcome rarity to the isolated camps. During the initial gold strikes of the mid-1860s, there was only a handful of farms in Montana Territory, with Major Owen in the Bitterroot Valley doing a brisk business freighting produce to the boomtowns. Even as Montana's

population increased and farms sprang up, there was always a produce deficiency, and the Chinese capitalized on this short coming. Best stated by Zhu (1997:114), “a well-cultivated garden often produced more gold than a mediocre placer field.” Chinese Overseas scholars have only touched briefly on the history and archaeology of Chinese market or truck gardens around the world (eg. Stanin 2004; McGowan 2005). In Australia, McGowan (2005) surveyed a series of Chinese gardens in New South Wales, and noted they played an important role in the economic development of Australia throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s. In contrast to Lee’s (1949:50) determination that these gardens focused on American clientele, it is more likely that they provided produce to the entire community. In New Zealand Chinese merchants owned the larger gardens in order to supply goods to their stores that serviced a broad consumer base (Ritchie 1986:640); this pattern likely existed in Montana, though there is little historical documentation.

Fee (1991; 1993) studied a series of terraced Chinese gardens along the Snake River in Idaho, and found that they produced a wide variety of crops. Both the McGowan and Fee’s garden studies noted how the Chinese were able to produce substantial crops in an arid environment, which is likely a testament to centuries of water conservation in agricultural China. In Australia the Chinese market gardens collapsed in the post-World War II period (Williams 1999:26), while the abandonment of this lifestyle occurred in Montana largely during the 1910s-1920s. As noted by Ritchie (1986:640), it was far more likely for Chinese in the Australian goldfields to maintain gardens than their non-Chinese counterparts, especially in the earliest days of mineral exploitation.

The 1870 Montana census lists no Chinese gardeners, though by 1880 there were 20 employed throughout the state clustering in Butte, Helena, Virginia City, Ophir Gulch, and the Prickly Pear Valley. By 1900, with the relative collapse of the placer mining opportunities for the Chinese, the number of gardeners increased substantially to 208 and was the third-largest employment category behind laundry work and cooking. Helena had the largest share of Chinese gardeners in the state in 1900, though Butte had numerous operations south and west of the city. Other communities had Chinese gardening including Missoula, Dillon, Kalispell, Billings, Fort Benton, Boulder, Anaconda, and Bozeman.

Chinese gardens were an important part of Montana's 19<sup>th</sup> century communities, as the predominantly male populace did not engage often in subsistence agriculture and gardening. In the first few decades of Montana's settlement history, Chinese gardeners cornered the market on fresh produce, creating a steady livelihood throughout the spring and summer months. In Fort Benton, Chinese gardeners harvested the first crops of the season in 1883 and sold onions, spinach, and celery at a high price (*Benton Record* 1883:2). Quong Lee, a Deer Lodge merchant, operated a small garden, and a reporter for the *New Northwest* acquired a number of cucumbers from him in 1881 (*New Northwest* 1881b:3). By 1885 there were apparently a few dedicated Chinese gardeners around Deer Lodge who brought radishes, lettuce, and asparagus to town for above-market price due to limited supplies (*New Northwest* 1885a:3). Dillon had a series of large Chinese gardens on the north end of town (BCHA 1990:974) that operated between 1880 and the 1920s (BCHA 1990:9). Whiskey Jim, a Chinese gardener and former miner, lived in

Dillon until his death in the 1930s and sold produce to “housewives, grocers, restaurants and chop houses” (BCHA 1990:10).

Helena’s downtown, near the mouth of Last Chance Gulch, had several large Chinese gardens beginning in the late 1860s through late 1890s. By 1882 there was a shift in the type of businesses operated in Last Chance Gulch, with one acre previously known as “Chinese Gardens” sold to non-Chinese business men for nearly \$20,000 (*Helena Independent* 1882h:3). Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1888 show several Chinese gardens along West Main, Cutler, and Water streets, but by 1930 there were none illustrated. According to the 1930 census, some of the Helena Chinese gardens moved to the north end of town, where space was more plentiful. However, even these gardens failed to survive the 1930s and yet another Chinese business venture disappeared from the Helena landscape.

Missoula had two areas of Chinese gardens during the early part of the 1900s. The eastern Chinese gardens clustered around the opening to Hellgate Canyon, between the Clark Fork River and Mount Jumbo (*Anaconda Standard* 1900c:10; 1900d:12). There was a second, and seemingly larger, cluster of Chinese gardens west of the downtown at the same time, apparently located west of modern-day Russell Street (*Anaconda Standard* 1901a:12). A series of violent robberies occurred at Missoula’s western gardens in 1901, with several thousand dollars stolen from the Chinese gardeners and several non-Chinese arrested for the crime (*Anaconda Standard* 1901b:12; 1901c:10; 1901d:12).

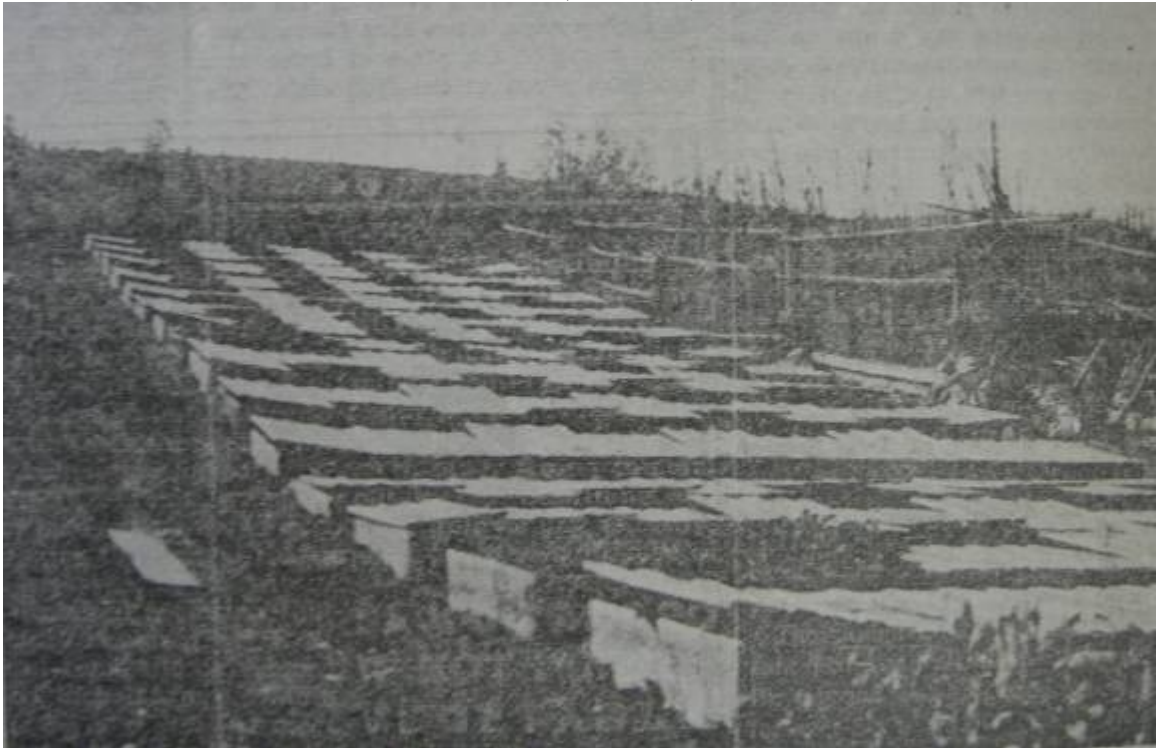
Overall, the Chinese gardeners of Montana received little formal attention from historians until recently and most of the original plots have been destroyed by urban

development. Urban renewal and redevelopment destroyed the remaining segments of Helena's downtown gardens in the 1900s, while housing subdivisions now cover the rural plots north of downtown. The only remaining areas of potential intact Chinese gardens are at Glendale, Ophir Gulch, and Marysville. Hall et al. (2006:42) notes that locals suggest that there are Chinese gardens on the northwestern part of Marysville, and surveyors located, but did not excavate, what appears to be a raised garden bed at the rear of the laundries in that community. Local history in Plains, Montana suggested that Chinese gardeners constructed rock terraces in Poacher Gulch (24SA0122) during the 1880s and 1890s, though archaeological investigations shed serious doubt on those claims (Merritt 2006; 2009b).

The best specific historical information on Chinese gardens and gardening techniques comes from a 1906 *Anaconda Standard* story on Butte's Chinatown which was included in full text in a recent book (Dean 2009). During the early years of Butte's Chinese garden industry, their plots centered on the flat below downtown and near the railroad tracks. Due to shifting property values, the Chinese moved their operations to the confluence of Basin and Ninemile Creeks to the southeast of downtown (Dean 2009:351). Workers at these gardens averaged about eight per operation, though one owner of a 15 acre plot, Ye Dee, states that finding enough employees was difficult and he only had seven (Dean 2009:349). A 10-acre garden generally produced about \$8,000 in crops per year, with \$500 of that going toward rent and several thousand dollars going to pay for labor (Dean 2009:347, 350). Due to Butte's high altitude, the gardening season lasts a total of five months, though three are spent in preparation and two represent the actual growing season (Dean 2009:350). Ye Dee produced a variety of market-crops,

including turnips, carrots, beets, onion, lettuce, peas, corn, and only a small batch of potatoes, in open fields and in rows of covered hot-houses (Dean 2009:347-348, 351; Figure 5.4). The covered hot-houses are apparently an adaptation to the unpredictable and short-growing season of Montana, as Chinese market gardens in Australia did not employ this type of technique (Stanin 2004). Unlike Idaho (Zhu 1997:113), it appears that the Butte Chinese did not grow a substantial amount of Chinese cabbage.

**Figure 5.4:** Rows of covered garden beds at Ye Dee's operation along the Ninemile area south of Butte, Montana. Photo from Dean (2009:348) and *Anaconda Standard*, 1906.



By 1930, the number of Chinese gardeners dropped to 31, and these were mostly located in Butte and Helena. Low-scale Chinese gardeners were simply incapable of keeping up with the mechanized farm and the low-cost importation of produce from other areas of Montana and North America. In addition, the arrival and succession of Korean and other ethnic groups into the Butte gardening business also forced the Chinese out of operation (Lee 1949:58).



#### *5.3.4 Chinese Cooks/Servants*

Domestic labor served as another avenue for Chinese to find gainful employment throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Montana. Cooks and servant positions were by far the second-largest pools of Chinese labor after 1900 but accounted for third place in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1870 there were 37 cooks and 19 servants, but these numbers increased significantly to 238 and 26, respectively, in 1880. By 1900, employment as cooks accounted for 20% of the entire Chinese workforce at 338, with servants-positions rising to 50. Cooks became the largest occupation category for Chinese in Montana by 1930 at 86, again accounting for 20% of all employment. However, the census recorded only one servant in 1930 which might be an indicator of the changing terminology for domestic labor, and also the impact of the economic downturn and repercussions of the earlier boycotts. Cooks discussed here are wage-laborers and include those occupying positions in hotels, railroad camps, sawmills, hard rock mine camps, and both Chinese and non-Chinese restaurants. This does not include Chinese individuals that owned or operated restaurants, as they would be listed in the census as a proprietor or owner.

Chinese cooks and servants worked in a much broader geographic swath of Montana than any other occupational groups. Throughout the last four decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese cooks and servants spread throughout the vast eastern prairie, sometimes representing the only Chinese person within a several hundred mile radius. In many of the rural farming and ranching communities, a Chinese cook was a common sight and actually was a sought after commodity to decrease the workload for the women family members (Figure 5.5). The large Orr family of Dillon employed several Chinese

**Figure 5.5:** Euro-American homesteading family and Chinese cook in Norwood, Montana. Photo courtesy of Jacoby Lowney.



cooks from the 1880s through 1920s who became a part of the family (BCHBA 1990[1]:153).

Chinese cooks and servants worked in many of Montana's military posts, either working for individual soldiers or providing services to the entire garrison. In 1880, Fort Shaw had five Chinese servants employed by officers, including Colonel Brooke, Sergeant Greenleaf, and Lieutenants Hennay, Jones, and Hale. That same year, there were three Chinese men, two laundry workers, and a cook, employed at Fort Logan, four laundrymen at Fort Keogh in Custer County, and three servants at Fort Missoula. Archaeological excavations at Fort Missoula (24MO0266) discovered several examples of Chinese celadon, though supervisors never completed a final report detailing the discoveries (Jackson Mueller, 2010, pers. comm.). A list of interments at the Fort Shaw Post Cemetery in 1881 notes the burial of Joe Chinaman, a servant to Captain Morely, 3<sup>rd</sup> infantry (United States Army 1881:251). Additional research discovered that Jo

Chinaman, was likely Joe Wanman, a Chinese servant in the officer's quarters who committed suicide in 1881 by pistol (*Helena Independent* 1881g:3). Lee Yee, a Chinese servant, died at Fort Custer in 1891 and was interred at the Post Cemetery (1891:137). The number of Chinese on Montana's military posts declined precipitously in the first decade of the 1900s, with Jim Lee, a laundryman in Fort Harrison, recorded as the only example in 1900.

Some former Chinese cooks and servants rose to prominence in Montana, including Billy Kee of Lombard. According to some accounts, Billy Kee was the servant and cook for United States Senator Thomas Carter and family in the 1870s and 1890s. When the NPRR sponsored the construction of a spur to run from the main line northwards to Lewistown and other central locations of Montana in the 1890s (Stoner 2007:33), Lombard was established as a hub. Kee acquired the hotel through some assistance from his former employer, Senator Carter, and ran the operation until around 1910 and departed Montana for China in 1914 (Stoner 2007:34). During his stay at Lombard, Kee was successful in importing his wife and children from China, and a famous photograph of the family hangs in the Montana Historical Society today.

When Billy Kee and family left Montana for China, it was shortly after the revolution in that country, and rumors circulated of Kee's execution. Several months later Kee was found alive in Japan, not even aware of his supposed execution (Stoner 2007:38-39). Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects to Billy Kee's story was the supposed use of his amassed fortune created in Montana to help fund the revolutionary overthrow of the Qing Dynasty. As Stoner (2007:33-34) notes, Billy's life was interesting though the exact details are shrouded in myths, hearsay, and likely,

exaggeration. It is unclear how a former servant like Billy Kee became the wealthiest Chinese in Montana by operating a hotel for several years, though that is perhaps a reason for the popularity of his life's story.

Billy Kee's life is an exception to the more general pattern of long-term wage labor of the Chinese cook or servant in Montana history. As noted in Chapter 3, as early as the late 1860s Major John Owen was employing Chinese cooks at Fort Owen to provide meals for his workers and guests (Dunbar and Philips 1927[2]:58, 67-68). Chinese cooks and servants served in notable Montana families including the homes of Charles Conrad, founder of Kalispell; George Beal, famous Butte doctor and mine-owner; William Wickes, founder of Wickes; A.B. Hammond, early merchant in Missoula; Samuel Hauser, powerful Helena banker and mine developer; and even Judge Knowles of Deer Lodge. Judge Knowles passed judgment on several Chinese-related court cases including the Montana Alien Law, the murder of two Chinese men, one by John Collins and the other by John Martell from (all described in Chapter 3). In all cases, Knowles appears to have possessed pro-Chinese sympathies, including the conviction of John Collins for murder, setting precedence in allowing Chinese testimony against John Martell, and overturning the Alien Law. Perhaps Knowles' use of Chinese labor in his household shaped his sympathies towards this population. It is clear that the presence of Chinese cooks and servants improved the quality of life for hundreds of Montana families, and provided these immigrants with a steady source of income and job security. These jobs, located on rural farms and ranches, led to the situation of severe isolation for the Chinese cooks and servants.

### 5.3.5 Other Notable Chinese Employment

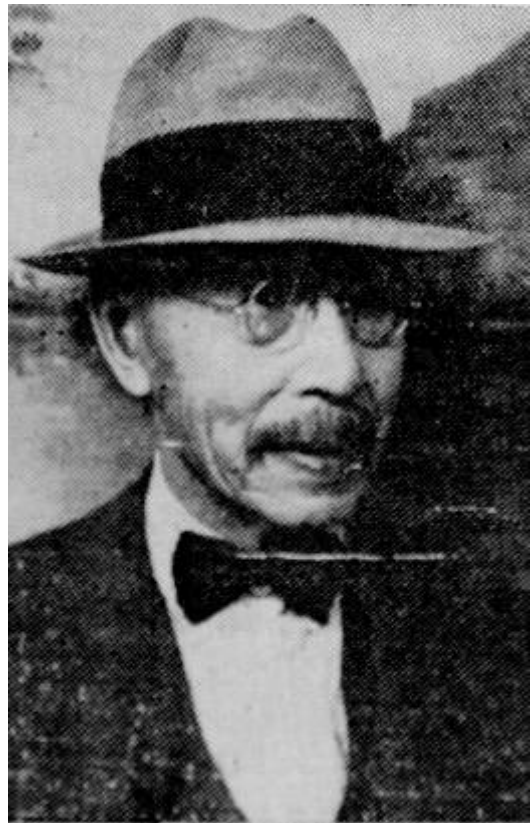
It is clear that laundries, restaurants, gardens, and domestic labor provided the bulk of Chinese employment opportunities in Montana after the collapse of placer mining in the late 1880s. However, broad patterns can sometimes cloud the personal and significant individual stories of Chinese that forged their own niche in Montana history. The various censuses between 1880 and 1930 provide some information on other employment associated with the Chinese, and many break the generally-constructed narratives of Chinese as miners, launderers, or gardeners. For instance, the 1880 census listed a wide variety of jobs, including priests, doctors, druggists, and cheese makers; all occupations defying the long-held stereotype of Chinese employment in the United States.

Chinese physicians were common on the Montana frontier in larger communities, and also some rural communities like Louiseville (see Chapter 3). During the 1870s and through the 1930s, there were Chinese physicians in Butte, Billings, Deer Lodge, Helena, Livingston, Louiseville, and Virginia City. In Helena, prominent Chinese doctors included Dr. Fook On Hong Tong and Yeng Too. Willie Toy was a prominent Helena and Anaconda-based Chinese physician and herbologist who trained in San Francisco using money earned from a string of restaurants in the early 1900s (*Helena Independent* 1929b:4). By far the most prominent Chinese doctor in Montana during the 1800s and early 1900s was Huie Pock of Butte. Dr. Huie Pock arrived in Butte in 1889 with his young wife, and stumbled nearly instantaneously into the Butte Union Boycott which deeply affected his medical and merchant businesses (Dirlick and Yeung 2001:400-401). Dr. Pock is also well-known in Montana history by curing the ulcers of “Copper King”

William A. Clark's daughter and by saving countless lives during an outbreak of the international influenza outbreak in Butte during 1918 (Dary 2008:194). Dr. Huie Pock and his wife created a will that outlined that their estate would return their bodies to China after their deaths. However, the Euro-American mortician kept the bodies in his funeral home for over 30 years, one body sealed in a casket and the other left open-air and covered in lubricants. Finally, after 30 years in the funeral home the bodies of Huie Pock and wife were buried in Mount Moriah Cemetery, as there was no money left in the estate to return the remains to China (Ciabattari 1976:16)



**Figure 5.7:** Tommy Haw, ca. 1880-1890.  
Courtesy Beaverhead County Historical



**Figure 5.8:** George Taylor, 1942.  
From Hilden (1942).

Perhaps the most unique stories of any Chinese experience in Montana belongs to Tommy Haw and George Washington Taylor (Figure 5.7, Figure 5.8). Their stories began rather similarly, both being born in China in the middle 1800s and brought to the United States by immigrating relatives or parents. George Taylor was born in Hong Kong in 1860 and was brought to Helena in 1873 by an uncle (Hilden 1942); however, in another version his mother died leaving him an orphan in Helena (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4). In the most likely scenario, recounted by George Taylor himself, his uncle set George up as a servant for a Helena lawyer and then returned to China. In contrast, it is unclear what occurred to Tommy Haw's family, but some stories suggest that his father died in the goldfields of California leaving him an orphan at age four (BCHBA 1990[1]:433).

The exact year of birth for Tommy is rather unclear, as the 1880 census records indicate he was born in 1850, while his obituary states he was born in 1846 (*Dillon Tribune* 1913:2). A rancher, Tom Orr, found Tommy wandering the streets of San Francisco and adopted him around 1850 or 1854 depending on his actual date of birth. Another version of the adoption of Tommy suggests that his parents died in an Indian raid on a Chinese mining camp near Yreka, California and Orr found him as the last survivor (BCHBA 1990[1]:431). In 1865, Tommy came to Dillon, Montana with a herd of Orr's cattle and worked with the family on a large ranch near that town for years to follow (BCHBA 1990[1]:433). Upon reaching Montana, one of Haw's first actions was to cut his queue that Tom Orr had forced him to keep to ensure his acceptance into the rest of the Chinese community. Sometime in the 1870s, Tommy Haw went into the stock-raising business for himself with assistance of the Orr family. After selling a herd

of his cattle for \$9,000, he used the money to purchase a sheep herd and lease a ranch (BCHBA 1990[1]:431).

By the 1880s, Tommy was one of the wealthiest citizens of Beaverhead County, paying a substantial amount in taxes (*Dillon Tribune* 1883:1), and was well-regarded by locals and the newspapers (*New Northwest* 1883:3). In 1886, Johnny Grant, the famous founder of the Grant Kohrs Ranch, pulled into Tommy's ranch late at night. Haw's white employees took care of Grant's horses but neglected him dinner. Tommy was most-displeased about this the next morning and provided Grant with a large meal. When Grant asked Tommy what the services would cost, Haw replied, "Ah! Nothing, nothing, when you see a Chinaman...in need, give him a meal" (Grant 1996:198).

In the late 1880s, Haw was purchasing mining claims in the Pioneer Mountains, west of Dillon, including the Copper Queen Mine. Perusal of the Beaverhead County Courthouse records indicate that Tommy purchased several mining claims in the region during the late 1880s through early 1900s, along with additional ranch leases. A 1903 deed record indicates that a local Chinese resident, Tommy Haw, purchased the Blue-Eyed-Annie claim (24BE2186) and managed the work until 1909-1910. In 2008, researchers re-discovered the site as part of my fieldwork for this dissertation and recorded the remaining log cabins, adits, trash dumps, and underground workings (see Appendix A, and Merritt 2010).

It appears that 1903 might have been the peak of Tommy Haw's fortune, with newspaper reports claiming his estate and assets came to \$200,000 (*Pittsburgh Press* 1903:3). Tommy's business sense did not appear to extend into the mining business, and by his death in 1913 his fortune declined significantly. Suffering from a long liver-



related illness, Tommy died on July 25, 1913 at the suspected age of 67 (*Dillon Tribune* 1913:1). After his death, Haw's will was located, and he left all his property and possessions to a Mrs. George Gray of Dillon who cared for him during the time of his illness. In addition, Tommy's wills stipulated that the revenue from the pending sale of the Copper Queen mine for \$37,000 would also go to Mrs. George Gray and two other white women who cared for him during his illness (BCHBA 1990[1]:431). However, due to his poor finances at the time of his death, Haw's estate lacked enough funds to purchase a headstone. Friends and family collectively purchased Haw's headstone, and he now rests within the Orr Family plot in the Dillon Cemetery (BCHBA 1990[1]:431). In the few years before his death Tommy continuously petitioned to be naturalized as an American citizen, though he was never successful.

George Washington Taylor came to Montana from Hong Kong in 1873, and settled in Helena as a lawyer's servant (Hilden 1942). Shortly after his arrival in Helena either by death of his mother or by abandonment of his uncle, George, whose Chinese name is unknown, started learning English language and writing. Sometime after his mother's death, Jesse F. Taylor of the Sands and Taylor Cattle Company (ST) adopted the Chinese boy and renamed him George Washington Taylor (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4). However, George Taylor himself stated in 1942 that he re-named himself as, "my imagination and fancy were drawn toward George Washington, the father of this country" (Hilden 1942). Through the 1870s George worked as a stockman and cowboy for the ST and had numerous interesting adventures as part of his life working the range in the Choteau and Cut Bank area of Montana.

The 1880 census lists George Taylor erroneously twice, once in Fort Benton and other on the Upper Teton River; however, both entries listed him as a 19 year-old cook. Around 1879, the elder Jesse Taylor gave George and his white brothers a herd of cattle to start their own ranching endeavors (Hilden 1942). In the 1880s, George married a Swedish woman named Lena from Minnesota, and by 1900 they had two children. The 1900 census lists the Taylor family living in Dupuyer Township, in Teton County and involved in farming. According to other sources George and family established a small stock ranch near Birch Creek (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4). According to several reports, the Taylor family established steady operation in the Birch Creek area, and their home was one of the finest in the local country and a favorite stopping place for travelers (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4; Hilden 1942).

George and Lena Taylor, luckily, avoided the adverse effects of Montana's miscegenation law. In 1909, Montana's legislature passed the state's first miscegenation law that barred intermarriages between 'whites' and other ethnicities such as African-Americans, Chinese, and Japanese (State of Montana 1909:57-58). The language of Montana's miscegenation law only prohibited or voided marriages performed after the 1909 date, leaving George and Lena's 1880s or 1890s marriage legal until her death in the 1920s. Sadly, others in the African-American, Chinese, and Japanese community felt the repressive effects of this racist law until 1953 when it was finally repealed by the legislative assembly (State of Montana 1953:4-5).

Sometime in the 1920s, George Taylor's wife passed, but not before building a sizable family legacy including seven children. The 1920 census lists George, Lena, and their six living children Albert, Margaret, George Jr., Helen, Andrew, and Daisy. Their

second oldest son, Jesse, died in World War I, though Hilden (1942) incorrectly states that Albert was killed. In both 1900 and 1920, the Taylors were boarding the local schoolteacher which is a sign of their complete integration into the local community. By 1930, Taylor left his ranch and moved to Cut Bank after Lena's death, and his sons engaged in sheep ranching on the Blackfeet Reservation while the third enlisted in the United States Navy (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4).

By the 1940s, George had settled into a comfortable small home in Cut Bank with his sons continuing their operations in the region and his daughters living in Alaska, and San Francisco. During his interview for the *Cut Bank Pioneer*, Taylor reminisced about his life spent in Montana including when Charles McDonald, a Teton County representative, put forth an amendment to allow Taylor's naturalization as an American citizen (Hilden 1942). Taylor's naturalization was celebrated as the first in Montana for a Chinese resident, an honor denied to Tommy Haw years earlier. Hilden (1942) concludes her story on George Taylor with poignant prose:

The young Chinese boy who left Hong Kong when he was only 13 years old, now lives in a neat little house in the shaded yard behind the Cut Bank hotel. His house is full of mementos of a long life spent in Montana-- pictures of his ranch and his family. He's like any other venerable gentleman in his declining years. He's an American.

The last statement of Hilden (1942) is as much a celebration of George Taylor's life as a rapprochement of the maltreatment of the other Chinese in Montana who could have benefited from the opportunities provided him. George Taylor died in Cut Bank on May 15, 1945, at the age of 85 and lies buried there today.

#### **5.4: Sun Descending over Horizon, 1900 to 1943**

As changing circumstances shifted the economy in the first decades of the 1900s, Chinese opportunity continued to decline, leading directly to the abandonment of Montana for areas with higher potential for profit and job security (Lee 1949:58). The anti-Chinese immigration legislation effectively cut off the population in Montana, leading to further migrations out of the state. In 1900, there were 1,722 Chinese in Montana, but the number declined to 1,285 a decade later. The population collapse continued, with numbers falling to 872 in 1920, 491 in 1930, 258 in 1940, and finally bottoming out at 209 in 1950 (Table 5.3). There was also a consolidation of Chinese population from rural to urban settings (see Appendix B). Some scholars (eg. Swartout 1988; Zhu 1997) discuss the year 1900 as the end of the historical period of Chinese settlement in Montana. While the heyday of the Chinese was definitely past, those still living in Montana continued to make significant contributions to state history and strengthened their connections to China. With the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, the history of Chinese in Montana changed tone, and for the first time since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century they were allowed to emigrate, even if on a quota system.

As discussed earlier, the 1900 census demonstrated the near-complete shift away from the mining sector as forms of Chinese employment. Laundries, restaurants, gardens and domestic labor dominated the types of employment available to the Chinese of Montana. At the time of this dissertation project, the 1940 federal census rolls have not yet been released to provide specific information on the employment, age, and addresses of Chinese in Montana; thus the detailed demographic discussion in this chapter ends at the 1930 period.

**Table 5.3:** Chinese in Montana by County, 1900-1930. Federal Censuses.

<b>County</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1930</b>
Beaverhead	67	33	17	7
Big Horn	0	0	12	0
Blaine	0	0	4	6
Broadwater	14	2	6	0
Carbon	2	0	3	0
Cascade	3	6	5	2
Choteau	87	40	8	0
Custer	16	31	28	18
Daniels	0	0	0	5
Dawson	2	14	5	3
Deer Lodge	88	26	23	18
Fallon	0	0	8	4
Fergus	14	15	25	12
Flathead	58	61	37	1
Gallatin	54	62	14	3
Glacier	0	0	5	11
Granite	69	25	16	2
Hill	0	0	49	19
Jefferson	57	23	7	2
Lake	0	0	0	1
Lewis and Clark	330	328	135	87
Lincoln	0	5	3	8
Madison	77	10	3	1
Meagher	5	20	10	7
Mineral	9	0	1	1
Missoula	113	73	18	14
Park	42	38	15	11
Phillips	0	0	10	0
Pondera	0	0	2	2
Powell	0	14	11	20
Prairie	0	0	1	0
Ravalli	30	21	9	2
Roosevelt	0	0	7	3
Rosebud	0	4	1	0
Sanders	61	38	18	5
Sheridan	0	0	5	0
Silver Bow	389	319	262	155
Stillwater	0	0	2	0
Sweet Grass	18	14	17	8
Teton	17	3	2	1
Toole	0	0	2	1
Valley	0	10	2	2
Wheatland	0	0	2	0
Yellowstone	99	50	55	49
(All other Counties)	0	0	7	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>491</b>

**Table 5.4:** Montana Employment Categories of Chinese Men, 1930 Federal Census.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Cook	86
Unknown/None	86
Laundry	74
Gardener/ Farmer	31
Prisoner	30
Merchant/Store Keeper	21
Restaurant Waiter	19
Restaurant	17
Laborer	9
RR Conductor	7
Hotel Keeper	6
Dishwasher	5
Doctor	4
Ironers	3
Tailor	3
Cigar Salesman	3
RR Laborer	2
Real Estate	2
Mining	1
Retired Cook	1
Servant	1
Groceries Bookkeeper	1
Court Interpreter	1
Janitor	1
<b>Teacher</b>	1

**Table 5.5:** Montana Employment Categories of Chinese Women, 1930 Federal Census.

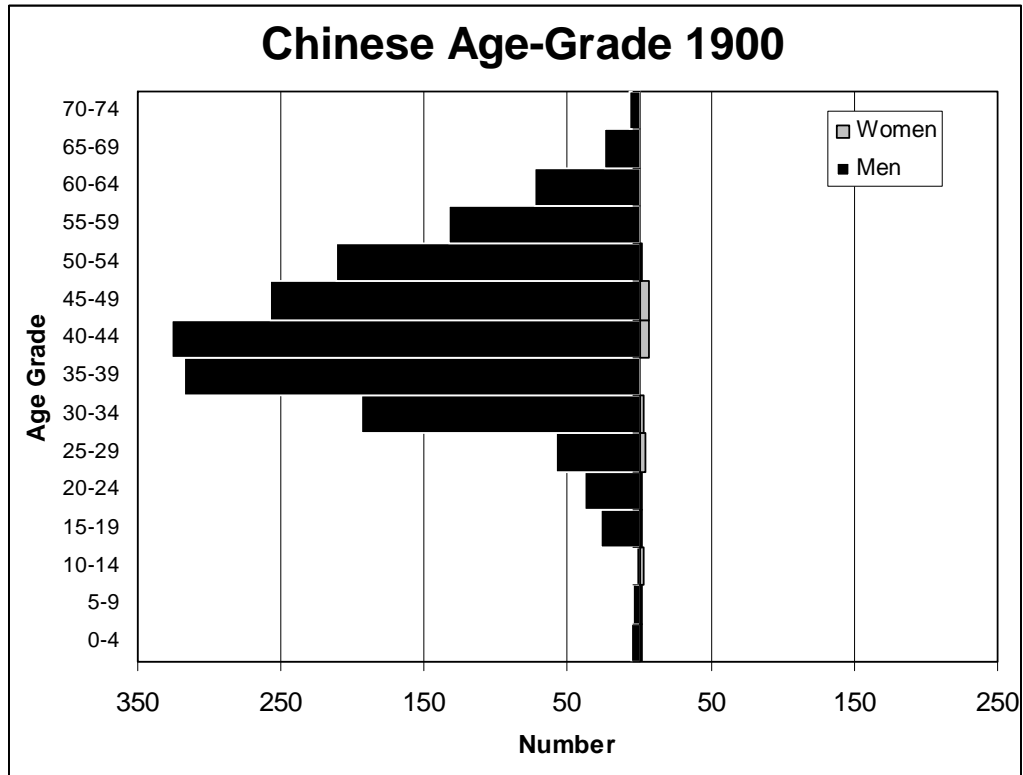
<b>Occupation</b>	<b># of Chinese Employed</b>
Unknown	50
Stenographer	2
Merchant	1
Laundry	1
Collection Agency	1
Gardener	1
<b>Laundry</b>	1

The laundry industry dominated the 1900 employment of Chinese, but by 1930 cooks and “unknown” took the top spots (Tables 5.4 & 5.5). The unknown category likely represents the number of unemployed Chinese in Montana, which results from both the economic downturn from 1929 and also the advanced age of many enumerated.

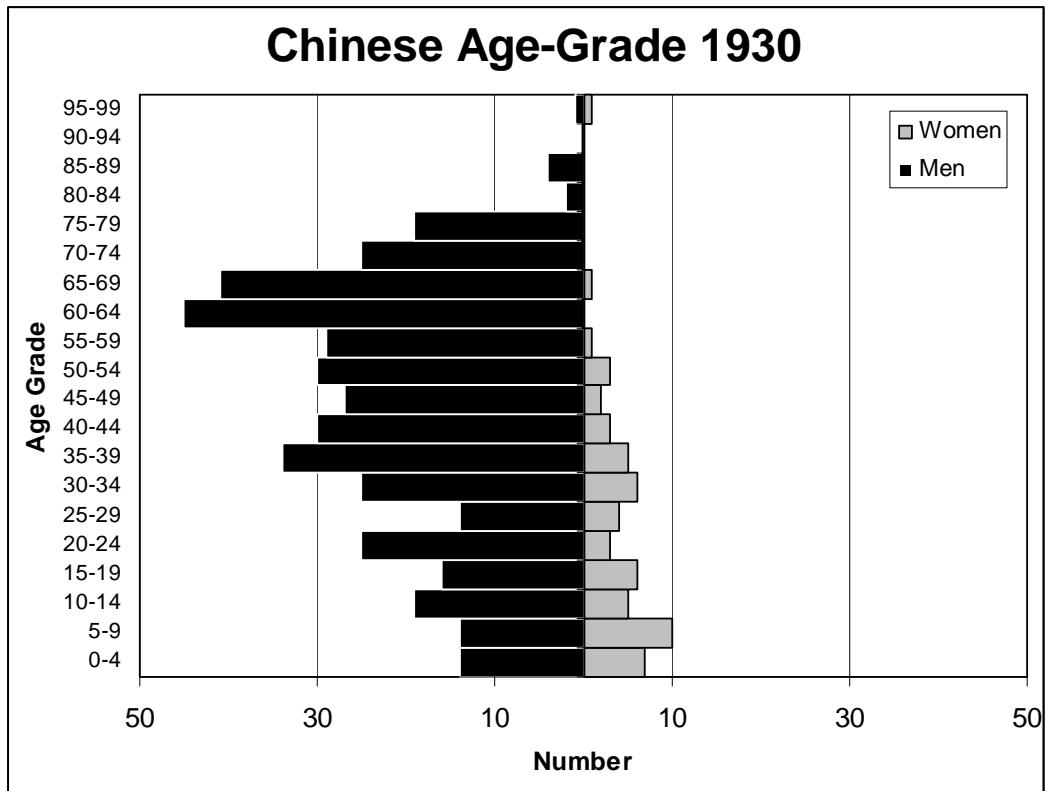
The average age of Chinese in Montana continued to increase throughout the 1800s and early 1900s. In 1870 the average age of a Chinese person in Montana was 30, and by 1880 that number rose to 35. In 1900, the average age of a Chinese individual was 42, with the oldest being 72 years old (Figure 5.9). The 1930 census shows that the average age remained steady at 42, with a median age of 43.5 (Figure 5.10). Substantially different from the 1900 census, the oldest Chinese person in Montana was a 92 year old woman, with an additional 36 men older than 72 years old. An aging population typified the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history in Montana although there were a number of children recorded in the 1930 census, most belonged to roughly a dozen families in Butte and Helena.

Between 1900 and 1930, the Chinese population of Montana consolidated into the larger urban and rural centers. In 1900, there were Chinese in 113 distinct enumeration districts, while in 1930 that number declined to only 52 (Tables 5.6 & 5.7). This consolidation was a natural process, as the overall population of Montana declined from both death and migration to China or other states. Butte and Helena retained the top two positions for Chinese population in Montana during the entire first three decades of the 1900s. Billings retained a significant Chinese community from the 1890s through 1930, and by that latter year, the city’s Chinese population ranked third in the state. The biggest drop in Chinese occurred in Missoula with 109 in 1900 but only 10 enumerated in 1930.

**Figure 5.9:** Population Pyramid of Chinese in Montana, 1900.



**Figure 5.10:** Population Pyramid of Chinese in Montana, 1930.





**Table 5.6:** Chinese population by location in 1900. 1900 Federal Census.

<b>Location</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>#</b>
Butte	277	Red Mountain	6	Fort Shaw Indian School	1
Helena	189	Blackfeet Reservation	6	Harlem	1
Hellgate	109	Horse Prairie	5	Forsyth	1
Billings	84	Cottonwood	5	Philbrook	1
South Butte	61	Township 3	5	Lavina	1
10N3W (North Helena)	55	Bremer	5	Monforton	1
Bozeman	49	Gardiner	5	South Bozeman	1
Belmont	49	Dupuyer	5	Red Lion	1
Union	47	Columbus	5	Princeton	1
Smead	46	Big Sandy	4	Fort Harrison	1
Dillon	44	Highwood	4	15N6W (Roger's Pass Area)	1
Kalispell	43	Fort Keogh	4	Madison	1
South Philipsburg	42	Garnet	4	Norris	1
Fort Benton	39	Township 4	4	Rochester	1
10N4W (West Helena)	32	Musselshell	4	South Boulder	1
Boulder	31	Frenchtown	4	School District 29	1
Thompson Falls	29	Hunter's Hot Springs	4	Township 14	1
Livingston	26	Choteau	4	Muir	1
Havre	25	Lima	3	Horr	1
German Gulch	25	Radersburg	3	Fridley	1
Hamilton	24	Lombard	3	Corvallis	1
Anaconda	17	Troy	3	Stillwater	1
Big Timber	17	Manhattan	3	Marias	1
Ophir	15	French Bar (10N1W)	3	Saint Mary's	1
Chinook	14	Flathead Reservation	3	North Billings	1
Warm Springs Insane Asylum	13	Ward	3		
Deer Lodge	12	Barrets	2		
Gold Creek	12	Black Tail	2		
Lewistown	12	Glendive	2		
Miles City	11	Columbia Falls	2		
Pony	11	Granite	2		
Walkerville	11	BiMetallic	2		
Jocko	10	Trail Creek	2		
Sunrise	9	Chico	2		
Township 7	9	Victor	2		
Cedar Creek	9	Argenta	1		
Drummond	8	Red Rock	1		
Township 5	8	Glendale	1		
Jefferson	8	Diamond City	1		
Bannack	7	Toston	1		
Silver Bow	7	Clark's Fork	1		
Hecla	6	Red Lodge	1		
Townsend	6	Belt	1		
Laurin	6	Sun River	1		

**Table 5.7:** Chinese population by location in 1930. 1930 Federal Census.

<b>Location</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>#</b>
Butte	154	Poplar	3
Helena	66	Big Timber	3
Billings	48	Deer Lodge City	2
Miles City	18	Cascade	2
Havre	16	Philipsburg	2
Lewistown	14	Bozeman	2
Montana State Penitentiary	11	Hamilton	2
Warm Springs Hospital	10	White Pine Vicinity	2
Blackfeet	10	Noxon Vicinity	2
Livingston	10	Ninemile Vicinity	2
Missoula	10	Glasgow	2
Anaconda	7	Columbia Falls	1
Kessler	7	Whitehall	1
Chinook	5	Trinity	1
Troy	5	Barret	1
Prickly Pear	5	Jefferson	1
Cottonwood	5	Superior	1
Floral Park	5	Hunter's Hot Springs	1
Scobey	5	Ophir	1
Lewis & Clark County Poor Farm	4	Trout Creek Vicinity	1
Baker	4	Shelby	1
Dillon	3	Liberty	1
Lima	3	Wolf Creek	1
Glendive	3	Choteau	1
Rexford	3	Cut Bank	1
White Sulphur Springs	3		

It is clear that the anti-Chinese agitation that formulated the Chinese Exclusion Act succeeded in cleansing the state of this ethnic group, though their spirit remained strong. Throughout the early 1900s, the Chinese continued to celebrate their traditional rites and the New Years ceremonies, while others like the Wong family of Helena attempted to assimilate by moving away from tradition (Mike Wong pers. comm. 2008). The Wong family in particular contradicts the trend in Historical Archaeology of moving away from assimilation/acculturation discussions, as this family intentionally attempted to shed the vestiges of Chinese culture including the visiting of family graves at Forestvale Cemetery.

The remnant Chinese population of Montana demonstrated a patriotic spirit during World War I. During the initial volunteer draft registration for World War I, which was an unpopular action taken by President Woodrow Wilson, 117 Montana Chinese men provided their information. According to the draft regulations, aliens to the United States were required to register but were not included in any of the selection pools. The 117 registries reflect a substantial portion of the adult male Chinese population in Montana, as the 1920 census only listed 872 total. Butte provided the highest number of Chinese draft registrants with 39. In total, Chinese in 26 Montana counties registered for the World War I draft.

In Sweet Grass County, the local Chinese organized a War Savings Organization, which sought to raise money for the war effort. Tom Kue, the same prominent Big Timber Chinese man discussed earlier in this chapter, was the president of the organization (Figure 5.11). Even though Kue lacked American citizenship, he organized 15 other Big Timber Chinese and promoted the organization raising a substantial amount of money for the war effort. The national office for the War Savings drive used a photograph depicting the members of the Sweet Grass County society as a promotional tool, and sent the image around the United States (*Mineral County Independent* 1919:4).

#### *5.4.1 Departure and Death*

Stories on the death or emigration of aged Chinese individuals dominated Montana's newspapers in the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before 1900 most stories on the Chinese focused on the threats of their immigration or continued occupation of Montana and the negative aspects of their community. In the 1900s, the

**Figure 5.11:** Chinese War Savings Society, Big Timber Montana. *Mineral Independent* 1919:4, photo and article courtesy of Mineral County Historical Society.



stories changed to public interest pieces on the death of aged Chinese individuals, or the parties thrown for their departure to their homeland in China. The return to China before or after their death was a powerful motivation for Overseas Chinese, as without friends or relatives to worship at their grave, the deceased's spirit would forever linger in a type of limbo (Rouse 2005:22). However, the emphasis on spiritual need to return home was not the only motivation, as many Chinese in Montana had not seen their parents, wives, husbands, or children for decades (Chung and Wegars 2005:2). In 1900, 64% of Chinese women were married, and of those, all were married to Chinese men within Montana.

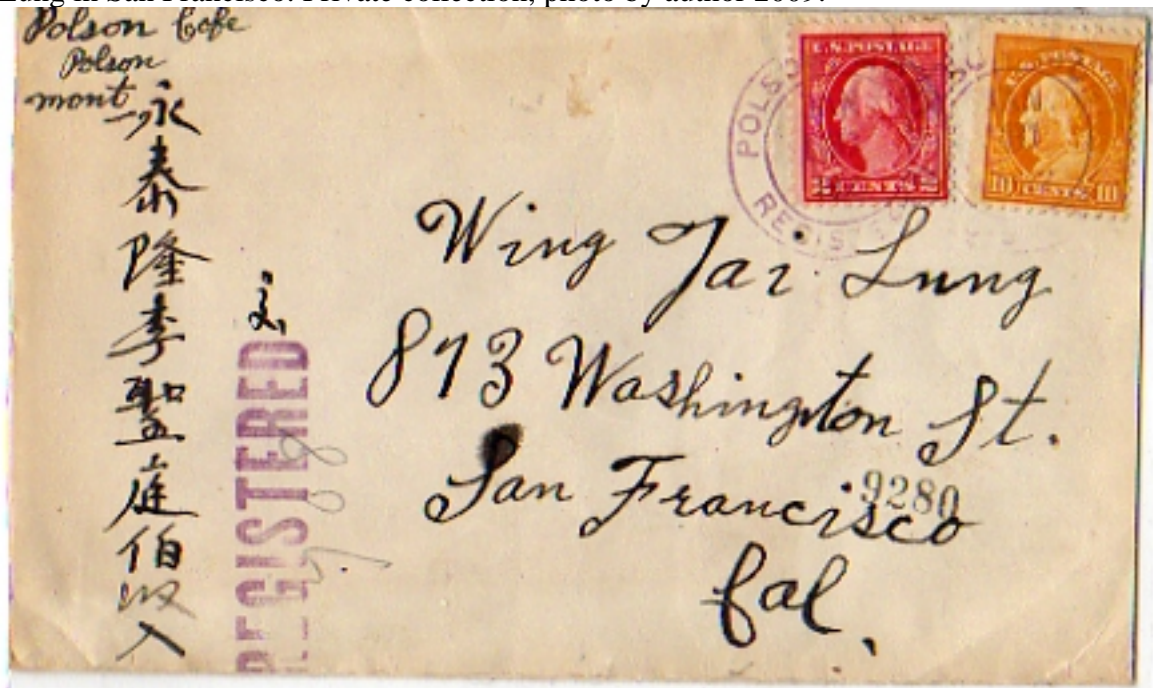
That same year, 1900, 41% of Chinese men were enumerated as married (698 of 1684), two were divorced, and another nine widowed. By 1930, there were 17 married Chinese couples in Montana, with 44% of Chinese men married (183 of 414). All but one of the married Chinese women was residing with their spouse in 1930, while 90.7% of married men were not living with their wives who were likely still in China. Most of these Chinese men had left their wives and children in China, creating a sizable proportion of the population without their spouses.

Chinese in Montana retained contact with friends and relatives in China through letter correspondence (Figure 5.12). Examples of Chinese correspondence with relatives are rare in Montana, though a letter found in the Montana Historical Society Archives from 1893 provides some context to the types of topics covered. The letter to Ah Hei in Montana came from his older brother, Hao Hsing, in China, and attempted to bolster the spirits of the overseas immigrant. After hearing that the Ah Hei was ill, Hao says “If you make even a little money, come home right away in order to restore your health. Do not overtax yourself by being away, so that mother and the family elders will not worry about you.” Later, the elder Hsing relates a traditional Chinese story about the dangers of focusing too much on fame and wealth. Lastly, Hao Hsing ends the letter with some advice grounding in both spirituality and familial bonds:

[Y]ou should not be preoccupied with worldly things. Do not become to attached to foreign places, you should consider returning home to China your most important goal. I trust the gods will protect you and your good health. When you get enough money to come home, find a fellow countryman who will help you return quickly so that mother and the family elders will not have to worry about you, so that they are unable to eat or sleep (*Hao Hsing* 1893).

The wish to return home was a constant goal for many Chinese in the United States and other overseas communities. This social imperative helped coalesce the image of the Chinese as sojourners to the American public (Chung and Wegars 2005:2). It is unclear whether this social imperative would have been as strong had the immigrating Chinese been able to bring their families. The death of Mar Joe's wife and two children in a 1938 Japanese bombing raid of Guangdong while he lived in Thompson Falls is a poignant reminder of the heartache caused by America's restrictive legislation (*Helena Independent* 1938a:3).

**Figure 5.12:** 1922 Chinese envelope mailed from Polson, Montana to Wing Jai Lung in San Francisco. Private collection, photo by author 2009.



Choteau residents celebrated the departure of Soo-Son in 1933, who lived in Teton County for 44 years. Soo Son came to Montana in the 1860s, working mining claims in Helena before being hired by the Sands and Taylor Cattle Company (ST), and then finally arriving in Choteau in 1889 and establishing a restaurant (*Helena*

*Independent* 1933b:3). It is likely that Soo Son knew George W. Taylor, mentioned earlier, who was adopted by Jesse Taylor of the ST (*Mineral Independent* 1930:4). Numerous dignitaries came to Son's farewell party, including one of his old friends Senator John E. Erickson of Choteau (*Helena Independent* 1933b:3). Soo Son retired from his restaurant a few years before his farewell party due to increasing age and poor health, and his decision to return to China was centered on the wish to join his family. Similar to Tommy Haw, Soo Son never received American naturalization, though all dignitaries proclaimed him as an example of a model citizen (*Helena Independent* 1933c:3). At the conclusion of the dinner and speeches, the guests presented Soo Son with several gifts including money for travel, and "tears welled into his eyes as his friends gathered about him to pay him tribute" (*Helena Independent* 1933c:3).

Other elderly Chinese left Montana during the early 1900s, including the former prominent citizen of Big Timber, Tom Kue. In 1924, Tom Kue left Big Timber and first stopped at San Francisco before heading by steamship back to China. It appears that Kue's purchase of a larger restaurant in the 1920s bankrupted him, and forced him to sell his holdings (*Helena Independent* 1924:3). The pattern continued across Montana, as Sam Wong, 71 years-old, left Forsyth in 1925, Wong Ching left Helena in 1926, and four elderly Chinese men left Butte in 1927 (*Helena Independent* 1925b:3; 1926b:3; 1927a:3; 1927b:3). Others left Montana for other places in the western United States (*Montana Daily Record* 1908:3; *Glendive Independent* 1941:3). Stories following their departures painted them as model citizens that were heading home or elsewhere in the West, only to die. The four Chinese who left Butte in 1927, aged 70-84, apparently worked the placer claims in Alder Gulch in the 1860s. Remembering a different version of history than

actually occurred, the newspaper story notes that the Chinese men “came in on the tail end of the placer mining excitement of the 60’s when the presence of a Mongolian was not resented by the red-shirted miners” (*Helena Independent* 1927b:3). It was common in these editorials to paint the life of the Chinese as extremely trying and difficult, with the only adversity in their lives coming from their own inability to work well-paying mineral deposits.

Throughout the early years of the 1900s, it appears that even more of the original Chinese pioneers of Montana died than emigrated. In Helena, stories followed the deaths of local Chinese men including Toy Ket and Yee Chuck. Unable to work due to poor health and subsisting off the food found in restaurant and hotel trash barrels, the 66-year old Toy Ket died of a stroke while awaiting a transfer from his home to the Lewis & Clark County Poor Farm (*Helena Independent* 1928l:3). Yee Chuck, also known as “Ice Cream,” died in Helena after serving the frozen dessert out of a two-wheeled cart for over 45 years (*Helena Independent* 1928n:3).

Smaller communities like Dillon, Philipsburg, Blackfoot City, and Deer Lodge documented the death of the last Chinese residents in their communities. Ah Sue, who was reported to be nearly 100-years old, was found dead in his small mining cabin in the Blackfoot City area. Sue came to Montana in the mid-1860s prospecting along Ophir Creek, and remained long after most others abandoned the area (*Helena Independent* 1929c:3). Tom Yee died at Philipsburg in 1932, and was the last remaining Chinese individual in that community. Yee was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Philipsburg and buried in the city cemetery (*Helena Independent* 1932:3). In 1934, Quong Lun Kee died in Dillon, and spent a year in storage awaiting sufficient funds for



shipment to China for burial (*Helena Independent* 1935:3). The Dillon Chinese community reportedly ended in 1938, with the death of Jim Lee. Known locally as “Whiskey Jim,” Lee came to Dillon in the early 1900s to oversee the shipment of Chinese bodies back to China, and decided to stay in the community. It is unclear whether Jim Lee’s body ever returned to China (*Helena Independent* 1938b:3).

The last Chinese resident of Mineral County died in 1922 (*Mineral Independent* 1922:4). Local oral histories provide a diverse array of possible ways Cedar Creek John, as he was euphemistically known, arrived in the Superior area. All stories do note that John arrived in the Cedar Creek Mining District during its peak, and was either a doctor, packer, or a murderer repaying a debt to the victim’s family in China. Regardless, after the boom of Cedar Creek passed, John remained in Mineral County and sometimes watched the local children. According to oral histories, John watched children in the late 1890s and early 1900s for local residents, and taught them how to use chopsticks. After spending a short stay in Missoula’s St. Patrick’s Hospital for an undisclosed illness, Cedar Creek John returned to Superior where he died at age 90 at the Ordean Hotel (*Mineral Independent* 1922:4). Demonstrating the still-prevailing opinion of the Chinese, the *Mineral Independent* obituary led with, “Cedar Creek John, the only welcome Chinaman in Mineral County, died Monday morning” (*Mineral Independent* 1922:4).

#### 5.4.2 Chinese Cemeteries

The predominant narrative regarding the treatment of the Chinese dead is the shipment back to the ancestral homeland. While in his 80s, Henry Reslip recounted a story in the 1930s about an encounter with a Chinese person and a willow basket during the late 1880s. When Reslip asked what the Chinese man had in the willow basket, he

replied, “Two Chinamen, one China lady” (WPA 72:2). Reslip continued that, “[t]he bones of the three had been buried a little above the...site of Louiseville” (WPA 72:3). In another instance, the bodies of 28 Chinese that died in Chicago between 1879 and 1887 passed through Helena on the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1894, each sealed in an air-tight casket (*Helena Independent* 1894a:3). However, many of the Chinese that died in Montana remain in their graves, though the predominance of removal narratives among the public and some professionals continue.

Far from home, the death of a member of the Chinese community took on extra significance and a means of displaying social solidarity. As illustrated by Kuijt (2001:82), “[t]he power of ritual as a cohesive force is based, in part, on the realization that mortuary practice is a form of public action...often to elicit community participation.” In this framework mortuary rituals are also a form of community maintenance, and others (Durkheim [1912] 1995; Gluckman 1954; Marshall 2002) support this view. The place of burial for the Chinese dying in Montana varied, with NPRR workers generally buried along the grade (see Fullerton 1961), while others used established cemeteries. Similar to other places in the American West (see Chung and Wegars 2005), the Chinese interments at official cemeteries in Montana occurred along the fringes of the grounds. There are confirmed Chinese burial plots in several Montana communities including Missoula, Helena, Butte, Philipsburg, and Deer Lodge. Missoula and Helena’s cemeteries shifted over the years, with many of the original plots now covered in urban development. For instance, the original Missoula City and County cemetery was located along Lower Rattlesnake Creek but abandoned by the 1890s for residential development. However, as late as 1900 the Chinese community was still

using the area for burials, including Tom Gogk, who died at the Missoula Joss House, and “Old” Charlie who worked at the gardens (*Anaconda Standard* 1900a:12; 1900b:12). Today, the original Missoula Cemetery lies underneath dozens of tidy bungalow homes, and occasionally human remains appear during excavation for garage foundations and tilling up the ground for gardens. Some of the human remains appearing in the last few decades include the Chinese (Katie Baumler, 2010, pers. comm.), thus supporting a view that not all bodies returned to China.

Some of the most significant parts of traditional Chinese funerary rites included the offering of foods and drinks, and the burning of paper money and personal effects to aid in the rest of the decedent’s spirit. To maintain this cultural tradition, Chinese mourners constructed large brick-and-mortar funerary burners in the center of cemetery plots in Helena, Butte, and Philipsburg (Figures 5.13 and 5.14). While Philipsburg’s burner is in complete disarray, the Butte and Helena examples remain in remarkably good condition. There are likely other examples of funerary burners in Montana, though in poor condition due to the ravages of time and the impact of vandals. The Granite County Historical Museum in Philipsburg is looking into restoring the Chinese funerary burner at the town cemetery and thus preserving this significant legacy for this cultural group.

Over the first 30 years of Helena’s history, the city had two major cemeteries. In 1890 the first two Helena city cemeteries were consolidated into Forestvale Cemetery, located approximately two miles north of downtown. The Chinese community of Helena began burying their deceased at Forestvale in the same year, though in an isolated corner of the property far away from the non-Chinese burials. Between 1890 and 1954 over 220 Chinese were interred in the far northwestern corner of the Forestvale property, with an

**Figure 5.13:** Brick and mortar Chinese funerary burner at Forestvale Cemetery. Photo by author, 2007.



**Figure 5.14:** Brick, rock, and mortar debris from Chinese funerary burner at Philipsburg City Cemetery. Photo by author, 2008.



unknown proportion exhumed for return to China (Bik 1993:13). In 1988, the Forestvale Cemetery received funding for rehabilitation and fencing its boundaries concurrent with completion of a National Register Nomination. At this time, the cemetery board decided to exclude the Chinese section, known locally as “China Row,” from the newly constructed fence boundaries, as they viewed it as an inactive portion of the grounds.

**Figure 5.15:** Marble headstone for Chinese grave at Forestvale Cemetery. Photo by author 2007.



Today, China Row at Forestvale is overgrown with weeds, and the marble headstones (Figure 5.15) and funerary burner are in a state of disrepair. While there is clearly evidence of disinterment by contracted Chinese bone collectors, it is unlikely that all human remains were removed as believed by cemetery officials. For instance, the 13 bodies moved from the Lewis and Clark County graveyard to Forestvale have no names associated, and it is unlikely that relatives or bone collectors could have relocated those remains. Bik (1993:13) notes that only a small proportion of the Chinese graves at



Forestvale show evidence of disinterment. Scattered around the location of the funerary burner are hundreds of Chinese and Euroamerican artifacts reflecting ritual offerings to the dead. During a revisit to Forestvale Cemetery in 2008 and 2009, the researcher located a variety of artifacts, including Chinese ceramics (celadon, “Four Seasons”, brown-glazed stoneware), opium paraphernalia (opium pipe bowls, brass opium cans), and a variety of personal items including buttons and pins. Archaeological investigations of other Chinese funerary sites in North America (Chung and Wegars 2005) illustrate that Chinese incorporated non-Chinese material into their ritual practices. During funeral rites, the Chinese employed these various artifacts for two main symbolic purposes: 1) to ward off evil spirits or 2) to provide nourishment or amenities for the deceased spirit (e.g., Rouse 2005:20-21). It appears that the Chinese mourners at Forestvale Cemetery employed Euro-American artifacts with, and in place of, traditional material culture. Further research at Montana’s Chinese cemeteries has the potential for refining issues of ethnic boundary maintenance, ritual, and social cohesion.

#### *5.4.3 Yee Sing’s Journey*

Even with the many stories of death and migration during the early 1900s, perhaps the saddest story at the end of the period discussed in this chapter occurred in the mid-1920s. Federal authorities arrested Yee Sing, an 80-year old Chinese man from Billings for the sale of drugs. As this arrest was his third offense, the federal court in Great Falls sentenced Yee Sing to one year and one day of hard labor at the Leavenworth Federal Prison in Kansas (*Helena Independent* 1925a:3). On April 7, 1925 Yee Sing arrived at Fort Leavenworth Penitentiary with only \$39.95 in personal money and no property. According to the Fort Leavenworth attending physician, Yee Sing suffered

from bad teeth, poor vision, past effects of sexually transmitted diseases, and advanced senility. With all his health maladies, the Fort Leavenworth physician recommended granting Yee Sing a first-floor cell. It also appears from Sing's health records that he spent most of his sentence ill, either in his cell or in the prison hospital (Fort Leavenworth Prisoner Files 1926).

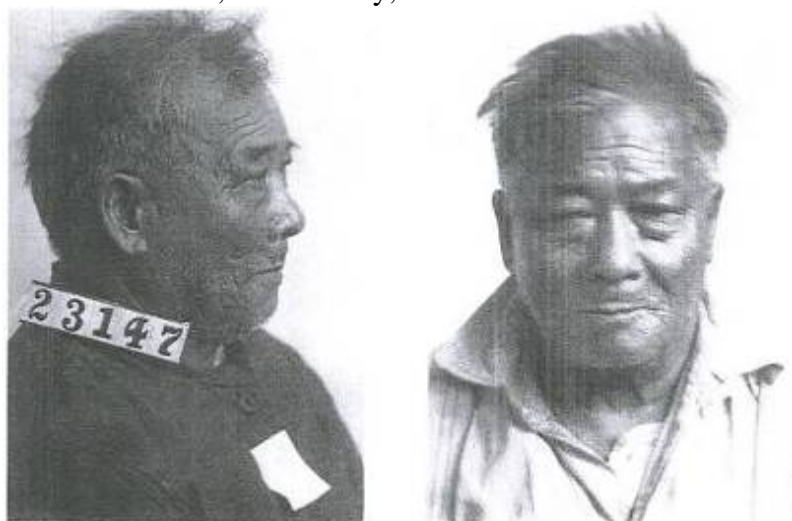
Yee Sing served his entire sentence at Fort Leavenworth and was then sent by train to Great Falls, Montana. As Sing lacked the funds to pay for his own ticket, the federal government paid his fare (Fort Leavenworth Prisoner Files 1926). On March 3, Sing arrived at the Great Northern Railroad station in Great Falls (*Helena Independent* 1926a:3). Without any money, or a place to go, Sing sat motionless in the railway station for hours. Finally, when station attendants closed the facility they discovered Sing and called for the Sheriff. When the police arrived at the station they arrested Yee Sing for vagrancy. Upon arrival at the station they discovered his identity they provided him food and a cell for the evening. The last status of Yee Sing's journey was a telegram sent to a Chinese businessman in Billings (*Helena Independent* 1926a:3). It is unknown whether any friend or relative ever claimed the elderly and senile Yee Sing (Figure 5.16).

## **5.5 End of Exclusion**

After nearly one-hundred years of immigration restrictions, the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 signaled a change in U.S. and Chinese relations (Ling 1998:113). In a surprising and sadly ironic twist, the leading proponents of the repeal were politicians and labor leaders from western states including California, Oregon, and Washington (Li 2009:59). Those repealing the law stated that the reasons included

bolstering Chinese morale, undoing a historic wrong, and creating goodwill for strategic and economic reasons (Li 2009:59). Even though the repeal had more to do with war strategy than social justice and immigration reform, the event changed the course of Montana's Chinese history. Chang Kaishek, leader of China in 1943, threatened to pull out of the partnership with the Allied forces in its opposition to Japan unless the United States government rescinded and repealed the unequal treaties and Exclusion Acts. The repeal was not complete and instituted a quota system (Li 2009:60), though it did allow current Chinese residents of the United States to apply for naturalization. However, the repeal of the Exclusion Act came too late for Montana's once vibrant Chinese community, as the population reached a new low in 1950. Today, there are as many Chinese in Montana as there were in the 1920s and 1930s, and some families survived the tough period and live in dispersed areas of the state. Where other immigrant groups flourished with open doors, the Chinese of Montana felt the full weight of legal and social infringements of personal rights and the community will likely never return to pre-1900 numbers.

**Figure 5.16:** Yee Sing, Inmate #23147, 1925. Fort Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. Courtesy of National Archives, Kansas City, Missouri.





## **CHAPTER 6: CHINESE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN MONTANA AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1: The Success of Overseas Chinese in Montana**

While not traditionally viewed as a successful immigrant population, the Chinese in Montana did indeed find modicum of economic prosperity, community cohesion, and freedom. During the eight decades analyzed in this dissertation the Chinese succeeded in not only pulling millions of dollars worth of gold from the creeks and gulches of Montana, but also from the pockets of Euro-American miners and their families by providing needed goods and services. It is also apparent that this immigrant population banded together and vigorously fought the various legal challenges to their livelihood and citizenship in Montana. What allowed the Chinese to organize sufficiently in response to internal and external forces was the complex web of interrelations forged between the immigrant laboring population, the burgeoning merchant-elite, family and clan relations in the homeland and in host communities, and a growing trend of nationalism.

Traditional South China social organization was centered around three separate modes: family lineage, socioeconomic class, and ethnicity (Woon 1984:1). By far, family lineage was the main means of organizing Chinese life prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, upon reaching the shores of host communities the traditional ties of family and clan strained over the long distance, and other means of social organization became prominent. This is not to say that ties to family and clan failed to translate into the diasporic community (see Speers 1870:546-547), but instead of the main organizing force, these ties became part of a palimpsest. In 19<sup>th</sup>-century host communities Chinese established benevolent or mutual-aid organizations, clan associations, and secret societies with varying degrees of connection to the homeland. Members of clan associations could

equally be joined to the district organization, and possible even hold a position in a prominent secret society all at the same time. Only in certain situations did these cross-ties become apparent.

The full depth of these interrelations are only now being integrated with mainstream historical narratives of the Chinese experience in diaspora communities, yet their impacts to archaeological and anthropological questions remain vague or untouched. Long-standing models for studying the Chinese experience focused on acculturation and assimilation based on incomplete pictures of interrelations between members of this cultural group (e.g. Greenwood 1978; Blanford 1987; Longenecker and Stapp 1993; Diehl et al. 1998). It would be folly to investigate a community and the material culture therein without fully understanding the various components of the social structure, a point understood by anthropologists from functionalist, structuralist, or even Marxist approaches (e.g. Firth 1951; Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Levi-Strauss 1963; Bloch 1983; Godelier 1986). From an archaeological perspective, the interlaced web of social relations through new types of fictive kinship in diaspora communities deeply affected the site formation processes of Overseas Chinese sites.

Kerri's (1976:23) review essay on the historical and anthropological analysis of voluntary organizations, illustrates that in changing social and economic situations immigrants employ these societies as adaptive mechanisms for creating new social groups in areas where kinship and territory-based organization fails. Specifically, Kerri (1976:34) notes that the study of voluntary organizations in anthropology shifted the disciplinary perspective so that researchers view "culture not only as an adaptive mechanism, but also as one of the things to which we as individuals and sometimes as

groups must adapt.” In new circumstances brought on by a variety of potential factors (industrialization, transnationalism, warfare, etc.), individuals adapted by employing these voluntary organizations as “innovative pathways to overcome the obstacles” encountered. The Chinese use of voluntary organizations represents a similar adaptation to changing social circumstances, comparable to Little’s (1967) analysis of secret society membership in South Africa. Little (1967:164-165) found that tribal migrants to South Africa from other inland regions with the inability to move upward socially, used these voluntary associations as a means of gaining power, prestige, and wealth. More recently, Brettell’s (2005) study of Asian Indian immigrants in Dallas-Fort Worth discovered a similar pattern in the growth of voluntary organizations. Touching on a point raised by Kerri (1974:34), Brettell (2005:878-879) states that the immigrant population in the Dallas-Fort Worth area employed voluntary organizations at a higher rate as compared to other Asian Indian ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles. The main reason for this discrepancy, suggested by Brettell, is that the larger population in Los Angeles provided more opportunities for traditional kinship-based social organization than the under-sized and fragmented Asian Indian community in Dallas-Forth Worth.

Kerri (1974), Little (1967) and Brettell (2005) demonstrate the relevance and potential of voluntary organization research in anthropological and archaeological discourse. Particularly, as Kerri (1974:33) notes, voluntary organization research demonstrates the failure of acculturation and assimilation studies to fully articulate true cultural systems due to the adaptive creation of new social organization in response to changing economic or cultural factors. As Voss (2005:432) and Voss and Allen (2008:19) discuss, the continued domination of assimilation narratives has marginalized

Overseas Chinese Archaeology, particularly in terms of the field's applicability to other disciplines. Archaeologists in Montana have continued this trend, applying acculturation models to their findings based on the presence/absence or ratio of traditional Chinese goods to Euro-American material culture (Fredlund et al. 1991; Rossillon 2002, 2003, 2008; Hall et al. 2006). Archaeologists studying the Overseas Chinese experience, as well as other ethnic immigrant groups, can use a framework of voluntary organizations to frame further research and refine ideas of how these associations deeply affected the daily lives of immigrants. This chapter will discuss how the scholarly framework of the Overseas Chinese experience needs to include a more robust understanding of social organization in order to shed the well-worn and utterly bland vestiges of assimilation and acculturation studies. The first step is to discuss the varying webs of social relations within the Overseas Chinese community. Second I will provide an example of one type of social organization in Montana, and then outline a final archaeological framework that can help guide future work in the field.

## **6.2: Chinese Social Organization in Overseas Communities**

As noted earlier, in traditional Chinese society the family and clan dominated community relationships. Due to the fractioned state of 19<sup>th</sup> century China, there lacked a distinct national identity among Chinese citizens. Rather, in place of a national identity, the clan, class, and ethnicity formed the core of an individual's identity and role in Chinese society. Upon reaching the shores of the diaspora countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, England, Mexico, Cuba, or the United States, the Chinese, regardless of family, socio-economic class, or ethnicity, became a monolithic entity in the

view of the host community. The social pressure-cooker in host communities forced disparate Chinese groups into close quarters and cooperation for mutual survival and success. The historic perception of the Overseas Chinese as a monolithic cultural entity deeply affected the anthropological and archaeological analysis of this population throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, in recent years a more robust and diverse variety of studies have emerged (Greenwood 1978; Ritchie 1986; Wegars 1993; and Meyer 2001) though much work remains.

Lyman's (1974) ground-breaking study of San Francisco's Chinatown establishes a better understanding of the 'web of interrelations' that permeated urban and rural Chinese life in the United States and potentially other diaspora communities. According to Lyman (1974:473), group affiliation in Overseas Chinese communities fell into three basic categories: clans, benevolent groups (or district associations), and secret societies. As Zheng (2001:11) notes each of the three types were based on a lineage arrangement commonplace in 19<sup>th</sup>-century China and thus comfortable for the immigrants to adopt. It is clear that membership in one did not preclude participation in the other two. Clan associations were the first institutions established by Chinese immigrants, with membership based off surname representing a break in traditional organization that historically focused on blood relations. Clan associations in China possessed carefully constructed lineage charts to determine membership, though in overseas communities such evidence was hard to produce and ultimately became unimportant (Lyman 1974:477). Benevolent societies provided a larger net of membership, organizing Chinese immigrants by their district of origin, a common language, or ethnicity (Lyman 1974:479). Both clans and benevolent societies were extensions of legal entities

acknowledged by the Qing government in China. However, the third organizing force in San Francisco and other diasporic communities were secret societies, an illegal institution in China due to their subversive tendencies towards the Qing government (Lyman 1974:484-485). Clans, benevolent associations, and secret societies helped to bind together an entire community faced by overwhelming social, legal, and physical attacks.

The clan, benevolent association, and secret society worked in unison and opposition in San Francisco's Chinatown during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arguments can be made that these groups still deeply affect Chinese life in large urban centers in the United States (e.g. PCA 1994; Bolz 1995; O'Neill 1999). In several instances, the interests of the three groups conflicted, leading to what the host communities termed "Tong Wars" (Lyman 1974:490-491). There also appears to be a relative blurring in the distinctions between these three groups during the period of question with merchant leaders of clans or benevolent societies also possessing interests in secret societies (Lyman 1974:491-492). Failure to accommodate the collective mandate of these three groups could lead to a member's ostracism, boycott, or exile from not only the organization but a community (Lyman 1974:484). As seen during the Geary Act deliberations discussed in Chapter 4, the Six Companies—a combination of several benevolent associations—deeply influenced the nation-wide Chinese response to the law first through boycott and later through sponsorship of registrations.

Even with the supposed anti-Qing leanings of secret societies, the traditional social organizations in overseas communities focused on protecting their own membership, and perpetuated a Chinese population that was fragmented in integration and purpose. By the late 1900s, the attempts to reform the Qing government in China

helped to foster a new politically-motivated and nationalist agenda among the Overseas Chinese that still continued as secondary to other loyalties. In 1899, the Empress Dowager Cixi halted any effort to reform the Qing Government into a constitutional monarchy (Stanley 1996:475). Kang Youwei, the leader of the reformers fled to British Columbia, Canada, and with the assistance of wealthy merchants, established the *Bao Huang Hui*, or Chinese Empire Reform Association (Stanley 1996:475-476). In contrast to other voluntary organizations in overseas communities, the Chinese Empire Reform Association (CERA) cross-cut all lineage, class, or ethnic affiliations and bound most immigrants together in an effort to reform the homeland.

A student of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, visited the United States in 1903 when he was 30 to learn more about the republican values of the country in order to better reform the Chinese state. Due to his attempts at reform in China he was forced to flee to Japan in 1898, and traveled to Canada and the United States in 1903. Youwei traveled extensively in both countries, meeting politicians and local Chinese populations in order to learn about international forms of government and also drum support for Chinese reform. During 1903 he visited Billings, Livingston, Miles City, and Helena (Arkush and Lee 1993:81). Liang Qichao determined that China differed from America on a basic level as Chinese were socially organized by clan rather than an individual unit. In effect, China had a village mentality, not a national mentality, something that America lost in the early 1900s (Arkush and Lee 1993:92; Stanley 1996:479). The creation of Chinese nationalism led to an active search for a new modern identity by those in China and overseas through active debate and sponsorship (Liu 2005; Chen 2006:192-193). Tsai (1986:92) notes that during Qichao's trip to the United States in 1903 the CERA

expanded to include a total of 103 branches. Recent research by Dr. Weinong Gao (2009:443-445) indicates that Liang Qichao observed that the Montana branches of CERA were the most organized and efficient, and even created a separate division for mutual defense and self-protection.

Seemingly supporting the prevalence of CERA in Montana Chinese communities, excavators at Big Timber recovered several fragments of decorative bowl made specifically for the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. The red transfer-print pattern shows the Hardscrabble homestead of President Ulysses S. Grant. Just before the 1904 World's Fair, C.F. Blanke purchased the Hardscrabble cabin for explicit use in marketing his new brand of coffee (National Park Service 2010). Blanke moved Hardscrabble to the World's Fair lands for the exposition, and produced a variety of promotional goods that were sold or given away to visitors. These promotional items were not distributed outside the World's Fair, as indicated by historical sources (Bennitt 1905; National Park Service 2010). In 1904, Prince Pu Lun of China came to the United States to visit local CERA groups and visit the World's Fair in St. Louis. During this visit, Prince Pu Lun met with leaders of CERA and many joined his entourage to St. Louis (Bennitt 1905). While there are many other countless ways the Blanke bowl was deposited at Big Timber's Chinese restaurant, there does remain a plausible connection to the St. Louis World's Fair and Prince Pu Lun's visit.

It is clear that all types of Chinese voluntary societies and organizations found favor with the Chinese living in Montana. There is no need to summarize the role and implications of all voluntary associations, as other scholars have touched sufficiently on the role and function of clans, benevolent associations, and CERA (e.g., Stanley 1996;



Chen 2001; Jiang 2004; Brettel 2005; Liu 2005; Chan 2006; Chen 2006; Hsu 2006). However, as noted by Lyman (1974:474), many scholars avoided the role of secret societies in Overseas Chinese communities due to what they viewed as exaggerated claims of significance. The history of the Chinese in Montana include numerous references to the role of secret societies in affecting daily life for these immigrants. Thus there is need to briefly summarize the historical evolution of this facet of Chinese culture, and its existence in Montana during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **6.3: Chinese Secret Societies in China**

Secret societies, also termed voluntary associations, have a long tradition within Chinese culture, some dating back thousands of years. Traditionally, these societies served as solely mutual-aid organizations but morphed into politically motivated systems of rebellion and resistance to the Manchu national government during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In resistance to the Manchu-dominated governmental system of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.), these secret societies brought together individuals of the lowest social classes, and thus, least powerful elements of Chinese society into semi-organized religious and political entities spread throughout both north and south China. It is significant that secret societies were not anti-government, but more simply anti-Manchu. Historical analysts of the Qing Dynasty divide its history into two parts, high Qing (1644-ca. 1800) exemplified by peace, tranquility and growth, and low Qing (ca. 1800-1911) identified by dynasty decline through social unrest, warfare, and external influence.

However, by the mid-19th century, secret societies, which were outlawed by the Qing government, became a means of underground social organization in communities feeling the worst sting of the transition from a traditional economic system to a proto-industrial core communities partly controlled by foreign powers. According to David Ownby (1996:2), in traditional Chinese culture “secret societies were informal, popular institutions, created by marginalized men seeking mutual protection and mutual aid in a dangerous and competitive society.” Movement to proto-industrial centers stemmed from years of social unrest, and changing rural economic systems, leading to the migration of dispossessed peasants. Dislocation of people from the land, and the destruction of self-sufficiency among thousands of families due to this process, created a substantial pool of unemployed or underemployed working individuals who had no access to social or economic prosperity within the Chinese political system without joining these secret societies. In essence, secret societies formed bands that crossed family lineages and political lines, and provided an opportunity for merchants and laborers alike to increase their chances of finding employment opportunities, trade markets, or even political success through the accumulation of wealth.

At the same time secret society membership and power within traditional Chinese culture grew, thousands of immigrants left the nation in search of economic opportunities across the world including but not exclusively Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, and the United States. Overseas Chinese research has largely ignored the role that secret societies might have played in social organization within these host communities. Indeed, even today these secret societies dating back hundreds or thousands of years are affecting the global system of illegal human and drug trafficking,

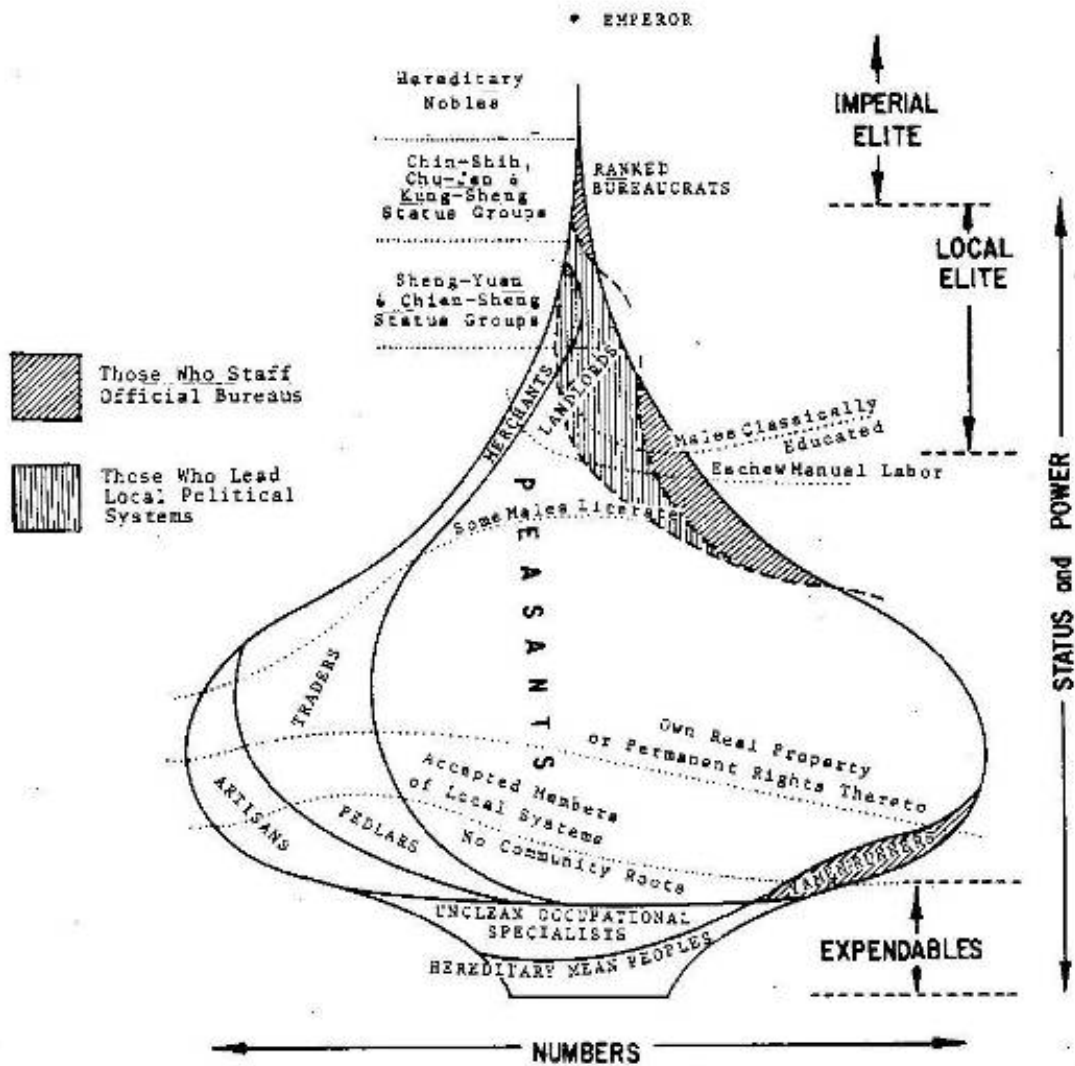
through semi-organized crime syndicates which still fall under the same banner as those earlier organizations. Understanding and researching the role of secret societies in historical contexts, including the examples from the state of Montana, will help scholars understand the dynamic nature of these institutions and how they have, and have not, changed during the intervening years.

In order to understand the evolution of Chinese secret societies, it is necessary to begin with the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), as this represents the foundation for the cultural system that created millions of disenchanting peasants who formed the membership base of these organizations (Lee 1970:173). During the Han dynasty the ruling class began to institute formal examinations to allow individuals to enter into higher reaches of power. These examinations largely focused on the individuals' knowledge of Confucian texts, and the deep understanding of their meanings (Smith 1994:60-61). Successful passage of the examinations allowed the person to join the ranks of the gentry if an applicant passed only the first level of exams. Applicants became scholar-officials if passing second or third level exams. The ruling class of Chinese was more based on hereditary linkages than examinations. A small number of peasants acquired gentry positions through the state examination system (Grasso et al. 2004:14).

Confucianists adhere to the notion that humanity was able to be perfected through scholarly and academic study, and thus true power and position came from the ability to master the virtues of human life: loyalty, justice, benevolence, wisdom and propriety (Deng 1999:114-115). In this way, the passage of the exams showed the dedication of an individual to the path of self-enlightenment that would be furthered through a lifetime of study. The gentry and scholar-officials were placed near the top of the traditional

hierarchy through the passage of examinations, but below the ruling monarchy (Brook 1990:28). An outgrowth of these beliefs was the low social hierarchy position that skilled physical laborers (miners, artisans, etc.) generally held within the traditional Confucianist society (Figure 6.1).

**Figure 6.1:** Social Stratification in Late Imperial China, courtesy of Dr. Phil West. The bell shape denotes the areas of Chinese society that individuals could move socially, both upward and downward with passage or failure of examinations. The cross-hatched areas indicate groups of people that would hold certain amount of power within Chinese society. Finally, note that the Emperor is separate from the rest of the chart, as this is due to the fact that in Chinese society the Emperor was god-like and no one could move up to his level.



Merchants bred distrust among the scholar-officials for one ideological and one pragmatic reason. First, in a system where intellectual pursuits were supposedly the single most important drive for individuals, the ever-present search for profit as exhibited by the merchant class was antithetical to this ideal. Second, the scholar-officials knew that the examinations, and thus the roads to power and prestige, were gated by expensive costs of training and education in doctrine, and the merchant class might well have the resources to enter the political system and begin to affect change (Davis 1971:12). The mix of ideological and pragmatic rationales in the Chinese Confucian system led to the mainstream exclusion of merchants, laborers, artisans, and many others, though some of these individuals did manage to move upward through the ranks of social stratification (Hsu 1967:300). While merchants were barred from gaining official local authority the Qing used them effectively to manage tax collection (Mann 1987:12-13). However, political and social opposition of the secret societies was not directed at Confucianism, but specifically at the Manchu and the Qing government.

As suggested above, while examinations were supposedly open to all Chinese citizens (except women), there existed a strong boundary between traditional power-holders and the rest of the society (Smith 1994:82). These examinations were exclusive based on access to schools, tutors, and examination centers, though millions did attempt and pass (Smith 1994:62-63). Not all villages or even provinces had dedicated centers for teaching and testing Confucianist ideology. In addition, the whole process of examination was cost-prohibitive to many, as every step required some outlay of funds to send a student to a tutor, or travel across country to a testing center. This created an elite class that lasted the millennia due to the fact that a select few could afford to have their

lineage become part of the Chinese system of power, while the vast majority outside that system rarely had a chance to enter (Ch'u 1962:161-163; Davis 1971:31). However, those lineages that had attained these positions of power had to continually maintain their social and economic position through continued passage of exams by descendants, lest the lineage fall down the social ladder (Ping-Ti 1962). For over two thousand years this system perpetuated itself with only a few minor insurrections, due to the generally content agrarian population, though outside influences were beginning to take their toll. Economic growth and security and the relative peaceful relations with neighboring states kept large-scale insurrection and rebellion to a minimum.

The Qing Dynasty began with the invasion and conquering of nearly all of modern China by the Manchu. The Manchu came from the north of China, and after conquering the nation, took over the system of Confucianism as a means of governance; some even suggest that the Manchu "were more Confucian than the Chinese" (Davis 1971:13). The new rulers attempted to decrease personal freedoms in order to quell any rebellions. These actions included portraying Buddhism and Taoism as dangerous (Stirling and Ward 1925:3; Smith 1994:83). Both of those religions held the greatest sway over the densely populated agricultural hinterland of southern China and had direct influence in the development of secret societies (Stirling and Ward 1925:3-4). The Manchu edict forced these religious systems underground, increasing the friction between the new rulers of China and the bulk of the populace. Over the first few decades of the Qing Dynasty, Manchu families instituted themselves throughout the entire country as the new scholar-officials and/or gentry class (Spence 1990:46-47). In many cases non-Manchu lineages that had successfully passed the formal examinations were not included

in the decision-making processes, leading to disenfranchisement (Brook 1990:28). As Manchu families controlled the examination system and the power-holding offices, they were able to propagate their control quickly through most of the provinces (Lee 1970:174). However, many times the power was only surrendered by the local non-Manchu population because of the ability of the Manchu and Manchu-sympathizing gentry to protect them from marauding bandits or outside invaders.

The system of gentry control over local villages, and subservience of the gentry to a larger power at the provincial and national level, never worked with great efficiency even during the best of times in Qing China (Brook 1990:27-29). Corruption was the norm within gentry-controlled areas, and officials were easily bribed for favors by powerful non-scholar-officials or by outside influence (Hsiao 1960:166). This corruption also included the purchasing of Confucianist degrees by the merchant class, who were for a long time excluded from this process during the pre-Manchu period (Davis 1971:30; Smith 1994:81). Even though it tried mightily to institute a strong national government, the Qing Dynasty was never able to fully control all the workings of such a far-flung geographical empire as China (Davis 1971:14). This reality allowed the local gentry to exert more control over local areas, although they were most likely Manchu themselves, or Manchu sympathizers. This disconnect between the national government and the local level, and ultimately the local and national governments' lack of connection to the population, fostered discontent from which secret societies grew stronger.

The rise of the Qing Dynasty closely correlated with the increasing connections of outside influences on what had long been a self-sufficient Chinese society. For hundreds of years, the economic system of China was largely internally self-sufficient and did not

require a substantial trading network outside its controlled areas for sustainability. This system changed during the eighteenth and 19th centuries by the increasing influence of European powers along the coast. Ultimately, the defiant adherence to little or no trade with outside entities instigated a series of wars, colloquially called the Opium Wars (1839-1842; 1856-1860). The battles between the traditional Chinese military and the technologically advanced European powers were heavily lopsided affairs, with the British and French securing rights to free trade in numerous ports, and securing Hong Kong as a colony (Davis 1971:55; Spence 1990:158-159).

The Opium Wars, and the abject failure of the Chinese military to defend sovereignty, shook the nation. For hundreds of years the Confucian doctrine of non-trade with outside powers had placed the country in a technological vacuum, and ultimately led to the stagnation of growth in various sectors, including military advancement. This failure, while blamed partly on Confucianism, was mostly centered on the largely despised Qing Dynasty and its Manchu leaders. In the following years after the Opium Wars, peasantry and some local gentry, bonded many times through secret society organization, attempted to overthrow their Manchu leadership through outright rebellion (Hsiao 1960: 472:473). The Taiping (1850-1864) and the Boxer (1899-1901) Rebellions were a direct and painful result of the failure of the Qing to resist outside foreign influences.

Nearly fifteen years of bloody battles in the Taiping Rebellion dislocated hundreds of thousands of rural peasantry from their lands in the war zone along the Yangtze River Basin (mainly in Guizhou and Yunnan provinces), and pushed them southward and towards the coastal regions (Davis 1971:31; Spence 1990:210).



Resettlement of this population in already densely populated areas substantially altered the landscape of economic sustainability within these communities. For hundreds of years the rural agrarian communities were largely self-sufficient due to the cultivation and consumption of crops and other necessary goods. However, increased population density, through both war refugees and increases in population, overpowered the traditional system of self-sufficiency (Ownby 1996:17). Population growth during the high Qing times (1644-1800) reflected good government and technological advances (Ping-ti 1959:266-267), and the population of China nearly doubled during the eighteenth century (Spence 1990:93; Evans 1998:74). Agricultural land per person declined continuously across China from the 11<sup>th</sup> century forward, due to increasing population and land fragmentation (Zhao 1986:92). By 1833, the land size per family had declined to less than three-quarters of an acre, for those farmers that could even find land. Ping-ti (1959:274) believed that nearly all the problems within the late Qing dynasty were direct results of the increasing disparity between population and economic means (see also Elvin 1973). Increasing population density and decreasing agricultural lands disrupted the millennia-old systems at work in the country, and farmers soon became tenants on larger farms owned by the local wealthy elite (Hsiao 1960:386). This resulted, for the first time in Chinese history, in a substantial portion of the farming community relying on wage labor for their existence without any chance of owning property of their own.

The growth of coastal ports seized by the European powers during the Opium Wars represented another response to this massive internal migration of populations. Those dispossessed from land because of increasing population density in the farming regions, disbanded military men, orphans of war, and hundreds of other working class

individuals moved towards the ports because they offered opportunities to make a living. Due to the European influence, some of the major port cities Ghuangzou (or Canton), Xiamen (or Amoy), Foochow, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, had begun to industrialize for the production of materials to be traded both internally and externally (Spence 1990:210). This influenced tens of thousands of individuals who had once lived in the rural regions to migrate to urban areas for employment purposes (Davis 1971:32). Industrialization formed (Davis 1971:33):

a new urban working class [which] was created with the arrival of European manufacturing and commercial enterprises in the treaty ports. This class of wage-earning, migrant labour had no precedent in traditional society, integral as they were to a capitalist economy.

As the port cities quickly became manufacturing centers, the rural farmers became more dependent upon wage-labor and craft production which further altered traditional Chinese society of self-sufficiency (Wong 1997:40)

In the haven of these ports controlled almost entirely by distant colonial powers, the long-strangled religions of Buddhism and Taoism found new life as they were not as closely monitored by the Qing regime. In addition, the European powers did far more than just merely provide employment opportunities. For example, close contact between the Chinese and their foreign neighbors created new problems for the traditional society, including the widespread introduction of Christian missions in port towns (which soon spread to the countryside) and the growing influence of Western political and social concepts upon all the classes of the Chinese population.

With the growth of these new social and economic realms, individuals long since excluded from the gentry in traditional Chinese society—the merchants—began to rise in importance due to their strong ties to the external colonial powers and the wealth that

those ties brought them (see also Zelin 1990). No longer did the examinations and intellectual cultivation of individuals dictate positions of power within local and national government. Rather, wealth became the primary means of social mobility. According to Davis (1971:53), “[t]his upsetting of the delicate equilibrium between wealth and status in determining the influence which an individual could exert in society, damaged the hegemony of the bureaucratic ruling class beyond repair.” Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the merchants lacked upward mobility and power through both a decentralized production center in rural communities but also the efforts of the government’s policies (Deng 1999:85). The movement towards emphasis of wealth as a precursor to power, rather than an adherence to Confucianism, allowed even the most common laborer and farmer to aspire to political goals through business ventures and hard work (Davis 1971:32-33).

In less than three hundred years, the traditional Chinese society governed by Confucianism had fallen to an outside invasion by the Manchus, spread rampant corruption throughout the empire fostering a strong resentment of the non-Manchu peasantry towards the leadership, and bent relatively easily to the forceful will of external colonial powers. The result of all of these events created a milieu of opportunity for secret societies to gain power and influence throughout China and to increase their membership without intensive effort.

In most cases, detailed scholarly study of secret societies are limited due to the relative paucity of documentary materials about the topic. After all, these were *secret* societies, and documentary sources tend to come from official records that are inherently biased (Ownby 1996:22). Due to the difficulty of obtaining clear records, it is nearly impossible to construct a list of secret societies in Qing China, as it appears societies had

numerous and overlapping names, yet the Triads seem to be the largest and most important secret organization around the world. While some secret societies existed in China well before the Qing Dynasty began in 1644, upheavals in this period in Chinese history created a mission for the societies and resulted in the increased number of organizations and membership. The new overt political goal of these secret societies intended to overthrow the Qing Dynasty and restore the Ming (Lee 1970:17), and to do that they had to increase their ability to organize the population. Secret societies were involved in both legal and illegal enterprises during this period, as even illegal activities helped to secure their goal of overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. As discussed in the preceding section, the historical context of the Chinese state from 1644 to the mid-1900s created an incredible opportunity for enlistment of new members and the spread of the power of these societies.

Several factors dictated the nature of a Chinese secret society, and these characteristics are quite comparable to other organizations around the world. Davis (1971:1-2) outlines these various characteristics as the following: 1) Voluntary, where membership within the secret society is based on a voluntary choice of the individual, and is not based on the economic position, social status, or even sex and gender of the individual; 2) Secret Knowledge, where a secret society is based on the lack of information provided to the outside world about topics like the very existence of said group, the rituals and origin stories, and especially the current and past activities of its members; 3) Secret Existence, this is broken down into two types of societies where a) members do not know other members, or b) where the members of the group are internally identifiable, but secrecy exists in its connection to the outside world; 4) Live &

Act Together: sometimes the members may live communally or share property, a trait that can only work if there is a consenting basis of existence that all members choose to support the other; 5) Dependent on Members and Non-Members: this means that a secret society must have the outside world to pit itself against, or there would be no reason for the association. Smith (1994:99) puts this succinctly as “[i]n general, Chinese secret societies may be defined as associations whose policies were characterized by some form of religious, political, or social dissent from the established order.” All of the above-mentioned characteristics of a secret society find manifestation in the Chinese organizations discussed in this paper, both in historical and current times.

It is important to note here that there is a distinct difference between the various Chinese secret societies, depending on the geographical location. In the north, secret societies such as the White Lotus were extremely religious in orientation through both rituals and beliefs. However, in the southern parts of China, the secret society expressed religious values through rituals only but not in the organization or beliefs of the group as a whole (Smith 1994:98). This religious split between the groups, even though related movements, is important as it relates to directly how they operated in the rapidly changing world. Specifically, southern secret societies were very appealing as the indoctrinated member did not have to alter their religious beliefs radically to join, and the benefits and aims were much more pragmatic than religiously-based organizations in the north. In particular, the “southern societies derived their [origin] from the secular *pai-meng* or mutual-aid or friendship association” (Davis 1971:47). The majority of Chinese immigrants that spread throughout the world during the second half of the 19th century came from southern China (mainly Guangdong, Guangxi, and Fujian provinces).

In the rural areas of southern China, secret societies had existed for hundreds of years, arising out of the need to supplement the corrupt local governmental officials who controlled those regions. In many cases the scholar-officials who controlled villages or cities relied exclusively on the local populace to form militias during times of invasion or banditry (Hsiao 1960:294-295). However, as the control of the central government declined during the Qing regime, and ultimately to almost complete dissolution after the China was defeated in the Opium Wars, local peasants increasingly relied on established secret societies for protection, trade, and organization (Davis 1971:56; Wakeman 1972:33). Before the massive dislocation of people through warfare, drought, famine, and population growth, secret society membership remained small. However, with the massive movement of people from established economic production areas to new regions with decreasing national control, and after the defeats of the first Opium War, secret membership from farmer peasants increased exponentially (Wakeman 1972:34; Ownby 1996:22).

Throughout the entire history of the southern secret societies, the main political goal was to overthrow the corrupt and oppressive national government, even before the Qing Dynasty (Davis 1971:73). However, these secret societies viewed the Qing Dynasty as the worst rulers in Chinese history responsible for increased corruption and the failure of the Chinese military to defend itself (Spence 1990:169). In addition, many members of the peasantry, who were forced off their land due to starvation or merely in search of better economic opportunities in major port cities, wanted to join these societies to throw off the shackles of foreign rule, both Manchu and European. According to Jean Chesneaux (1971:19), “the societies supported and led the struggles of the poor

peasantry, the proto-proletariat (notably transportation workers), and other have-nots against the well-off and their political adversaries.” In this way, the Taiping Rebellion during the mid-19th century had deep connections to secret society leadership and organization (Stirling and Ward 1925:8). In particular, the secret society known as the Triads (also known as the Hung Men, Red Turbans, etc.) centered in South China, were extremely powerful in organizing the Taiping Rebellion.

As discussed earlier, the increasingly large wage-earning class in the port cities had completely changed China’s social system. For the first time, there were large numbers of people separated from ancestral agricultural lands and families who needed the support of secret societies to survive in the rapidly modernizing world. Family lineage was especially important in traditional Chinese society (Ch’u 1962:179-180), as evidenced by the perpetual scholar-officials’ control over these lands. In rural, and urban settings, family and clan lineages were the main glue holding together these communities and organizing their production and livelihoods (Smith 1994:87, 91). However, due to the ravages of war and famine, there was an ever-increasing number of individuals in both the countryside and urban settings who had little or no family lineage left, and this is where the secret societies stepped in to assist as “substitute lineages” (Ownby and Heidhues 1993:4, 43).

The nature of the relationship between secret societies and family lineages is interesting in its ability to alter the nature of fundamental relationships without major conflict. Both of these organizational schemes relied on the individual’s sole adherence to that system (Davis 1971:82). However, the disenfranchised family lineages of the countryside did not necessarily support the scholar-official lineages controlling local

politics and economics. In essence, the only real conflict between secret societies and family lineages was in the opposition to gentry/scholar-officials, where the secret societies attempted to circumvent control of these powers while local families might be part of, or in support of, these governmental figures. In other circumstances, the secret societies actually cross-cut lineage lines and banded together warring lineages and even sometimes rectified class-based breakages within a single lineage as the organization focused attention on the singular goal to overthrow the government (Davis 1971: 81). This successful bridging of lineages gave significant power to the secret societies, except in areas where the gentry's lineage was strongly aligned with national military forces (Davis 1971:83).

Although, secret societies explicitly avoided including the gentry into their fold due to their connections to the Qing government, sometimes gentry individuals and lineages did join, though only in limited and unimpressive numbers. These members had no extra power or entitlement to position within these organizations (Davis 1971:88). Exclusion of powerful lineages is the direct result of the Qing Dynasty policy of outlawing the societies, thereby effectively severing the possibility that a respectable (or aspiring) lineage might attempt to join a secret organization. Davis (1971:89) suggests that if the Qing had not placed the societies in an illegal light, then these Chinese organizations might have followed an evolutionary path closer to that of European Freemasonry, with rich and powerful members comprising the leadership. The comparison and linkages of Freemasonry and Chinese secret societies will be discussed later.



By the mid-1800s, Chinese secret societies in the south were able to bring together an extremely variable group of both lineated families and isolated individuals, including dispossessed peasants, unemployed artisans, small traders, owner-managers of various land and water transport vehicles, general laborers, porters, and disbanded soldiers in proportions dictated by their location (Davis 1971:90; Ownby and Heidhues 1993:52). Depending on the region of the society's operation, the membership shifted towards domination by a single group, such as stevedores or transportation managers along the rivers; but nearly all came from a poor background, and all were part of the new working class. In some cases, women had their own chapters of secret societies, yet their numbers within the larger groups is hard to quantify, but did include those working as prostitutes as well as seamstresses, and other laborers (Davis 1971:53).

Political goals alone did not entice this broad slice of Chinese society to join; instead there were pragmatic reasons for joining a secret organization. Economic connections provided through the membership of a secret society were probably the primary reason most individuals joined. The role of the secret society as a substitute lineage was reified in the recurrent use of terms such as "family" and "brothers" in official rules and rituals (Schlegel 1866:xii; Stirling and Ward 1925:24, 66-68, 82; Ownby and Heidhues 1993:84), and this bond was extremely important to ensure continuity with the traditional Chinese value of the family. Secret societies were made up of individuals spread across various economic spheres, and merchants and laborers alike could find trading partners even in largely unfriendly regions. For example, merchants traveling up the Yangtze River into territory held by warring or inhospitable

gentry lineages could still find a means of organizing a trading opportunity through secret society memberships existing in the area (Wakeman 1972:29).

Relations between different secret societies (over five separate main organizations, and dozens of sub-chapters in south China) were not always cordial. In areas where a single secret society might have claimed control of legal pursuits such as river trade or illegal pursuits such as smuggling, movement of another society into its realm might spark violence (Lee 1970:178). This led to the direct association of gang warfare with secret society activity throughout the government and among the non-affiliated populace (Davis 1971:79). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, rival secret societies fought for control of illegal activities across the United States, leading to several deadly incidents in San Francisco (Lyman 1974:491).

Membership into a secret society was largely a voluntary choice. In the cities, faced with an innumerable individuals separated from family lineage ties, the societies found a large proportion of their membership willing to join without argument. However, in areas where the secret society was trying to establish its control and will over a village or market, sometimes the collective membership of the society would coerce an individual or family to join through blackmail, threats (and sometimes action) of physical violence, including kidnapping (Davis 1971:88-89). Once joined, an individual was a member for life, as the society could not take the chance that a person might relate their experiences to an outsider or the government (Schlegel 1866:6). If a member did attempt to leave the organization, penalties could include beatings or perhaps even death. When joining a secret society the individual accepted a number of laws, each particular to the organization that would secure group cohesion and solidarity.

Prohibitions against leaving a society, divulging society information, turning in a fellow member to the law, and committing adultery with another member's spouse or daughter, were all part of the agreement that one adhered to when joining (Davis 1971:90-91). Due to the secret and illegal nature of the organizations, penalties for breaking these laws were much more stringent than breaking laws associated with the host society (Davis 1971:89).

Leadership of a traditional Chinese secret society in south China was based on a rotational system, so that every member had an equal opportunity to lead the organization for a set period of time. This rotation scheme decreased the chance that an organization would change from its original purpose as opposing the government, but also decreased an administrative cost and thereby decreasing the chances of the entire society being discovered by governmental officials (Davis 1971:43). In addition, there was no central leadership for the various chapters of a secret society, which was both a strength and weakness to the overall goals of the organizations. First, no central leadership allowed each chapter of the society to pursue its own particular goals in a local environment without being controlled by distant, and separated, leaders. This allowed individuals to feel closely affiliated with the local membership, without fear of being subservient to other organizations spread throughout the country. This decentralized system also severely decreased the chances that an individual arrested or detained by the government could identify all the members or even the leaders of the entire organization (Schlegel 1866:6). However, a decentralized system of small isolated chapters was not easily organized for revolt (Wakeman 1972:31). This decentralization spelled doom to the

Taiping Rebellion, as secret societies were a major player in recruiting soldiers and organizing the battles.

Chinese secret societies were able to capitalize on the growing wage-earning working class emerging after the Opium Wars, making themselves a truly dangerous political opponent to the Qing Dynasty. By performing a role as a “substitute lineage” the societies were able to provide opportunities, both legal and illegal, for thousands of Chinese at home and abroad. Membership in these societies allowed an individual to gain access to business contacts, but also to form a kinship with others of a similar economic background. Secret societies effectively banded together widely disparate groups that earlier political regimes had pushed to the fringes. On a small-scale these societies were able to effectively control a substantial portion of the economic activity in numerous areas across China, and create a new type of social organization that allowed for a large role in the eventual overthrow of an entire regime.

Finally, in 1911, secret societies played a small but significant role in the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and helped to usher in the Republican government headed by Sun Yat Sen. Sun Yat Sen was probably a member of a secret society, and received substantial financial contributions from the Triad Society (Lyman et al. 1964:533). After the fall of the Qing, he took away the legal prohibitions against the organizations and integrated them into the new government. After the 1911 transition to a Chinese Republic, secret societies gained positions of influence, as the traditional channels to power collapsed and members could officially join the ranks of the government for the first time (Zelin 1990:94, n.32). After the violent transition to communism during the mid-20th century, these secret societies again went largely underground, but their goals

were no longer as political. Instead, many of their activities centered almost exclusively on various illegal enterprises, including human and drug smuggling, to name several. In Hong Kong and Malaysia, officials have noted that, “the secret societies there not only controlled prostitution, but also actually formed ‘companies’ for the ‘importation and hiring out of prostitutes from China’, which implied there were also ‘export’ companies in China” (Davis 1971:164).

#### **6.4 Chinese Secret Societies in the North America and Montana**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tens of thousands of Chinese voluntarily, although sometimes under duress, immigrated to countries around the world in search of opportunity. These immigrants came almost exclusively from the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, and Guangxi, in the heart of the south China secret society territories. The role of secret societies in the United States is as complicated as within China itself. In China these secret societies were defined by their oppositional nature to the Qing government, though they had other roles as mentioned earlier. However, as Chinese spread to other countries and further away from the restrictive government, the role of secret societies underwent changes. As noted by Lee (1970:178):

Gradually, the original revolutionary nature was lost and the groups became more in the nature of fraternities and mutual help organizations, although the secrecy about membership, rituals, and other details remained. The changed nature of the secret societies was particularly noticeable among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. The exigencies of living abroad among the other people apparently helped to cement the ties of the Chinese, and in tying the Chinese together, the role of the secret societies was very important.

For the first time in two centuries, these secret societies were able to work with almost complete immunity to governmental control and repression, and the true depths of their

control over Overseas Chinese populations remains misunderstood. Shaoqing (2002:44-45) states that the Hung League, one of the largest secret societies, was far more significant in organizing the Australian Chinese population than scholars and the public currently understand. The Qing did attempt to control some Overseas Chinese colonies through establishing consulates and even selling honorary titles to maintain loyalty (Spence 1990:211). However, the Qing did not establish the first Chinese consulate in the United States until the late 1870s (Hansen 2006:42). These efforts met with limited success and never exerted much direct control over American Chinese immigrants.

By 1880, over 100,000 Chinese men and over 3,000 women resided in the United States (Spence 1990:213). Before 1862, there were six separate organizations that handled the immigration and production of Chinese migrants, and these merged to form the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, or Six Companies in 1882 (Pan 1994:54). The Six Companies, with direct ties to secret societies in China through similar legitimate businesses, organized substantial numbers of Overseas Chinese (Spence 1990:213; Pan 1994:54). As part of their efforts in assisting newly arrived immigrants, the Six Companies kept a detailed ledger on the identity, occupation, and location of the Chinese members of their organization (Hansen 2006:41). This registry allowed the Six Companies to organize the immigrant into collective labor efforts in their current location or transferring them to where more labor was needed (Hansen 2006:41). Baxter (2008:30-31) notes that the Chinese Six Companies represented a direct means of using collective power to resist the influence of anti-Chinese agitation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, after the Exclusion Act of 1882 the Six Companies facilitated the illegal immigration of Chinese workers by the thousands across the Canadian and

Mexican border. The Six Companies went even further by providing the illegal immigrants with falsified documents of residency and helped to construct a new identity including family relationships, occupancy, and educational background to assist in the avoidance of the American law enforcement (Hansen 2006:51-52).

Culin (1890:2-5) thoroughly discusses the role and extent of Chinese secret societies in the United States, noting the presence of Chinese secret society chapters in Chicago, St. Louis, New York City, and Philadelphia, with a large headquarters in San Francisco. According to some figures, upwards of eighty percent of Chinese living in Tucson, Arizona during the 1880s belonged to the Triad secret society which was deeply entwined with the Six Companies (Dirlick and Yeung 2001:xxiii). Pioneering work by Paciotti (2005) determined that the significantly higher murder rates among the Chinese in Seattle between 1900 and 1940 was a direct result of secret society organization and the intense warfare disputes brought to the community. Within the Chinese Six Companies there was continual internal strife, and several splinter groups formed during the 1890s and early 1900s (Hansen 2006:40). Even in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century there are internal tensions within the Six Companies, or more commonly known today as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.

In Prescott, Arizona the *Chih-Kung T'ang*, also known as the *Chee Kung Tong* or Triad Society, operated as a means to protect the lives and businesses of Chinese in that community, with a membership percentage similar to that of Tucson (Lister and Lister 1989:51-52). The *Chee Kung Tong*, based out of San Francisco, also had branches in Nevada which included mercantile operations (Hunt-Jones 2006:36). According to Hansen (2006:49), the *Chee Kung Tong*, or a variant, was also critically involved in

human trafficking cross the U.S. and Mexico borders during the early 1900s. In addition, Cheung (2002) discusses how ritual and performance within the *Chih-Kung T'ang* meeting hall in Tucson acted as a means of resistance to the world of exclusion and racism existing in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While outside the meeting hall the Chinese of Tucson, and other areas, were beset on all sides by negative attitudes and laws, but within the *Chih-Kung T'ang* reenacted dramatic episodes of warfare and symbolism empowered the participants (Cheung 2002:42, 46). The analysis of Chinese in Arizona by Lister and Lister (1989), Dirlick and Yeung (2001), and Cheung (2001) demonstrate the powerful role secret societies played in Overseas Chinese communities.

In the early 1960s, Lyman et al. (1964) discovered an assemblage of Chinese secret society trappings while doing research in the Cariboo region of British Columbia. These trappings included a ceremonial robe, books of codes, and a long board with Chinese calligraphy. When translated, the calligraphy was a list of rules for the *Chih-kung T'ang* (or Triad Society), a Chinese secret society operating in California before the mid-1850s with a British Columbia chapter opening in 1862 (Lyman et al. 1964:530-531). According to the translated rules, the Chinese in British Columbia used secret societies for mutual aid, protection, and other social activities (Lyman et al. 1964:532). Far from the stereotypical image of secret societies as havens for crime, the rules of the Cariboo Chinese *Chih-kung T'ang* included the reason for founding the society to: “maintain a friendly relationship among our countrymen and to accumulate wealth through proper business methods for the benefit of all members” (Lyman et al. 1964:534). The documents also outline the rules of the societies’ activities including promoting fair business practices amongst members, prohibitions against in-fighting



during visits to brothels or gambling houses, hospitable housing practices, and a number of other rules backed by declarations of punishment (Lyman et al. 1964:535-539).

Overall, the discovery of the secret society materials in British Columbia show the widespread power of these organizations, and their ability to conduct both formal and informal business and social maintenance through their activities.

The largest organization, which also had direct links to Chinese secret societies, was the Six Companies based out of San Francisco, California. This group was probably the single most important immigration and social organizing force for Overseas Chinese communities in the United States and Canada (Dirlick and Yeung 2001:xx), if not in other countries. The Six Companies, an organization of entrepreneurs at the top, would often pay the expense of travel for those wishing to immigrate; upon arrival in America immigrants would pay off their debt to the company through their labors. During this time the Six Companies would feed and protect these new immigrants, for a fee (Hunt-Jones 2006:36). Chinese employed by the Six Companies, or perhaps indentured is a better term, would be sent to various locations where their labor was desperately needed; such locations were mainly railroad or mining ventures in the American West (Sadowski-Smith 2008:783-784). While definitely not a secret society externally, the extremely weak links, if any, to the Chinese government suggested a powerful autonomous secret society was pulling substantial strings. Even long-distance trade of imported Chinese goods was channeled through the extensive network of the Six Companies, a reality that likely exerted yet even more control over an individuals' life (Dirlick and Yeung 2001:xxiii). While these societies did move from revolutionary tendencies, at least overtly, to mutual aid and social organizational roles that did not attempt as significantly

to hide their clandestine activities, in the United States, they were still connected fundamentally to their roots in China.

Although, Swartout (1988) has discussed the history of the Chinese in Montana, this overview displays a somewhat inaccurate portrayal of the immigrants' social organization. Swartout (1988:48) states that these immigrants "were able to maintain or to create new social organizations based along traditional clan or district lines." While this is in part true, as these affiliations did have manifestations in Montana, secret societies created social and economic linkages between all members of the Chinese community regardless of district or lineage. In Montana, there are quite a few clear examples of the direct impact of secret societies, including the Six Companies, upon both the Chinese and non-Chinese communities. In 1873 the Six Companies in San Francisco issued an order to the local head of that organization in Pioneer, Montana to buy as much land as possible. This was likely ordered to initiate a dispute over the recently passed Montana Alien Law that forbade Chinese from owning land or mining claims (*New Northwest* 1873a:4). The local newspaper editors felt that this effort would ultimately fail, as it would quickly be tested in court if they attempted this action. It is unclear how successful this attempt at mass claim purchase was, but court cases in 1874 overturned the law as discussed in Chapter 3 and Wunder (1980).

Even as early as 1867, the presence of these companies was detailed in Montana with the death of "Chinese Mary." Chinese Mary was a prostitute in Helena who was murdered by unknown parties just before her departure to California to reunite with her children and marry an African-American who had worked for her in Helena. According to newspaper accounts, Mary had garnered the animosity of other Chinese in Helena by

denouncing her citizenship and refusing to “conform to their ‘company’ arrangements” (*Helena Daily Herald* 1867a:2). As a result of this conflict, only four other Chinese prostitutes joined her funeral procession. Denial of proper funeral rites was a significant penalty to the Chinese immigrant, due to the religious necessity of such mourning (Chung and Wegars 2005). As Chinese Mary was a prostitute, and a Chinese one at that, there was little investigation into the motives or suspect of the murder, and the case was never resolved. It is unclear whether Mary’s dispute with the “company arrangements” was strong enough to illicit a murderous response, but it is clear through other stories that these organizations did exert both a coercive and sometimes deadly power over Chinese living in Montana as will be discussed shortly.

The Six Companies also served as a regulating function for the immigrants, as demonstrated in the life and death of an elderly Chinese man in Park City, Montana. According to the newspaper reports, the deceased person had been exiled from China, and once in United States had been harassed by the Six Companies. It seems as though this individual, who never shows up in any subsequent reports, had somehow alienated himself from both the government in China and the powerful Six Companies in the United States. However, this small article suggests that the Six Companies exerted significant control over individuals’ lives, and helped to shape the social organization of Chinese communities in places like Montana (*Helena Independent* 1882f:3).

A different example illustrates that the Six Companies had control over women sold into prostitution and slavery. In 1884, Chin Cum’s contract to another Chinese woman, Suzie Mouie had expired but was still held against her will. A trial over the affair apparently used a Chinese interpreter with clear ties to the Six Companies, and the

case went against Chin Cum. Regardless, Chin Cum was placed in protective custody in the Lewis and Clark County Jail until such time that the court could find a suitable home for the woman to serve as a domestic servant (*Helena Independent* 1884d:3). While this story ended positively, it does indicate the deep connective powers of the Six Companies to prostitution and to the treatment of Chinese women as property or slaves. In a similar case, a woman betrothed in China was abducted by mysterious parties and sent to work as a prostitute in California; a “wealthy Chinese company,” most likely the Six Companies, “owned” her. The husband followed the woman to California, but the company sent her to Montana, where finally she was overtaken by her husband and rescued. Numerous kidnappings and counter-kidnappings followed over the next three years, until finally in 1881, they were married according to United States law and housed in the Lewis and Clark jail for protection from the angered company (*Helena Independent* 1881d:3).

Not only did the Six Companies exert control over the population, but other, more local, secret societies seemed to have certain amounts of influence over Montana’s Chinese communities. Far away from Chinese governmental control, such organizations were not shy in displaying this coercive power and were largely ignored by the United States or Montana governments since the events associated with such control were treated as internal Chinese matters. Take for example the story of Gem (or Jim), a Chinese laundry operator in the town of Deer Lodge. According to newspaper, accounts Gem was approached by the Chinese Gambling Society at Deer Lodge for recruitment, and upon refusing this offer the society “decreed his assassination” (*New Northwest* 1874d:3). Gem appealed to the local non-Chinese community, including the newspaper for assistance and they ran editorials denouncing the threats (*New Northwest*,1874e:3).

Finally, an apology letter to the Hung Seung Tong Co., which probably has ties with national and international societies, written by Gem appeared in the August 8, 1874 edition of the *New Northwest* (1874f:3). Roughly a year later on March 12, 1875, the *New Northwest* received a letter from Gem, who had left for his home in China; the letter arrived shortly after Gem's death on board a steamer that sank off the coast of China. It is unclear why Gem had left Deer Lodge, but it seems logical to assume the difficulties with the Hung Seung Tong Co. did not end with an official apology letter, and might have precipitated his departure. It was likely sheer coincidence that the steamer Gem took back to China sank before final arrival. In a similar case, Sam Yek, another Chinese laundry operator, disappeared completely after a dispute with the Nine Companies, yet another indistinct secret society, and it was supposed at the time that the company might have had a hand in this situation (*Helena Independent* 1882e:3).

There appears to have been a centrality to secret society efforts in Virginia City, Montana, one of the first areas of gold discovery in the state. This was one of the original points of immigration for the first wave of Chinese into Montana. According to numerous resources there was a Chinese Masonic Temple in Virginia City dating to at least the 1870s that, "stood on a little promontory near the town's entrance," and "loomed high in the skyline, an oriental outpost on the borders of western barbarism" (*Mineral Independent* 1941:4). Excavations by the University of Montana in 2000 were near the location of the Chinese temple lodge (Bowen 2004), though crews did not locate firm evidence of this significant structure. Due to the 1950s road realignment through Virginia City, there is likely few remaining subsurface deposits associated with this structure.

In many cases, the host communities commonly called these Chinese secret societies, particularly the Triad, Chinese Free Masons. In Overseas Chinese communities there were dubious linkages between free masons and these organizations; however, outsiders called these Freemasonry lodges because of their secretive nature. Even members of the Free Masons attempted to find linkages between Chinese secret societies and free masonry with limited results besides some similar iconography and rituals (Glick and Sheng-hwa 1947; Stirling and Ward 1925). Other freemasons however, have made the claim that even up through 1882, the Chinese did not have any freemasonry connections, though they were starting to incorporate some traits (Giles 1882:379). In 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia, the Hung League altered its name to Chinese Masonic Society as a means of explaining their organization to non-Chinese, and helped to foster some positive interactions with white Australians (Shaoqing 2002:42-43). Indeed, even the excessive pomp and attendance of a funeral of a Chinese man in Helena was discussed in relation to his position as a head person among the Masons (*Helena Independent* 1884c:3).

Therefore, in reality, the Chinese Masonic Temple of Virginia City, Montana was merely a district meeting house of the Triads, Six Companies, or another strong secret society. Over the following years, it appears that this secret society exerted strong powers over personal freedoms, commerce, and social organization not only in the immediate area but across the state, and “it is reputed to have been, at one time, western headquarters of Chinese Masonry in the United States” (*Mineral Independent* 1941:4). A tapestry from this Masonic Temple in Virginia City, dating to 1876, details the rules and regulations of this organization and included the same types of language and rules as

**Figure 6.2:** Portion of a Chinese banner from the Virginia City Masonic Lodge that outlines a code of conduct for the brotherhood. Montana Historical Society, Special Collections. Photo by Ellen Baumler, 2009.



secret societies in China, as discussed earlier. In particular, the banner (Figure 6.2) had rules including not to “covet the wife or sisters of brethren,” and to retain secrecy at all costs with a rule “may not compromise any other brother,” with potential punishments up to 306 strikes of a cane (Swartout 1988:50). Just as similar rules in China, this banner created the means necessary to retain social cohesion within these secret organizations, and continued use of the language of “brethren” and “brothers” as a substitute lineage.

In the late 1870s, a major conflict between rival Chinese companies in Virginia City cost the lives of two individuals. Although published many years after this conflict, the *Mineral Independent* provides some clues about the root of the disagreements related to this event and its connection to larger organizations:

Six Chinese companies operated in Alder gulch, and every Chinese in the diggings was affiliated with one or the other of them whether the companies were connected with the six great Chinese tongs in control of

the Chinese colony in San Francisco is not known, but the impression prevailed in Virginia City that the connection was direct. The head of each of these companies was martinet and his followers obeyed his orders implicitly. Their quarrels the head men settled among themselves. There were many differences over leases and gradually there grew up two factions in this Chinese fraternity house, four companies aligning themselves against two and among the white people these factions became known as the Four company and the Two company groups (*Mineral Independent* 1941:4).

In effect, during the conflict that lasted nearly a week, the warring factions who used the stage road as a common boundary cut off Virginia City from the rest of Montana.

Eventually, after the death of two members of the Two Company, the conflict subsided, and the Sheriff arrested two individuals for the murders. However, the Chinese effected a mistrial, and when the defense asked for the bodies of the two murdered Chinese, officers excavated the graves only to find them empty. Without corpses there was no case, and the accused individuals were released. There were other “tong wars” reported through secondary literature in Butte during the 1910s and 1920s (Lee 1978), though the scale and death rate seems overblown compared to primary historical resources (*Butte Miner* 1922:3)

In another situation, the interconnections between Chinese societies in other cities and Virginia City became clear. A case in point included the events surrounding Han Bo, a Chinese Methodist convert who arrived in Virginia City to begin proselytizing the local community. It seems that the Han Bo was not a member of the local secret society, and this group saw its power possibly being challenged by outside influences, enlisted the help of a sister organization in Helena. The nature of the dispute illustrated the divide between Han Bo and the other Chinese in Virginia City, as:

His enemies were determined to get rid of him in some manner, and the facts seem to show that the Helena branch of the secret order was



instructed to procure his removal to this city upon a criminal charge. A complaint charging him with the [theft] was therefore made before Judge Davis, and last week Sheriff Jefferis went over to Virginia city, arrested Han Bo and brought him to Helena (*Helena Independent* 1881a:3).

Han Bo claimed to have never even been to Helena before the day he was arrested and taken there, and that on the day of his arrival in Helena the individual who had put out the warrant had “came to the jail and said he was not prosecuting the case because there was any truth in the charges, but because he was compelled to do so by the instructions of the secret order” (*Helena Independent* 1881a:3).

After the inconsistent testimony of those accusing Han Bo of the robbery, the judge dismissed the case in favor of Han Bo. While relishing in the dismissal of the charges, Han Bo requested that he be housed in the jail for an indeterminate amount of time as he was worried that if he had left that day he surely would have been murdered by agents of the secret society. The court granted his request, and the case never appeared again in the newspaper, suggestive that Han Bo survived after discharge from the Lewis and Clark County jail. This account indicates that not only did secret societies have power over the immediate local community, but through connections to other organizations, could control individual action to a somewhat significant extent.

Perhaps the most intriguing story in Montana Chinese history with apparent connections to secret society activity is the 1928 murder of Mow Lu Dun (or Mar Leu Dunn in some reports). Lu Dun’s murder was a sensational story in January and February of 1928, though in the end no one was formally charged in the case. According to the reports, Mow Lu Dun, aged 55, was murdered at his garden plot southeast of the Green Meadow Farm, which lay north of Helena’s downtown (*Helena Independent* 1928a:4). Lu Dun had been accosted in his own residence, shot three times with a .32

caliber pistol, and had his tongue and throat removed by knife (*Helena Independent* 1928a:4; 1928b:3). Initial investigations by the Helena police located tracks in the snow outside the residence suggesting that the murderer(s) laid in wait until Lu Dun returned from town with money needed for paying the lease on the house and garden property (*Helena Independent* 1928a:4). The angle of the bullets in the body and door frame suggest that the murderer was inside the house and waited for Lu Dun behind or on the living room couch. Police found a .25 caliber automatic pistol on Lu Dun's body, but was unfired (*Helena Independent* 1928b:3).

While the murder itself was sensational, the events that followed provide a clearer image of internal Chinese society during the late 1920s. Wong Chuck, a local Chinese drifter, was arrested the same night as Lu Dun's murder and held as the only suspect in the murder. According to police reports, Chuck's clothing was wet and covered in a variety of cockleburs found near the garden, though Wong claimed he never even left his hotel room that evening (*Helena Independent* 1928a:4; 1928b:3). In addition, Wong Chuck stated to investigators that he had heard of the murder at 10 am on the morning of the crime, though the body was not discovered until 11am (*Helena Independent* 1928b:3). In the days following Chuck's arrest, investigators noticed that he had no Chinese visitors, something that was unusual enough to warrant a full-length editorial (*Helena Independent* 1928c:4), but investigators were still interviewing other suspects in Helena's Chinatown (*Helena Independent* 1928d:3).

Within a week of the murder, the Chinese community in Helena began to withdraw from the investigation and many even changed their stories. Upon first interview, prominent Chinese individuals noted that on the day of the murder Mow Lu

Dun withdrew \$350-\$400 from his account in town (*Helena Independent* 1928a:4; 1928e:4). However, by January 10, the same informants stated that the amount was only \$40 (*Helena Independent* 1928e:4). While the Chinese community became more silent in their interviews with investigators, many also pulled away from helping to arrange the burial of Mow Lu Dun (*Helena Independent* 1928f:4). The first indication of the scale of events came on January 13, when Mow Lu Dun was buried at Forestvale Cemetery. Instead of the local community providing the funds for burial, a wealthy Chinese man from Seattle, Mar Kin Dun, provided all costs for the funeral on his first day in town (*Helena Independent* 1928g:4). On January 17 police released Wong Chuck due to the establishment of an alibi (*Helena Independent* 1928h:3), and in reaction to the protestations of Mar Kin Dun and another wealthy Chinese merchant from the Pacific Coast, Toy Young.

In addition, the case brought the attention of a R. Woodside, a Euro-American man from San Francisco. According to the newspaper reports, Woodside was fluent in Chinese due to his long-term habitation in China and his marriage to a Chinese woman. More interesting, perhaps, was that Woodside was a member of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's revolutionary party in the 1911 overthrow of the Qing government (*Helena Independent* 1928i:3). Sun Yat Sen's use of secret societies, and other Overseas Chinese voluntary organizations, was the key facet in his plans to overthrow the regime in the 1910s (Liew 1985:283; Zelin 1990:94, n.32). Woodside stayed at the Placer hotel in Helena while he searched for the real perpetrator of the murder, under the pay of a Chinese agent in San Francisco. By late January of 1928, Woodside and other investigators had found no additional suspects and the case faded from the newspapers. The last known information

on Woodside's involvement was in relation to the death of a Euro-American oil worker who was thrown underneath the wheels of a locomotive in Great Falls. In the oil worker's possession was a handbag full of correspondence relating to Woodside and the Chinese murder case, including letters and depositions (*Helena Independent* 1928j:4).

The Wong Chuck connection to this story does not end with his release on January 17 of 1928. After being released from the Lewis and Clark jail, Chuck moved to Butte and by February was seen with completely new wardrobe suggesting sudden wealth. After Wong Chuck left town, some of the Chinese in that community began to leak information that he was indeed the murderer, there were closed door dealings that precipitated the murder of Mow Lu Dun, and that Mar Kin Dun came only to Helena to secure his release from jail (*Helena Independent* 1928k:3). Chuck continued to interest authorities as he was arrested in Butte during October of 1928 for selling and using opium, which resulted in a hefty fines (*Helena Independent* 1928m:4; 1928o:4; 1929a:4).

While Wong Chuck faded into the late 1920s, the story of Mow Lu Dun's murder remains a captivating tale of intrigue, murder, and possible secret society activities. The Helena Chinese communities' silence in the case seem to indicate an internal investigation and prosecution relating to the murder. These investigations seem associated with the arrival of Mar Kin Dun, Toy Young, and R. Woodside, though their true involvement remains forever shrouded in mystery. From all the evidence it appears that Mow Lu Dun garnered the wrath of unknown parties for providing information or speaking out of turn, as evidenced by the removal of the victim's tongue through his throat. The failure of the Helena Chinese to offer testimony also attests to some type of strong linkage between Wong Chuck and an internally organized apparatus. Finally,

Wong Chuck's release and subsequent acquisition of new and expensive clothes in Butte, suggests a successful conspiracy and reward for the task now completed. The full extent of the story may never be discovered, but there was far more strength in internal Chinese social organization than often discussed, even in the final historical period of Chinese residency in Montana.

It is clear through these newspaper accounts that Montana, among other states, had active and powerful Chinese secret societies at work within their borders. These organizations controlled the movement of labor, prostitutes, goods, and even non-members through coercive and sometimes violent methods. Secret societies even played a role in the burial of the dead in Helena's Mow Lu Dun murder case, and in the death of an aged Chinese gardener in Missoula (*Anaconda Standard* 1907:7). The complete role of these societies remains unclear, but it is apparent that Chinese communities in the United States were shaped in part by institutions begun in China. It is also unclear how much of the wealth created in the United States made it back to China to help support insurrections led by these secret societies in the homeland. As demonstrated by Culin (1890), Lyman et al. (1964), Chen (2001), and Hansen (2006), many secret societies used their communal pool of funds to assist immigrants and also to fund different economic ventures. It is clear that many of the major purchases of Chinese in German Gulch and Blackfoot City, to name just two examples, used funds funneled through these voluntary organizations whether they were the Six Companies or a less visible society.

By the 1940s, most of the Chinese living in Montana had left, taking with them the powerful secret societies operating in the state. However, areas along the coast of the United States continue to have substantial Chinese populations, namely Seattle, San

Francisco, Portland, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Many of the Chinese across the U.S. resettled in these places as they left inland rural areas, and the strength of the secret societies continued in those larger urban centers.

## **6.5 Secret Societies in the Modern World**

Today, Chinese secret societies no longer have clear ties to revolutionary action and political insurrection since these goals have been upstaged by lucrative opportunities in organized crime. In 1995, the largest existing Triad, or secret society, group had over 55,000 members worldwide with many being part of legitimate businesses and governments—and this number has probably grown substantially since that time (Bolz 1995:148). However, these organizations continue to operate in the same spheres of influence as their historical predecessors. During most of the late 20th century these organizations dealt almost exclusively in illegal drug smuggling; however, in recent years there has been a shift to human trafficking (Bolz 1995:148). In the United States alone during the 20th-century, 100,000 Chinese have been smuggled into the country illegally by organizations directly linked to these secret societies (Bolz 1995:147). Most of these immigrants are male and have to place a down payment on the cost of immigration (upwards of \$35,000 per person). Upon reaching the United States, the person must work off the rest of the debt, and if they are unable to do so, they become subject to coerced (slave) labor in underground sweatshops or become involved with organized crime as a means to pay off the debt (Bolz 1995:148). Chinese Triads and related gangs have been involved with alien smuggling and prostitution for years and are now increasingly getting involved with the recruitment process. Sun Yee On Triad, 14K Triad, Wo Hop To Triad,

United Bamboo gang, and Fuk Ching Gang provide protection to Asian and non-Asian brothels for an exorbitant fee and also maintain control of the prostitutes engaged in slavery (O'Neill 1999:14).

Quite similar to the conditions existent in 19th-century China, many lower class workers living in China are seeking new opportunities due to the failure of the government to improve the majority of Chinese lives, and there is a continuous connection of governmental officials to corruption and organized criminal organizations (Bolz 1995:149). Ever-increasing publicity of the connection between the government and these Triad societies, including the sale of officially supplied visas on the black market, has fueled the local distrust in these organizations (Bolz 1995:150-151).

Dismantling of rural communes has destroyed many local economies, and there is a severe wage differential between rural and urban employment, thus creating a large group of disenfranchised working class individuals. Currently, Fujian province, a center of 19th-century immigration and secret society organization, comprises 85% of the modern illegal alien population, even though the area has undergone heavy expansion as those without government connections are unable to reap the benefits of progress (Bolz 1995:149).

## **6.6: Anthropological and Archaeological Implications of Secret Societies in Montana**

Tracing the history and current status of Chinese secret societies provides the time depth necessary to understand the role of these groups as forces of social organization.

There are numerous means of understanding social organization within traditional societies (e.g., Boas 1897; Steward 1955; Geertz 1961; Warner 1963; McGuire 1992), yet

there is no consensus and each position has strengths and weakness too lengthy to discuss here. However, it appears quite clear that in traditional Chinese society, the main unit of social organization was the family lineage, and this continues to be a strong force in China today (Woon 1984:105). Yet, secret societies controlled, and in some cases still control some aspects of social organization within the Overseas Chinese communities around the world. Leadership in these secret societies required substantial financial influence and established trade networks, leading to the domination of these groups by Chinese merchants or wealthy entrepreneurs as illustrated in British Columbia (Lyman et al. 1964; Chen 2001; Morrow 2009).

In Montana, secret society chapters linked directly to the Six Companies in San Francisco (or other society), and then in turn connected to sister/parent organizations in Hong Kong and mainland China. Newspaper accounts of secret society involvement in the daily affairs of Montana Chinese life during the 19th and early 20th centuries suggests that consanguinal family lineages were not as important as the substitute lineages provided by these voluntary organizations. Chinese secret societies in Montana heavily controlled trade of goods, movement of labor, interactions with the host society, and maintained internal social cohesion through both coercion and retribution to those that failed to follow the organizational rules. For instance, Chinese secret societies were critical in the importation and distribution of smoking opium in the United States, before and after anti-opium legislation (Ahmad 2007:23). In some rural British Columbia mining communities, secret societies became the only social organization controlling significant parts of the community activity (Lyman 1974:485)



From an archaeological perspective, there is serious reason to include a more inclusive view of Chinese social relations during this period. In a recent thesis, Trelle Morrow (2009) analyzes the use, distribution, and symbology of Chinese stoneware in overseas contexts. As discussed in this chapter, Morrow (2009:31) notes that many merchants in diaspora communities had close ties to secret societies and other voluntary associations. These ties were integral to establishing a complex network of trade that facilitated the importation and distribution of traditional Chinese goods. Specifically, Morrow (2009:86-87) states that the Overseas Chinese laboring classes represented a captive consumer market that relied on the merchant classes for the goods. In addition, the merchants could also dictate the market availability for what type of goods and in what quantities (see also Hsu 2006). According to Lyman (1974:484), “so long as the Chinese were either denied the right to testify in public courts or unwilling to employ the American legal system, the merchant-elite of Chinatown exercised an awesome authority,” which undoubtedly included the sale and distribution of merchandise. In addition, Chen (2001:246) notes that members of the Hung League, a globally powerful secret society sect, owned four of the five Chinese stores in Stanley, British Columbia during the 1870s and 1880s. Thus, stores, goods, merchants, and consumers were inextricably linked to secret society activity and influence especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In many Montana communities, rich Chinese merchants served as unofficial mayors (Rossillon 2008:15-17), but also helped to purchase and manage mining leases and claims. For instance, in the German Gulch Chinese community the owner of the Chinese store also held deed on several of the mining claims in the district (Fredlund et

al. 1991; Meyer 2001). Chinese working in German Gulch relied on the Chinese merchant not only for the goods of his store, but also the employment opportunities in the gulch. During its peak, German Gulch sustained a population of several hundred Chinese laborers, which would have represented a profitable market for the local merchant. Within this framework, it would be difficult to separate ethnic boundary maintenance as social action against the dominant Euro-American population, or the display and purchase of goods from the Chinese merchant for other reasons as there was little other choice. This perspective does not limit the agency of a Chinese individual, though there were far more factors involved in purchase a celadon bowl versus a Euro-American version than previously thought. Thus, any interpretations of acculturation or assimilation must be couched in understanding the basic availability of goods, and the direct social impacts of not purchasing from the local Chinese provider.

Excavations by Hall et al. (2006) and Rossillon (2002, 2003, and 2008) of properties and features occupied by the Chinese discovered a variety of Chinese and Euro-American goods. In their view, the ratio of Chinese to Euro-American goods reflected the level of assimilation or acculturation. It seems more plausible that the artifact ratios reflect market availability more than assimilation and acculturation processes. As noted by Voss (2005:432), “it would be a grave ethnocentric error to assume that cultural change in Overseas Chinese communities was necessarily the result of acculturation to Euro-American cultural norms.” Isolated Chinese camps like those excavated in German, Cave, and China gulches had limited access to a variety of markets, but all possessed a Chinese store or direct trade with an extra-local source. In contrast, the mining camp on Emigrant Creek near Yellowstone National Park lacked any

local Chinese markets, and thus appears that occupants made do with locally-purchased Euro-American goods and the few curated Chinese wares they brought with them. The simple fact of market availability precluded the easy access to traditional goods and opened up more economic choices.

Perhaps the best example of merchant-class control of goods is the construction of the Central and Northern Pacific Railroads (NPRR) in the 1860s and 1880s. The remarkable similarity of artifacts found in all sites along both grades are a direct result of constrained contracts with merchandisers. Of the eight known Chinese sites along the NPRR in Montana, all exhibit the same ceramic ware types (celadon, “bamboo”, and to a lesser extent “Four Seasons”), and array of opium smoking paraphernalia. In essence, each stop along the grade, regardless of the location in Washington, Idaho, or Montana, was created from the same constituent parts supplied by likely the same Chinese merchants. Chinese laborers had limited or no market access, except to the same merchants that negotiated their wages and work schedule. From the lack of any standing in China, the merchant-class of Chinese immigrants in diaspora communities cornered significant power and influenced the lives of thousands.

While it is clear, and should be emphasized here, that not all members of the Chinese community were members of these organizations; yet their experiences were shaped in part to these societies. Voluntary organizations, whether they were clans, district associations, or secret societies formed the basic unit of social organization in Chinese communities. For instance, in the battle against restrictive immigration legislation the Chinese Six Companies, a hybrid of benevolent (or district) organizations and secret society, was the main national organization rousing support against this law.

In Montana, the Chinese Six Companies organized local chapters against the Alien Law and Geary Act. Regardless, of an individual's membership in the Six Companies or allied group, the efforts of these organizations affected the perception of Chinese immigrants to the host community. Both the Chinese Six Companies and the *Bao Huang Hui*, served as a mutual-aid and mutual protection society in the 1800s and early 1900s.

As Baxter (2008:33-34) notes, the Chinese were not passive or docile actors in 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century politics. Due to the widespread anti-Chinese violence sweeping the American West throughout the 1870s through 1890s, Chinese armed themselves and prepared for the worst. In the 'Tong War' of Virginia City, Montana the temple and fraternal lodge served as a central point of strategic planning and eventually peace talks. At German Gulch, excavators located over 140 spent shell casings from pistols, shotguns, and rifles within only a few square meters (Fredlund et al. 1991; Meyer 2001). These shells clustered in and around the Chinese store established in German Gulch during the mid-1870s. While there are likely a variety of explanations for the number of shell casings within such a small area, including hunting, the presence of these artifacts in direct association with the archaeological remains of a Chinese store provide some interpretive potential. If voluntary organizations, like secret societies, were the main means of offering collective resistance against both legislation and anti-Chinese mobs, could then the shell casings from German Gulch represent an effort to prepare for the worst and display collective power? Excavations from China Gulch in Louiseville in Western Montana recovered only a handful of shells and cartridges (Merritt 2007, 2009a) suggesting some disparity in the two rural Chinese mining assemblages that could potentially be accounted for by anti-Chinese agitation and collective response. Weisz's

(2003) work along the NPRR, discovered dozens of shell casings associated with the Chinese camps, suggesting that these workers were indeed well-armed though there was little need to hunt local game.

As scholars investigate the Overseas Chinese community anthropologically, archaeologically, geographically, or historically, the role of these secret societies must not be brushed aside as insignificant. Scholars have demonstrated the significance of voluntary organizations to immigrant populations (Little 1967; Kerri 1974; Brettell 2005), especially among the Overseas Chinese (Lyman et al. 1964; Lyman 1974; Lister and Lister 1986; Cheung 2002; Baxter 2008). It is difficult to gather substantial documentary or even oral history sources on these organizations because of their secretive nature and the still-present existence of these organizations and potential adverse consequences for informants. However, if the researcher is aware of the importance of these organizations, and how they operate(d), the true role of these organizations might be understood. At the center of Overseas Chinese experience is the search for economic opportunity, but the internal social structure of this community is largely secret societies in their role as substitute lineages. Merchants, due to their now-privileged position at the top of the diaspora hierarchy, effectively used all modes of social organization to their own advantage while at the same time benefiting and restricting the other Chinese immigrants.

Merchants served as community figures in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Montana communities. These Chinese businessmen sponsored and capitalized mining ventures, supported or influenced critical legal battles in Montana's courts, and their ever-present linkage with the new forms of social organization directly affected the material culture

imported and used in the state. Archaeologists discover the material culture remnants of these social relationships, and simply noting the presence or absence of Chinese items as signs of acculturation or assimilation simplifies the social relations. Praetzellis and Praetzellis (2001) illustrate how a Chinese merchant in California used material culture as a symbol of tradition or assimilation based on the social setting. Wegars (1993), Voss and Allen (2008), and Voss (2005) push for archaeological research that focuses on a deeper understandings on the transnational workings of Chinese society, instead of the site-specific discussions of particular historical circumstance. An archaeological framework using a firm understanding of Chinese social organization in China and diaspora communities is necessary to create more articulated models of social cohesion and change. As noted by Mullins (2008:156), anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States, and other diaspora countries deeply affected social relations both internal and external as seen by the growth and strength of voluntary organizations.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **7.1. The Chinese Experience in Montana**

From their entrance into Montana's mining frontier during the early 1860s, the Chinese left indelible reminders of their contributions to the state's historical development. While facing seemingly insurmountable racism and legal exclusion, this population helped to spur the economic growth of Montana through gold mining, service-based industries, and constructing the NPRR. This dissertation is the first full-fledged foray into investigating the Chinese heritage of Montana, and only touches on a finite number of topics. Some areas that were glossed over in this dissertation include celebrations of annual festivals, religious practices and beliefs of the Montana Chinese, and inter-ethnic relations. There is evidence that the Chinese and Native American populations had several intermarriages during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and several Chinese were arrested for selling liquor to Native Americans in the 1870s and 1880s. Robison (2010) records the 1891 marriage of a Chinese man and Gros Ventre woman in Fort Benton. A photograph of Mose Auld, a Kootenai Chief, taken on the Flathead Indian Reservation lists him as "part Chinaman" (Figure 7.1). Further research into Chinese/Native American interactions, marriages, and other social connections can help better understand the ways they integrated into Montana society. Analysis of tribal documents for the Salish, Flathead, Blackfeet, Crow, and other Montana Native American groups can help fill in gaps. As the Chinese were barred of marrying Euro-Americans by Montana's miscegenation law, there might be a significant thread of experience overlooked in this dissertation. Inter-ethnic relations and the other aspects of the Montana Chinese experience warrant further historical and archaeological attention.

**Figure 7.1:** Undated photograph of Mose Auld (right), taken on the Flathead Indian Reservation. From left to right: Antiste and Josh Chiefhat, Kootenai, Mose Auld. Photo #, 007.VIII.177, Frank Bird Linderman Memorial Collection, Archives & Special Collections, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula.



**Figure 7.2:** The Lee family of Philipsburg, ca. 1910. Courtesy of Granite County Historical Museum and Dr. Dennis Darling, University of Texas.





### *7.1.1: Dissertation Goals*

Over the past four years, the Chinese story has been pulled together from the historical and archaeological record in an effort to provide these immigrants with some acknowledgement for their achievements. Unlike California where substantial descendant populations still live, Montana has only a few families who can trace their roots back to Chinese pioneers of the state. A descendant of a Philipsburg Chinese family, the Lee's, returned to that community in 2006, the first revisit to the Montana community since their departure in the 1920s or 1930s (Esther Williams pers. comm., 2008). The Lee family owned and operated a restaurant in Philipsburg, and a family photo (Figure 7.2) from 1910 hangs in the Granite County Museum in Philipsburg (Paige et al. 1998:9). As noted by Voss (2005), future Overseas Chinese archaeological projects must engage with descendant communities, but this is far more difficult, if not impossible, when the majority of that group no longer lives in the state under study. Until descendants come forward to share their stories, photographs and other records, historical and archaeological resources are currently the best and only data sets for understanding the Chinese heritage of Montana. Analyses of such resources have been the focus of this dissertation project.

- 1) **Historical Sources:** The principal goal of this dissertation was to consolidate primary and secondary historical resources to present a history of Montana's Chinese population. This objective relied heavily on the use of period newspaper accounts, census records, and to a lesser degree deeds, mine claims and other primary records. Since Chinese perspectives are often absent from these accounts and records, it requires careful interpretation of these primary records to provide

details on the trials, tribulations, and successes of this immigrant population. Secondary historical resources often were a disappointment due to their limited perspectives that generally presents the Chinese experience in a caricature. New historical studies, such as those conducted by Flynn (2006) and Stoner (2007), are providing a far more accurate perspective on the Chinese immigrants. While there is much work yet to be done to understand the range of complexities associated with the history of Chinese in Montana, the historical information consolidated in this dissertation can be used by future researchers to guide their investigations. Such, a “road map” did not exist before this dissertation. The three historical periods outlined in this dissertation may prove useful because the boundaries are based significantly on the social circumstances and legal situation of the Chinese in Montana, though other scholars are likely to find other ways of organizing the Chinese experience. Historical information in the 1860s and 1870s suggest that the Chinese were relatively unfettered or constrained by effective and enforced legal restrictions, though this changed with passage of the Opium Act in 1880 and the federal Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. By 1900 placer mining was only a minor contribution to the Montana economy, and Chinese workers searched for other employment opportunities. During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese population was in a rapid decline, comprising only 10% of its size in 1870. Historical information provided not only broad patterns of Chinese heritage, but also a personal character, though little remains of their individual experiences.

- 2) **Archaeological Sources:** The second primary goal of this dissertation was to compile an exhaustive database of Chinese archaeological sites in Montana. This turned out to be a far more challenging task than first thought, due to technological limitations of the State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) archaeological site database known as CRIS or Cultural Resources Information System. While all archaeological forms are digitized, there is no ability to search these forms for ethnic designations such as "Chinese." However, recent programs at SHPO are starting to change this situation, though it will be many years before researchers can search the database by ethnic affiliation or even relevant keywords. The list of 40 known and 20 potential Chinese archaeological sites is the culmination of personal communications, direct searches of legal locations derived from historical data, and the partnership with Region 1 of the United States Forest Service. It is clear that many areas with high Chinese site potential were severely damaged by later re-mining and development. This process of site destruction continues today as with the reclamation of the Beal Mountain Mine at the head of German Gulch. While representing a comprehensive search of public records, the site database in this dissertation likely represents only a small portion of Chinese sites, as many exist on private lands or in unsurveyed portions of public lands.
- 3) **Social Organization:** The final goal of this dissertation was to use the historical and archaeological data on the Montana Chinese experience to analyze the nature of social organization among this immigrant population. Voluntary organizations, such as clans, district organizations, and secret societies formed the most basic

substitute lineage in Diaspora communities, and deeply affected the daily lives of Chinese immigrants in Montana. Archaeologists have yet to frame their research within the context of Overseas Chinese social organization. There is much work to be done in Montana, and other Diaspora communities, in order to provide a richer analysis of this topic. Historical sources about the Chinese in Montana have small fragments of information on voluntary organizations, including secret societies, and this information helped to interpret the population's experience in the state. The Chinese in Montana used these voluntary organizations as a major adaptive mechanism for resisting exclusion and racism in diasporic communities, and these activities deeply affect the interpretation of archaeological materials. Instead of purely a Chinese versus Non-Chinese dichotomy, a view of internal social organization provides a far more nuanced view at the shaping of culture and its material manifestations. In Montana, the Chinese organized themselves in voluntary organizations that helped to dictate the form of their resistance to exclusion laws, boycotts, and institutional racism. At the same time, these institutions provided the context and mechanism for elaborate trade networks that brought material goods from their home in China in mass quantities to the most isolated parts of Montana.

#### *7.1.2: Results of Historical and Archaeological Research (1862-1880)*

Chinese immigrants first came to Montana after the gold discovery at Bannack in 1862. By 1870, the Chinese population exploded, accounting for 10% of the territory's total population, and even higher proportions in urban areas such as Virginia City and Helena. The period between 1862-1880 is typified by the domination of placer mining as

the main source of economic pursuit for the Chinese immigrant population. Far from modern centers of population, Chinese dominated the mining communities in Cedar and Gold Creeks, and German and Cave Gulch throughout the late 1860s and 1870s. Unlike later periods, legal challenges to the rights of Chinese immigrants were largely ineffective during the first two decades of Montana Territory. Montana's Alien Law, passed in 1872, failed to alter much, as many Euro-American miners preferred to sell under-paying claims to Chinese companies for substantial profits. Though the Chinese population felt the pains of a nationwide depression of the 1870s, their population dropped only slightly by 1880.

Research of archaeological sites from this first historical period demonstrate the ubiquity of Chinese populations in isolated mining camps like Lion City, Cave Gulch, Ruddville, and Yogo Town. German Gulch is still the premier archaeological site in Montana due to its reflection of community organization, its isolation, and overall high level of integrity. German Gulch best reflects the archaeological and historical conditions of the Chinese during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the creation of a nearly self-contained society with its own store, recreational pursuits, and well-paying gold claims. The archaeological recovery of imported Chinese goods, from coconuts to porcelain serving bowls, illustrates the extensive trade networks existing in Montana before the first railroad even entered the Territory. In apparent affront to the Montana Alien Law, the Chinese owned most of the placer claims in German Gulch during the 1870s and made a substantial profit. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century however, German Gulch's placer streaks played out, and without any other industry to supplement their income, the settlement faded into Montana's history.

Other sites in this first period further illustrate an open frontier of opportunity, surrounded by the institutional racism inherent in Montana and other parts of the American West. Archaeological work in the Cedar Creek drainage of Western Montana recovered evidence of Chinese lives during the 1870s at China Gulch, Louiseville, and the Rowley Chinese Hearths. Due to the anti-Chinese agitation in neighboring Idaho, hundreds of Chinese miners and entrepreneurs moved into Cedar Creek during the summer of 1870. Archaeological research has shown that many of the initial Chinese moving into China Gulch lacked the economic clout to purchase sufficient foodstuffs, and some individuals resorted to starvation processing of faunal remains. Meanwhile, by the mid-1870s, the lot of Chinese in Cedar Creek changed and the archaeological deposits in Louiseville demonstrate a broad palette of food and imported Chinese goods.

### *7.1.3: Results of Historical and Archaeological Research (1880-1900)*

The last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the peak and collapse of the Chinese population in Montana due to the changing legal and economic circumstances of the state. Dipping slightly from 1870 to 1880, the Chinese population of Montana peaked in 1890 thanks in large part to the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. H.L. Hallett, supervisor for the Clark's Fork Division of the Northern Pacific, employed upwards of 6,000 Chinese railroad workers through Washington, Idaho, and Montana during the first years of the 1880s. Nowhere was this population larger than Montana, with thousands of Chinese working the grade and laying track from the Idaho border eastward to Gold Creek. However, the successes of the Chinese on the Northern Pacific were overshadowed by a changing legal climate in Montana and the United States.

Montana's Opium Act, passed in 1880, targeted the Chinese use of smoking opium while protecting other forms of opium consumption generally used by Euro-Americans. Unlike the Alien Law, the Opium Act was strictly enforced and led to even further damage to the popular opinions of Chinese immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first in a pattern of anti-Chinese legislation that dominated the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Exclusion Act, coupled with the provisions of the Geary Act amendment in 1892, effectively ceased the legal immigration of Chinese women and laboring class of men into the United States. In addition, the Geary Act forced Chinese to register and led to a number of high profile deportations around the nation. Concurrent with the immigration legislation was a growing, and increasingly violent, anti-Chinese movement spearheaded by powerful labor unions. Labor union supported boycotts, anti-Chinese immigration legislation, and changing economic circumstances signaled the end to a robust and growing Chinese population in Montana. By 1900, the Chinese population dropped and never recovered.

Archaeological research into the second period of Chinese history in Montana is not as thorough as the other periods. While German Gulch's occupation crosses into the 1880s and early 1890s, the Chinese population of the district had declined significantly from the 1870s heyday. However, the significant research done in this period reflects the transition from the dominance of mining-based employment of the Chinese, to a diversification into laundries, restaurants, and other service-based industries. Excavations of the Chinese laundries at Marysville demonstrate how these small isolated ethnic populations continued to connect their lives to broader patterns of history by

supporting the Chinese Empire Reform Association and maintaining traditional cultural practices.

On the fringes, some Chinese miners continued to work placer claims into the late 1890s and even early 1900s, though with limited success. The discovery of the Quong Chong Company claim outside Yellowstone National Park reflects the last vestiges of Chinese activities in placer mining during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the site's isolation and the lack of Chinese markets nearby, the archaeological assemblage is largely comprised of Euro-American ceramics and bottles. This assemblage, however, does not necessarily reflect the acculturation of Chinese to Euro-American culture, but instead the miner's isolation from others in their ethnic community and their ability to adapt their traditions to meet changing circumstances.

The history of the Chinese during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Montana reflects a crowing achievement of their labor in the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. While archaeologists have not completed a detailed survey of the grade, the work of avocational archaeologist Gary Weisz located eight distinct railroad camps associated with the construction. These sites, as part of a work camp system, imprint a highly regular archaeological signature from Idaho to Missoula. Weisz found the same suite of Chinese ceramics, opium cans, and opium paraphernalia at all the recorded camps, further illustrating these cookie-cutter camps that moved along the grade during the early 1880s. More interesting, perhaps, is the continued dominance of "bamboo" style ceramics well after its peak in the early 1870s in other parts of the American West. The material culture at these camps reflects the creation of a cultural



system from a distributor tied to a certain range of goods that had to meet the demands of the workers without catering to their every whim or desire.

Chinese voluntary organizations played a significant role in shaping the experience of this immigrant group during the late 1800s. The Six Companies, with direct ties to secret societies, and other Chinese voluntary organizations helped the Northern Pacific Railroad to organize their labor needs. In addition, several Federal laws excluding the Chinese in Montana, and other parts of the United States were resisted explicitly by voluntary organizations led by the Six Companies based out of San Francisco. Voluntary organizations provided at least some level of political organization designed to fight back against these racist laws, and there was a dedicated effort to resist the Geary Act amendment in 1892 through a registration boycott. Chinese voluntary organizations affected the ways in which the Chinese acquired goods and services, and the remarkable similarity of archaeological materials across space and time during this period. Many archaeologists viewed the continued use of Chinese goods as a sign of social isolation and perhaps resistance to assimilation. In reality, the social system affected the types of goods available to purchase through Chinese vendors, reinforced by the social implications of refusing to acquire supplies through the leader (which was generally a merchant) of the local or even regional voluntary organization.

#### *7.1.4: Results of Historical and Archaeological Research (1900-1943)*

While the peak of Chinese population in Montana had passed, the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to include substantial contributions by this maligned immigrant population. During the 1880s and 1890s the Chinese continued to shift away from mining as the dominant means of economic gain. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese

in Montana created a diversified economic model based on service-based industries like laundries, restaurants, and mercantile shops. Service industries required the least amount of capital investment and provided means to accumulate money in the new economy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the exclusion of Chinese from hard rock mining and other industries by labor unions, there were fewer opportunities in the extractive part of the economy. Chinese also worked as gardeners, doctors, tailors, stock raisers, and numerous other jobs that break with the common stereotypes of Chinese as laundry or restaurant workers. Even with all the past racist transgressions, the Chinese in Montana supported the United States effort in World War I, even establishing a War Bonds Society in Big Timber. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, the Chinese population of Montana dwindled and aged. The few hundred remaining Chinese witnessed the passing of their community in Montana, with many returning home to China or dying. Some of the immigrants left in Montana immigrated to the United States in the 1870s and had not seen their wives, children, or other family members for decades. Effectively, Montana became home and a final resting place for hundreds of Chinese immigrants. There are still sections in many Montana cemeteries that silently testify to the life and death of this immigrant population.

While Montana's Chinese population declined throughout the first five decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, isolated businesses continued to prosper. Archaeological efforts in Butte and Big Timber recovered significant information on these businesses and social relations. University of Montana archaeologists discovered the remains of a Chinese laundry and restaurant in Big Timber, and the information recovered from that site support Rose Hum Lee's (1949) outline of Chinese business models. A cursory analysis

of the faunal remains, ceramics, and bottle assemblage, does suggest that this particular Chinese establishment catered to a diverse clientele, largely Euro-American. However, the presence of Chinese ceramics and opium paraphernalia in the back of the structure suggests a public versus private dichotomy of activity at the business. In addition, the periodic switching of the business from a laundry to restaurant illustrates a remarkable flexibility in adapting to new economic circumstances.

Excavations at Butte discovered several large trash middens associated with Chinese occupation and reflected households with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, all located within a single city block. The single block in Butte contained several Chinese businesses, habitations, and even the Baptist Mission that promoted the education and assimilation of the immigrant population. Due to the population decline the Chinese clustered into these dense occupations where individuals or households of a diverse socio-economic background lived in close proximity. The wide variety of goods discovered in Butte likely results from over 60 years of established Chinese trade networks, and the diversity of the area's occupants.

Finally, the archaeological remains at Forestvale, Mount Moriah, and Philipsburg cemeteries provide a closure to the Montana story for those Chinese unable to return home. At Forestvale Cemetery in Helena, over 200 Chinese were interred, and mourners constructed and employed a funerary burner for over 50 years. Mount Moriah Cemetery in Butte, and Philipsburg City Cemetery both have remnants of funerary burners, providing additional remains on the continuation and creolization of Chinese mortuary rituals. For instance, Chinese mourners sacrificed both traditional goods and Euro-American goods at the funerary burners, reflecting a symbolism not tied to specific

presentation or origin of artifacts. Many of the Chinese that pioneered Montana remain still entombed in its soil.

The unique facets of Chinese social organization played out in the last period of this dissertation, affecting the personal lives of many immigrants. As in previous decades, these voluntary organizations provided funds for the funerals, burials, and even transmission of the bodies back to China. As seen in the case of Wong Chuck's murder of Mow Lu Dun in Helena in the 1920s, Chinese individuals in Montana had deep and sometimes nefarious ties to secret societies along the Pacific Coast and in mainland China. For a Chinese merchant to arrive from Seattle and pay for the burial of Mow Lu Dun, and then push for the release of Wong Chuck, suggests efforts to maintain the fragile peace between clans, district associations, or secret societies. Due to the decrease in Chinese population during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the overall effects of social organization was not as pronounced as earlier periods. However, it is clear that voluntary organizations helped to foster social cohesion within the Chinese community in Montana, and sometimes competing voluntary organization interests spilled over into violent episodes fought along membership lines. Butte had a number of these disputes in the early 1900s, and resulted in several deaths (Lee 1978).

#### *7.1.5: Results of Historical and Archaeological Research: Social Organization*

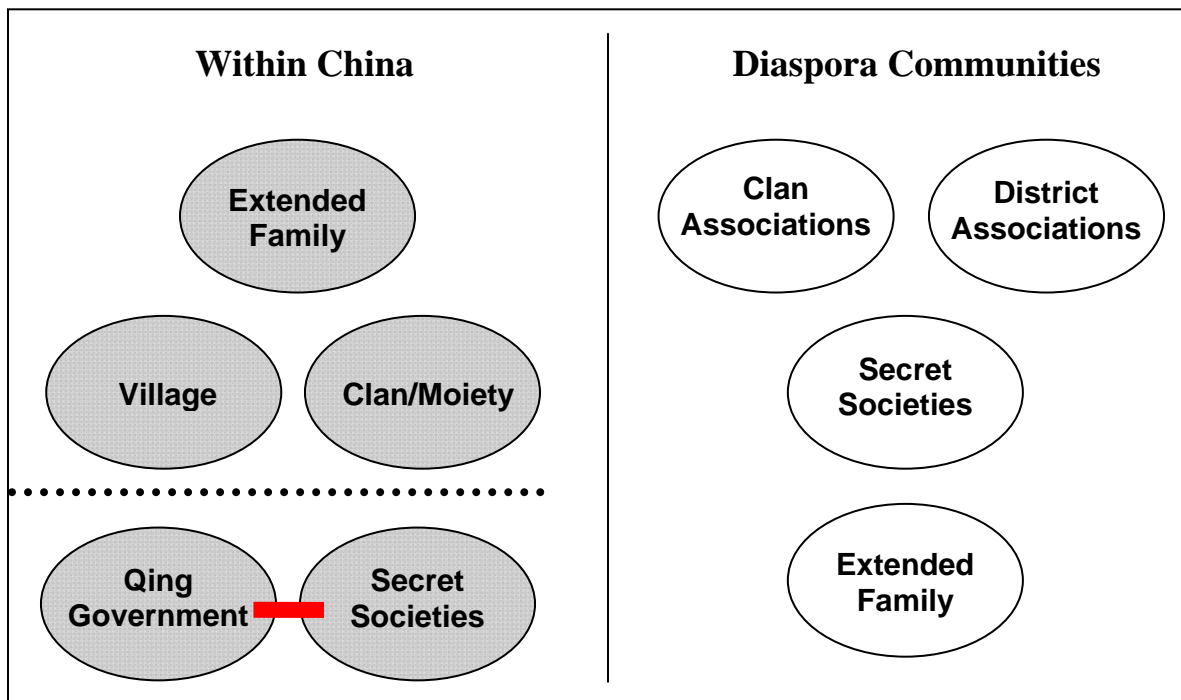
While many may see the Montana Chinese story as typified by racism, legal exclusion, and violence, their success in overcoming these circumstances is the true narrative, as it was elsewhere among 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Diaspora communities. As noted by Lyman (1974), Overseas Chinese populations were connected by a complex web of voluntary social organizations created through clans, district organizations (or

benevolent societies), and secret societies. All having roots in China, the new forms of voluntary organizations in Diaspora communities provided the immigrant with a substitute for the traditional family-based social organization. These organizations served a variety of formats, and the lines between were often blurry. Regardless, these organizations deeply affected the lives of Chinese immigrants in Montana and beyond. Specifically, secret societies, illegally formed in China to subvert the Qing Dynasty, found an unfettered environment for growth in influence and wealth in Overseas Chinese communities. Merchants, traditionally excluded from power in pre-1911 Chinese society, quickly rose to dominate all three types of voluntary organizations. Most significantly for archaeologists, these merchants controlled the flow of people and goods throughout the American West and other regions affected by the Chinese Diaspora. These voluntary organizations provided the Chinese immigrant with a means of protection and power, and likely allowed the degree of success witnessed in Montana and beyond. What scholars have called an insular Chinese society in the United States was the result of internal social organizational structures and their connections to external racist and legal factors.

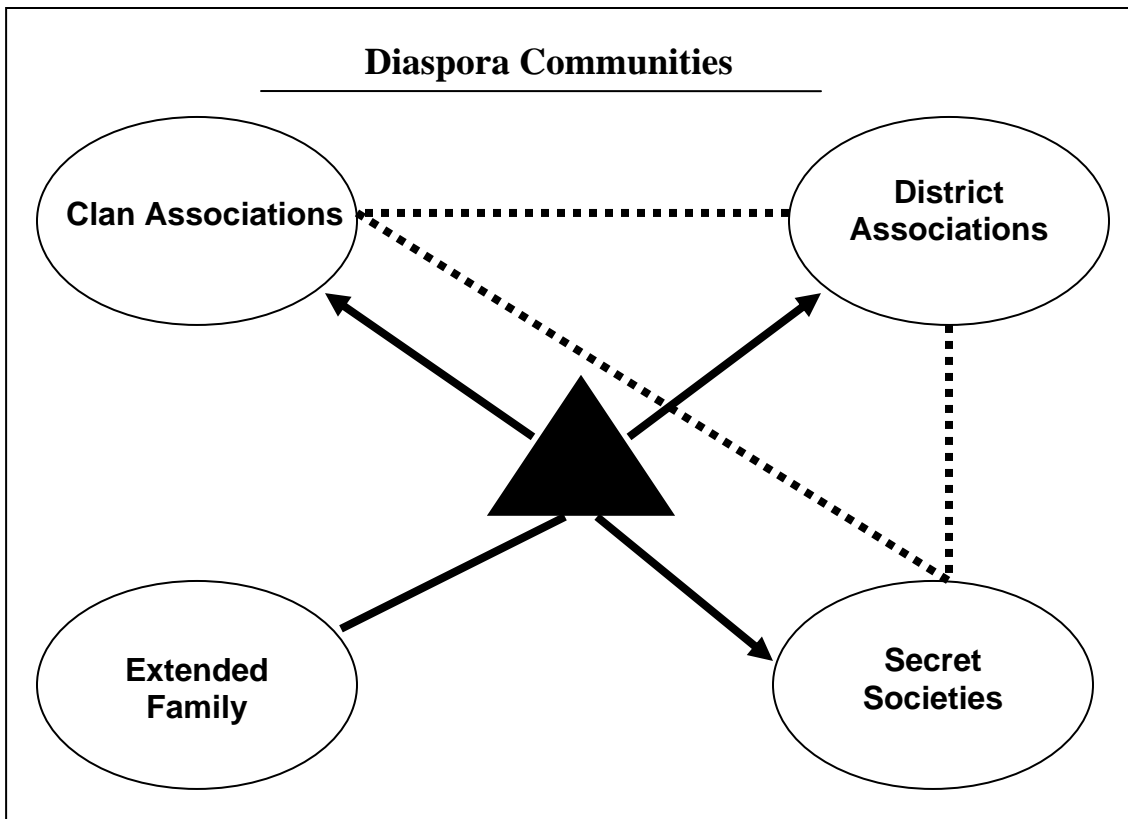
The Chinese in Montana employed an interrelated web of social relations that replaced the traditional kinship systems in China (Figure 7.3). Clans, district associations, and secret societies helped to allow the Chinese to succeed in Montana by organizing communal mining efforts, resistance to exclusionary laws and boycotts, and even controlling the flow of people and goods throughout the state (Figure 7.4). It appears that Helena, Virginia City, and Butte were the centers of Chinese secret society activity throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese Empire Reform

Association spread out to most of Montana’s Chinese communities. Voluntary associations did far more than merely allow survival in the United States or Montana; they were powerful agents of change within the Chinese community overseas, and integral to reformation and revolution in China itself.

**Figure 7.3:** Traditional social organization in China (left), and new social organization opportunities in Chinese Diaspora Communities (right). In China, the extended family, village, and clan represented the most significant form of social organization, with the Chinese government existing at a higher level. In China, secret societies were at odds with the Qing government, hence the connecting link. Chinese immigrants in diaspora communities continued the linkage of extended families, but due to restricted immigration there was less ability to retain those ties. Thus, voluntary associations (clans, district, and secret societies) were the most prominent means of social organization.



**Figure 7.4:** Social organization opportunities available to the Chinese immigrant in Diaspora communities. The individual (noted by the triangle in the center) had direct linkages to their extended family. This same individual could choose what voluntary organization they wished to belong to (hence the uni-directional arrow). Clan associations were extensions of similar organizations in China, and were centered on a single lineage or surname group. District associations cast a broader net but were based on ethnicity, county, and sometimes language groupings. Secret society membership, however, was based purely on willingness to belong to the group, and cross-cut the more traditional roles of family, lineage, clans, language, and ethnicity. All Chinese voluntary organizations had overt and hidden linkages of joint membership or control, and in some cases, animosity (denoted by the dashed lines). Thus, while an individual chose to belong to a single group, they could be indirectly linked to the other two types of voluntary organizations. During conflicts this complex web of relations caused most of the Chinese population in a certain area like San Francisco to be drawn into a conflict.



As archaeologists work primarily with the material culture of past peoples, it is important to understand that the nature of Chinese social organizations deeply affected artifact patterning by affecting the availability of goods in a given context. For instance, as wealthy Chinese merchants headed most of the voluntary organizations, these individuals dictated the flow of goods into a mining camp or even urban center. Future research can hopefully track down the linkages of trade between Seattle, San Francisco, China, and points in Montana to determine any networks built upon these voluntary organizations and merchants. While experiments have yet to be carried out, chemical source analysis of Chinese porcelain, opium pipe bowls, medicine bottles, imported flora and fauna, and other artifacts could indicate further linkages of trade networks based upon district, family, or secret society ties. While Chinese ceramics share the same morphological characteristics they were produced in various areas of China, and were transmitted by differing trade networks that could reflect voluntary organization influences or economic ties.

## **7.2. Myths of the Montana Chinese**

It is clear from the historical and archaeological analysis of the Chinese in Montana that this population was as diverse and internally heterogeneous as any other immigrant group. However, certain myths persist about the Chinese experience, and as most of the descendant population no longer lives within the state, these rumors can grow rampant without much substantiation. Another outgrowth of the dissertation project, which did not fit neatly into the narrative, is the role myth plays in our current understanding of the Chinese experience in Montana. Many modern Montanans' only experience with the Chinese is through stories that generally perpetuate stereotypical



images of the Chinese as clever, thrifty, hard-working, and amusing anecdotal characters. These images play themselves out even today with many citizens discussing Chinese tunnels, rock-work, and “opium bottles.” A basic misunderstanding of the Chinese experience in Montana pervades mainstream education and awareness, though the Mai Wah Museum, Montana Historical Society and the Mike Mansfield Center have released educational tools to assist in dispelling some of the misinformation. The desire to preserve and interpret the Chinese heritage of the Montana even led Charles Bovey to reconstruct examples of a joss house and other Chinese businesses at Nevada City in the 1970s, using salvaged wood and logs from other historic structures (*Montana Standard* 1973:22). Though in reality the image of Chineseness at Nevada City is a mere construction of basic stereotypical images by a prolific collector, and situated in a community where little or no Chinese presence ever occurred.

Regardless, the true depth of Chinese contributions to Montana remain misunderstood, with many using this population as a tourist attraction even where no heritage exists. Take for example, the Wu Tang Chinese Drug and Laundry in Neihart that is proudly displayed in “Roadside Geology of Montana” written by University of Montana professors David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman (1986:319). The possibility of such an historic log structure relating to the Chinese would be a windfall for researchers, especially considering the ordinance prohibiting Chinese from living in Neihart passed by a miner’s council in 1885. However, during revisit in 2008, the researcher discovered that 1) the building had been burnt down in the early 2000s, and 2) a local artist painted the “Wu Tang” text on a random miner’s cabin in the 1970s to bring in tourists (Figure 7.5).

**Figure 7.5:** The fabricated Wu Tang Chinese Drugs and Laundry cabin in Neihart, Montana. Photo from Alt and Hyndman (1986:319).



### 7.2.1: *The “Heathen Chinees”*

As illustrated best by Kelly Fong (2005; 2007), the pervasiveness of Chinese stereotypes in United States history, archaeology, and collective memory continue to undermine the narrative of these pioneers. Particularly, individuals discussing the lives of Chinese in Diaspora communities tend to focus on their ‘otherness’ in terms of opium use, diet, religion, and burial ceremonies.

Wylie and Fike (1993:298-199) illustrate that the Chinese use of opium differed greatly from that of host communities. In particular, Chinese used opium for a variety of purposes more along the lines of medical marijuana in today’s culture while Euro-Americans tended to use the drug more like alcohol. American doctors and culture

viewed medicinal opium, usually in a liquid form mixed with alcohol, as an acceptable and necessary cure for physical ailments, though it possessed the same ability to addict its user (Ahmad 2007:38). Indeed, Chinese were not the only users of smoking opium in the United States and Montana, as many Euro-Americans, African-Americans, and other ethnic groups became addicted to the drug during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ahmad 2007:30, 90). However, American cultures viewed smoking opium as far more pernicious, with users losing their ability to employ morals, religion, and connected the drug with a feminine trait of docility whereas alcohol was far more masculine and thus healthy (Ahmad 2007:38)

Fong (2005:23) notes how archaeologists continue the trend of focusing on the cuisine preferred by the Chinese, and these discussions continue to place this population at odds with mainstream American culture. In fact, the Chinese practiced a synergy of traditional cuisine and American foods dependent upon availability of goods. Many Chinese viewed the consumption of beef with the same wariness as Euro-Americans looked upon the consumption of dogs and cats. Every region in the United States has specific foods that promote their local identity, and the Chinese were no different in this fact.

The most dominant narrative found in historical resources is the focus on using the epithet “heathen” to describe the Chinese population in the United States. Most Chinese immigrants came to the United States with a firm faith in a unique mixture of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianist belief systems (Rouse 2005:21-22). In many Montana communities the Chinese established temples for worship while their Euro-American counterparts were still building saloons. Beyond this, some of the Chinese that

immigrated to the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were actually Christians, who had been missionized by Protestants in China.

Many Chinese who died in Montana during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries performed traditional burial rites at public or private cemeteries, much to the amusement of newspaper reporters and local citizens. As best illustrated by Rouse (2005:40-41), many Americans criticized the Chinese ritual offerings of food and drink for the deceased, while at the same leaving flowers at their own relatives' graves. During some Chinese burials in Montana and elsewhere (Rouse 2005:35), many of the Euro-American funeral attendees fought over the food, liquor, and money left behind by the mourners. Another persistent myth regarding the Chinese is that all deceased have been exhumed and shipped back to China for reburial. This rationale has led to the abuse and neglect of traditional Chinese burial sites in Montana, even though there are likely of dozens of bodies remaining. While many bodies were indeed disinterred and returned to China, there were many more of criminals, paupers, and prostitutes that were generally not afforded this luxury (Chung and Wegars 2005:13).

#### *7.2.2: Chinese Rock-Work*

There continues a persistent belief in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia that nicely stacked placer tailings are an indicator of Chinese miners. Following a similar position as Lawrence (2000), McGowan (2003) asserts that neatly stacked rock from placer mining relates specifically to Chinese miners. McGowan (2003) argues against Valentine's (2002:47-49) statement that well-sorted mine tailings are ethnically indistinct. According to McGowan (2003:17), "vertically stacked tailing mounds, in particular, are very strong evidence of Chinese mining activities." This goes

against scholarly convention in the United States, as Valentine (2002) notes that neatly stacked rock cannot necessarily be attributed to a specific ethnic group, even if oral history and legends relate extensive rockwork to the Chinese. The fallacy of Chinese being the only individuals capable or industrious enough to neatly stack rock tailings has cost many researchers in the United States time and money (e.g. Merritt and McLeod 2010). The Poacher Gulch Terraces project which spurred this dissertation, was thought to be Chinese due to the hand-stacked dry laid rock work, though no evidence could ever be linked to this hypothesis. Fredlund et al. (1991) studied the mining works in German Gulch Montana, and while they could clearly see differences in sluice-box placering remains versus hydraulic mining tailings, there was no clear ethnic differentiation. The mere idea that the Chinese stacked rock better than Euro-Americans on the mining frontier is steeped in racial stereotyping and still affects the public perception of the Chinese today.

### *7.2.3: Chinese Tunnels*

Another common feature associated with both the Chinese in Montana and elsewhere in the United States and Canada are subterranean tunnels (see also AACC 2007). This is perhaps the most persistent local urban legend in Montana in regards to the Chinese, and during the course of this project tunnels have been described to the author in Missoula, Livingston, Big Timber, Havre, Virginia City, Butte, Hamilton, Kalispell, Billings, and Helena. As common as the story of the tunnels themselves are the constant refrain that the tunnels have been destroyed and thus unable to be relocated. During the archaeological project at Big Timber in 2008, researchers investigated potential “Chinese Tunnels” without any success, even with the assistance of a backhoe

(Moschelle 2009). It appears that most of the purported tunnels in Montana's communities are sidewalk vaults, steam tunnels, or underground store fronts. Lai (1991:39) provides a solid overview of how the myth of "Chinese Tunnels" grew in Victoria, British Columbia and this same pattern applies to Montana. However, this is not to say that the Chinese did not use any subterranean spaces in Montana communities. Instead, it appears that the Chinese and many other groups adaptively used underground spaces at various times for diverse reasons. But to assume that the Chinese constructed tunnels for living and business is folly, and is an extension of a racially stereotyped image of these immigrants. A blatant example of racist perspectives comes from an underground tourist attraction in northern Montana where the dominant narrative centers on the Chinese being forced to live underground by the Great Northern Railroad Company for their own protection from marauding Euro-American mobs. This story is suspect on a number of accounts, including that the Japanese were the main non-Euro-American labor force employed on the Great Northern, and that the period discussed is decades after the peak of anti-Chinese violence in the United States. The myth of the "Chinese Tunnels" will be a powerful and persistent myth for professionals to wrestle with, as a resurgence in interest has occurred lately (Vollmann 2004)

#### *7.2.4: Chinese Hearths and "Ovens"*

"Chinese Ovens" are a common discovery by locals in Montana communities near railroad grades. This topic has been well-covered by Priscilla Wegars (1991), and need not be discussed in detail. Many historical societies in Montana already possess a copy of the Wegars' article, and her efforts have helped educate numerous interested Montanans. In most cases the common "Chinese Ovens" described by locals were

constructed by Eastern Europeans or Italians during the construction phases of Montana's Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and Milwaukee Railroads. Locals discovered an "Oven" east of Paradise, Montana along the Northern Pacific Railroad grade, and it is an excellent example of the types of features commonly misinterpreted as Chinese in origin (Figure 7.6). As shown in detail in Chapter 3, it appears that most Chinese hearths are u-shaped with an open-front for access to traditional wok cooking techniques.

**Figure 7.6:** Rock Oven along the Northern Pacific Railroad grade east of Paradise, Montana. Photo by Kenny Marjerrison.



### 7.3. Future Directions

While this dissertation provides a solid backbone to the historical and archaeological story of the Montana Chinese, there is far more to be done to understand this population. Even after completion of this project, the author will be constantly updating the "Chinese in Montana" website generously hosted by Spectral Fusion

Designs and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Montana. This website contains a broad variety of historical and archaeological information that can assist other scholars and an interested public. Specifically, the website will house digital copies of the federal census, newspaper extractions, and other historical information associated with the Chinese in Montana. Public versions of this dissertation and other reports will be also posted on the site, with hopes that free information will help to provide educational tools for professionals and the public. Even though the author will continue research on the Montana Chinese, there are other areas that researchers and students can help to further knowledge in this domain.

### *7.3.1: Historical Recommendations*

This dissertation has illustrated the ways in which primary historical records can create a more dynamic narrative of nameless Chinese in Montana, but there is still much more work ahead. Newspaper records specifically provide character to historical events, though the researcher must be quite aware of the biases inherent in these types of documents. As this dissertation focused heavily on Chinese communities west of the continental divide, further research into local rural newspapers in eastern parts of the state, can help provide more balance to the completed narrative. Future researchers are encouraged to digitize their extractions to assist in creating a community of information that can provide tools for all interested parties.

Deeds, ledgers, leases, and other primary records dedicated to business transactions need to be examined; these were not included in this dissertation and therefore represent an excellent point of departure from the material presented here. While there is little information written by the Chinese themselves, a careful analysis of



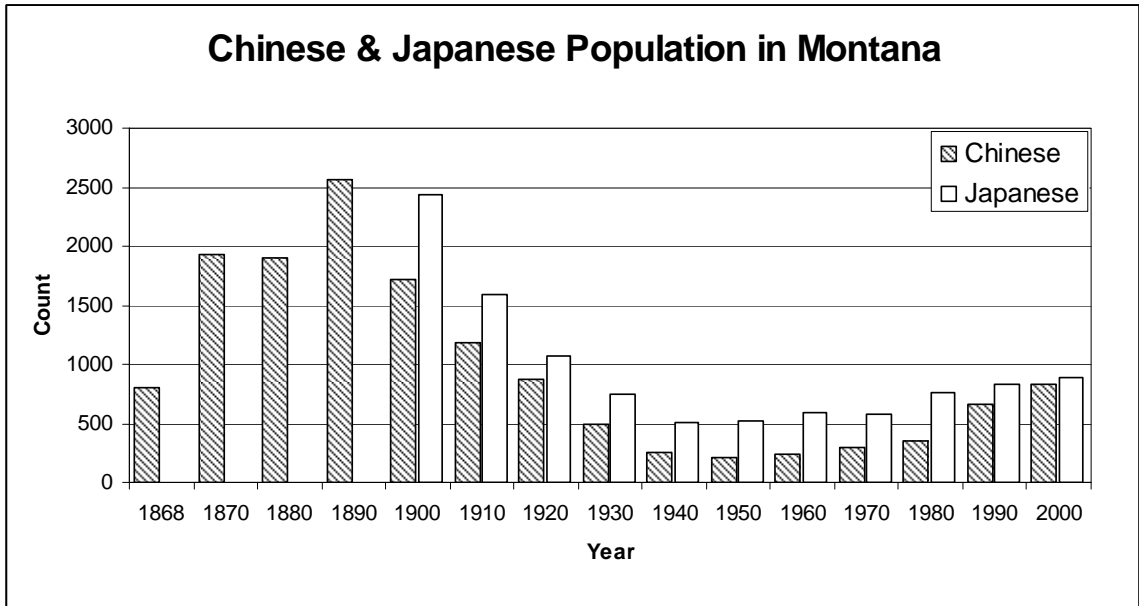
Euro-American store ledgers can provide significant data on the goods purchased and sold by this immigrant population. Data at this small scale is the crux of understanding social processes including creolization, resistance, and socio-economics that exist under the now-explicated heading of social organization and voluntary associations. In addition, better knowledge of historical deeds and leases might lead researchers to additional Chinese archaeological sites that went previously undiscovered.

There is also a need to locate additional information that presents the Chinese perspective on the cultural heritage of Montana's Overseas Chinese. This may include locating descendant groups in other parts of the American West or even China. As noted by Voss (2005) and Fong (2005; 2007) there is a decided need to include the Chinese voice in order to fully understand the Chinese experience. Without these sorts of emic sources, interpretations could easily obscure patterns observable by cultural members. The Montana Historical Society possesses several collections written in Chinese, including a business ledger from a Chinese business in Butte. However, many of these resources are written in 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese and are difficult to translate, even for modern Chinese speakers. Even so, translating and examining these documents would represent a starting point for an emic interpretation of the Overseas Chinese experience in Montana. Moreover, future researchers should also venture to San Francisco, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, or other parts of China to locate additional materials that are relevant to the Montana experience. Only recently have scholars in China begun a concerted effort to investigate the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century diaspora, including the 2008 launch of the *Journal of the Chinese Overseas out of Singapore*.

The final research avenue that future researchers should address is to consider the ways in which the Chinese influenced cultural contacts on the Montana frontier. As noted earlier in this chapter, the author did not have the time to conduct a detailed investigation of Chinese interactions with African-Americans, Native Americans, and Euro-American ethnic groups such as the Irish, Italians, and Norwegians. Pioneer and settler diaries of Euro-American groups could provide a finer-grained perspective on the daily lives and interactions of the Chinese in Montana, though of course these documents will be heavily biased. A careful historical analysis of these interactions could provide insights into the complex cultural contacts in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Montana.

A final recommendation to future researchers is to investigate the lives and archaeology of Japanese immigrants in Montana, as their story is inextricably interwoven with that of the Chinese narrative. The mass importation of Japanese laborers into the United States is directly tied to the anti-Chinese agitation and legislation of the 1880s through early 1900s. There were no Japanese recorded in Montana in 1870 and 1880, and only six in 1890. However, by 1900 the Japanese population exploded to 2,441, several hundred higher than the Chinese community, and a direct result of labor importation for maintenance on the NPRR and construction of the Great Northern Railroad (Figure 7.7). While the Japanese faced a host of unique issues with their immigration and occupation in the United States, their story shares many parallels with the Chinese. In 2008, Montana Department of Transportation road construction activities unintentionally unearthed a Japanese railroad section house deposit on Evaro Hill, northwest of Missoula (Janet Stevens 2010, pers. comm.). There are surely many more Japanese archaeological sites in Montana awaiting discovery.

**Figure 7.7:** Chinese and Japanese Population of Montana, 1868-2000



### 7.3.2: Archaeological Recommendations

Any future excavation of Chinese archaeological sites should be approached with a well-articulated anthropological research design. Future researchers should use ideas set forth by Voss (2005), Voss and Allen (2008) that focuses on broader patterns of historical and social processes through gender, ethnicity, creolization, and socio-economics. Garren Meyer's (2001) richly nuanced and Chinese-centered thesis on ethnic diversity in German Gulch was the strongest attempt in Montana to tackle the complicated internal social patterns of the Chinese, though in the end the study was mostly archaeologically inconclusive. Researchers in Virginia City, Montana could build upon Bowen's (2004) descriptive thesis with more specific anthropological questions.

Most Chinese archaeological collections in Montana are the result of mitigations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Fredlund et al. 1991; Rossillon 2002, 2003, 2008; Hall et al. 2006; McCourt 2010). Thus, many of the reports are limited in time, scope, and funding, which lead to a more descriptive than analytical

report. While there will continue to be Chinese sites excavated as part of Cultural Resource Management-based mitigations, academic researchers should focus their attention on analyses of existing archaeological collections from Butte, German Gulch, Marysville, Big Timber, Cave Gulch, China Gulch, and Louiseville. A United States Forest Service and University of Montana partnered project in spring of 2010 discovered that many of the artifacts from German Gulch were misidentified, and the newly discovered materials provide a more realistic picture of the Chinese experience in that area. In fact, Bill Norman, a Master's Student at the University of Montana, is undertaking the first reanalysis of the German Gulch collection since its excavations. Meyer's (2001) thesis on German Gulch used historical accounts and the Fredlund et al. (1991) report for data, without ever revisiting the collection. Rossillon's (2008) report on the Butte Chinatown is a step forward in its scope and research, but even this collection deserves further research. Due to a variety of factors, Big Timber's 35,000 artifacts remain unanalyzed but will hopefully undergo a more thorough investigation in the future.

Activities such as modern mining, looting, and other urban development have compromised the visibility and integrity of many Chinese sites in Montana, though there are still sites such as the Quong Chong Company cabin and placer claim along Emigrant Creek, the Forestvale Cemetery in Helena, German Gulch, and probably many others that warrant further investigation. While storage space for collections in Montana remains limited, these sites could provide significant data to help understand the experiences of the Overseas Chinese. For example, the Emigrant Creek site is unique due to its extreme isolation from other Chinese population centers, and its small size. All previously

investigated Chinese archaeological sites in Montana are urban or part of a larger rural mining settlement. Excavations at this site are not necessary, as much of the artifact assemblage is visible on the surface. In addition, the material culture at China Row at Forestvale Cemetery provides an unparalleled archaeological example of Chinese mortuary rituals and practices in Montana. Non-invasive investigations could help to illuminate the role ritual played in Chinese society in Montana, and the material culture associated with those rites. Finally, many features in German Gulch remain unexcavated and during revisits in 2008 and 2009, they appear to be undamaged by looting. Thus, further excavations of this site could continue to build a better picture of activity areas, socioeconomics, and even gender in the German Gulch Chinese community.

A framework of social organization can allow a far more emic perspective on the Chinese experience in Montana, and other diaspora communities around the world. Many archaeologists have overlooked the material culture patterning as left by a homosocial ethnic group, such as the Chinese. In most archaeological settings the Chinese represent a monolithic sexual group, though in some cases (see Hsu 2006), gender roles can shift according to the new social circumstances. Another possible comparative study could compare the assemblage recovered from the Butte excavations to the more isolated mining camps summarized in this dissertation to determine differences in material culture patterning created by the presence of at least some female Chinese.

Finally, future archaeological endeavors must incorporate the knowledge of internal Chinese social relations as evidenced in voluntary organizations of clans, district associations, and secret societies. For instance, future research could analyze historical

documents in San Francisco's Chinese businesses to determine if there are firm connections between specific distributors in China and consumers or retailers in Montana. In addition, this framework of social organization as collective action has direct implications for interpreting material culture in a Marxist or agency theoretical perspective. Within this social organization framework, artifacts on archaeological sites, such as imported Chinese goods, are imbued with power relations of resistance, submission, or differentiation. Similar to Wobst's (2006) perspective, artifacts interpreted in this manner are actually interferences in the cultural system that both reflect and shape social relations.

#### **7.4: *Hua Kiu***

The lives of Overseas Chinese, or *Hua Kiu*, intertwined deeply with the historical development of Montana, though their contributions remain forgotten to only but a few dedicated scholars and but a small number of Montanans. So much of the Chinese story remains untold due to the lack of their voice in Montana's history. Chinese migrants to Montana spurred economic growth through mining and the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and grew with the state's rural and urban development. Facing racism through legal restrictions, violence, and boycotts the Chinese of Montana prospered, some returning to China wealthy. Other Chinese individuals fared less well, became part of the fabric of Montana's history, and remain buried here today, not infrequently in overgrown and neglected cemeteries. With every trowel scrape and newspaper extraction the story of the Montana Chinese unfolds, but only through a microscope's view. These microscopic archaeological and historical views provide snapshots of regional and

international patterns of an immigrant group's adaptation to changing social and economic circumstances. Using both modified and new forms of social organization, the Chinese in the United States and Montana were able to collectively resist the seemingly insurmountable racism and legal exclusion facing them. While most of the population left Montana in the early 1900s, their legacy continues in the historical and archaeological remnants of their experiences. The Chinese were not anecdotal appendices to the settlement and exploitation of Montana, but instead were part of the master narrative that was largely ignored until only recently. To remember is to know, to know is to respect, and respect is what these coming men and women from Canton deserve. The Chinese never left Montana, their influences and achievements still surround modern Montanans. Even place names hold the reminders of Montana's historic Chinese pioneers (Figure 7.8).

**Figure 7.8:** "Chinatown" road sign on Jeff Davis Creek southwest of Dillon, Montana. Photo by author, 2008.



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**Appendix A: Statewide Chinese Archaeological Database**  
(Organized within sections by Smithsonian Trinomial)

## *Confirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites*

### **Bannack (24BE0169)**

- Ownership: State of Montana
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1862-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a maintained ghost town with several dozen standing buildings, and various archaeological deposits. Bannack had a Chinese population from the mid-1860s through 1880s. Western Cultural Inc. discovered Chinese artifacts during excavations for construction mitigation. Site has high potential for intact Chinese archaeological deposits.

### **Glendale (24BE0187)**

- Ownership: Private and Bureau of Land Management
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a few standing buildings relating to Glendale, a smelter town established in the mid-1870s. Glendale had several Chinese residents, including a large garden area. Private landowners control most of the site, and have periodically discovered Chinese artifacts. In concert with private landowners there might be significant archaeological deposits available for study, though that is a weak possibility.

### **Lion City (24BE0807)**

- Ownership: University of Mississippi Trust
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: In the late 1970s a private individual hoping to re-establish silver mining in the area purchased the upper Trapper Creek area. Later this individual died, leaving the property to the University of Mississippi. Survey in 2008 discovered Chinese artifacts on the surface of downtown Lion City, possibly relating to a Chinese laundry established in the town. Site has high potential for a broad variety of research including further elaboration of the Chinese archaeology and history of the area.

### **French Creek Cabins (24BE1381)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1872-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of two dilapidated log cabins, trash middens, and historic mining scars. This site was previously recorded without any ethnic affiliation. During survey in 2008, crews discovered a crushed opium can at this site. Area was likely first developed by white miners, with Chinese taking the claim over after the boom in the mid-1870s. Due to the site's remote location the area retains a high integrity for intact and undisturbed archaeological deposits.

### **Blue-Eyed Annie (24BE2186)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1890s-1910
- Comments: Site consists of several log cabins, trash middens, and mine works associated with the hardrock development of the Blue-Eyed Annie Claim. The claim was purchased by Tommy Haw, prominent Beaverhead County Chinese resident, in the late 1890s and worked through the first decade of the 1900s. Site has high potential for archaeological remains associated with early 20<sup>th</sup> century mining operations, though little information on Chinese history. (Figure A.1)

**Figure A.1:** Log cabin style shafthouse at Blue-Eyed Annie. Photo by author, 2008



### **Confederate Gulch (24BW0112)**

- Ownership: Private and Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of the remains of an entire mining district, including cabins, trash middens, and extensive mining works. Chinese first arrived in the Confederate Gulch district in the late 1870s and established their own mining companies as well as laundries. Due to constant re-working of claims over the last 130 years, there is little evidence of Chinese sites in the area. Stoner (2007) notes that modern miners sometime discover Chinese artifacts in Confederate Gulch.

### **Lombard (24BW0497)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1890-1910
- Comments: Lombard was established as a railroad hub town for the Montana “Jawbone” line. Site consists of several building remains, trash middens, and railroad workings. Billy Kee, prominent Montana Chinese entrepreneur operated the only hotel in Lombard during the 1890s and early 1900s, until his departure to China around 1910-1911. Site likely has significant archaeological assemblages of late 19<sup>th</sup> century life, and Kee’s degree of adherence to Chinese material culture.

### **Chinese Graves (24GN0009)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1910-1920
- Comments: Site consists of a marble headstone inscribed with the name, birth date, and death date of an apparently Chinese child or dog. The burial is likely associated with the nearby Moon Ranch, which operated during the late 1800s through mid-1900s. Further historical research might indicate whose remains are buried in the grave.

### **Granite (24GN0363)**

- Ownership: Private, State of Montana, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1893
- Comments: Granite was established as a silver-mining town in the mid-1880s. During the 1880s and early 1890s, Chinese established several laundries and restaurants in Granite. Visits in 2007 and 2008 recovered several dozen artifacts relating to the Chinese experience. With permission of the private landowner, researchers removed the Chinese artifacts from the site, produced a research paper (Blackford and Merritt 2008) and used in the creation of an interpretive museum exhibit in nearby Philipsburg. Due to the severe looting in Granite’s Chinatown evidenced in the site visits, there is little potential for intact archaeological deposits.

### **Sierra Mine Site (24GN0377)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management, Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of several collapsed cabins, trash middens, and mining works indicative of both placer and hardrock techniques. A revisit in 2009 by researchers from the University of Montana discovered evidence of Chinese occupation at the site. Due to mining development post-occupation, and modern trail construction, there is little potential for intact Chinese archaeological deposits at this site.



### **Garnet (24GN0540)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management, Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a maintained mining town, trash middens, and mining works dating to the early 1870s through 1930s. However, Garnet only had Chinese population during the latter parts of the 1800s. Chinese worked Bear and Elk Creeks during the 1870s, and established a laundry in Garnet during the 1880s. The BLM has recorded several Chinese artifacts in their collection from Garnet, including one celadon bowl at the Wells Hotel. Site retains some integrity for archaeological deposits, though it is unclear where exactly the Chinese laundry existed. (Figure A.2)

**Figure A.2:** Chinese celadon bowl with maker's mark at Garnet. Photo by author, 2009.



### **Ruddville (24JF0059)**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of several dilapidated log cabins, trash middens, and placer mining works in the Elkhorn Mountains southeast of Helena. Chinese miners purchased several claims in the area during the early 1870s, and are discussed in detail in Merritt (2010). During initial recording in the late 1970s, Forest Service archaeologists located a substantial trash midden with numerous fragments of Chinese artifacts. Site is only accessible by ATV or hiking, and researchers were unable to revisit the area in 2008 due to poor road conditions. Due to the site's remote location there is a high potential for a remarkably intact archaeological deposit associated with Chinese placer mining in the 1870s.

### **Chinaman's Cove (24LC0712)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Reclamation
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a hydraulic mining landscape including ditches, dams, and wash features associated with Chinese miners. Before inundation by the Canyon Ferry Reservoir, the Chinese campsite was likely located just below the modern boat launch. Campers located a Chinese coin in the beach at the boat launch in 2007. Surrounding areas had substantial Chinese populations in the late 1860s and 1870s, and included Cave, Cooper, and Oregon Gulches. The site is one of the best-preserved hydraulic-mining landscapes in Montana, but likely retains little archaeological integrity.

### **Forestvale Cemetery (24LC1032)**

- Ownership: Private (Lewis & Clark County)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1890s-1950s
- Comments: Site consists of a historic cemetery established in the late 1890s, and used continuously until the present. There is an isolated section located outside the cemetery's fence that includes at least 200 Chinese graves, most of which are unmarked. Several graves include marble or metal markers that suggest the area was used by the Chinese community from the 1890s to 1950s. The most significant feature at the cemetery is a brick and mortar funerary burner that was used in traditional Chinese mortuary practices. Surrounding the burner is a dense accumulation of archaeological materials that mourners offered to the deceased. Site has the ability to inform on Chinese mortuary practices during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and warrants further protection and investigation. The cemetery board and Montana Historical Society volunteers compiled a summary of the Chinese section of Forestvale (Bik 1993).

### **Marysville (24LC1083)**

- Ownership: Private and Montana Department of Transportation
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of the archaeological deposit of two Chinese laundries established in the 1880s and occupied through the early 1900s. Marysville was a hardrock mining community established in the late 1870s, with a Chinese population engaged only in service-based industries of laundry and gardening in the 1880s. In 2005, Western Cultural Inc., excavated several dozen units in the front of the two Chinese laundries recovering thousands of Chinese artifacts (Hall et al. 2006). The backyards of the two laundries remain unexcavated, and could provide a fertile ground for further investigations by future archaeologists.

### **Upper Cave Town (24LC1711)**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1870s
- Comments: Site consists of several habitation pads, cellars, trash middens, and historic mining evidence. Chinese miners worked in Cave Gulch during the 1860s through 1870s, and apparently occupied several areas of this site which relates to the upper end of the historic community of Cave Town. After a devastating wildfire in 2000, RTI Inc., excavated several features at this site uncovering several dozen Chinese artifacts (Rossillon 2002, 2003). Revisit in 2008 discovered several additional unrecorded features at the site. It also appears that even with the site's close proximity to recreational trails, the area retains significant archaeological integrity.

### **Upper Cave Gulch (24LC1723)**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1870s
- Comments: Site consists of several habitation pads, trash middens, ditches, and historic mining evidence. Chinese miners worked in Cave Gulch during the 1860s through 1870s, and apparently occupied several features at this site. This site is likely both a Chinese placer mining camp and water control area, with ditches extending down drainage to 24LC1711 and 24LC0712. After a devastating wildfire in 2000, RTI Inc., excavated several features at this site uncovering several dozen Chinese artifacts (Rossillon 2002, 2003). Revisit in 2008 discovered several additional unrecorded features at the site. It also appears that even with the site's close proximity to recreational trails, the area retains significant archaeological integrity.

### **Virginia City (24MA0723)**

- Ownership: Private and State of Montana
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1863-1920s
- Comments: Site consists of an active community with maintained historic structures and significant subsurface archaeological deposits. Chinese arrived in Virginia City likely in 1864-1865 (Davis 1967), and established a long-lasting presence in the area throughout the early 1900s. Archaeological efforts at Virginia City resulted in several hundred Chinese artifacts and a master's thesis (Bowen 2004). Continued excavations at Virginia City are recovering additional Chinese materials. Only certain areas of Virginia City retain archaeological integrity due to building and highway construction efforts in the last several decades. (Figure A.3 and A.4)

**Figure A.3:** Chinese ceramics from Virginia City, Montana. Photo by Kate McCourt, Montana Heritage Commission, 2010.



**Figure A.4:** Opium can from Virginia City, Montana. Photo by Kate McCourt, Montana Heritage Commission, 2010.



### **Louiseville (24MN0249)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of two structures, trash middens, and mining features associated with the first mineral development of Cedar Creek. Louiseville was initially dominated by non-Chinese miners. However, by the mid-1870s the Chinese dominated Louiseville and established a store, butcher shop, temple, and doctor's office. Site was first investigated in 1995 by the Forest Service, with the collections' reanalysis completed by Merritt (2007). The site was investigated again in 2007-2008 in partnership between the Forest Service and the University of Montana (Merritt 2009a). Site retains little integrity due to systematic looting and mining during the 1950s to present.

### **China Gulch (24MN0262)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of several hand-stacked rock hearths and associated habitation pads relating to Chinese occupation of the gulch in the 1870s. Located only a few hundred yards from Louiseville, it appears that China Gulch was the site of the first Chinese immigration to Cedar Creek in 1870 and was only occupied for a short time. The Forest Service first investigated site in 1995, with the collections' reanalysis completed by Merritt (2007). The site again investigated in 2007-2008 in partnership between the Forest Service and the University of Montana (Merritt 2009a). Site retains significant integrity due to the lack of looting and mineral development, though there are continued threats from both activities.

### **Rowley Chinese Hearths (24MN0332)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870-1880s
- Comments: The site consists of six hand-stacked rock hearths relating to the Chinese occupation of the area during the 1870s and 1880s. It appears that the hearths along Mary Anne Gulch were part of Forest City, a town in Cedar Creek contemporaneous with Louiseville. Survey in 2008 located these hearths, and discussions with local informants suggest the area was looted with some recovery of Chinese artifacts (Merritt 2010). The rock hearths at this site are the same size and construction style as those located several miles downstream at China Gulch. Site retains questionable integrity, and only excavation can determine if there are intact archaeological deposits.

### **Montreal or “Old Town” (24MO0110)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1874-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of several building depressions, historic wagon road, and several significant trash middens dating to the 1870s through 1930s mineral development of the Ninemile District. Miners from Cedar Creek flooded into Ninemile District in 1874 with news of a gold strike and established Montreal during this time. Chinese miners came with the initial rush and started their own mining companies along St. Louis and Eustache Creeks, and operated a Chinese laundry in Montreal. A bulldozer line cut through the site in support of fire-fighting operations in 2001 uncovered several Chinese artifacts including celadon, opium cans, and brown-glazed stoneware (Roenke 2001). Revisits in 2008 and 2009 discovered additional Chinese artifacts (Merritt 2010). Due to the bulldozer activity, looting, and mineral development the site likely retains little integrity.

### **Coloma Ghost Town (24MO0172)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management, Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1910s
- Comments: Site consists of several dozen dilapidated log cabins, several trash middens, historic roads and trails, and other features associated with hard rock mining including tailings, adits, and shafts. Coloma started as a gold-ore mining town in the 1880s, but boomed in the 1890s. Unlike nearby Garnet, Coloma was established with Victorian ideals in mind including the inclusion of women and children and the omission of saloons and prostitution. It appears that the Chinese owned a restaurant or store on the outskirts of Coloma, as evidenced by large globular stoneware jars. These jars were used to hold various dry or pickled foods imported directly from China. Coloma and German Gulch (24SB0212), are the only two sites in Montana that have produced these types of vessels. The University of Montana excavated the site between 2005-2009, and results of these efforts are pending. Certain areas of the site have high integrity, while most areas do not.

### **Fort Missoula (24MO0266)**

- Ownership: Missoula County, United States Forest Service, and Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1890s
- Comments: Fort Missoula comprises a variety of structures, trash middens, and other associated features. In addition, many of the buildings continue to be in use by a variety of users including the United States Forest Service, Montana National Guard, Bureau of Land Management, and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. Fort Missoula had a Chinese laundry in the 1870s-1880s, and many officers and their families had Chinese servants during this period. Excavations by the University of Montana in the 1970s through 1980s recovered several Chinese artifacts. Unfortunately none of the excavations have been formally published, thus the data exists only in the collection and field notes. It is unclear whether the Chinese laundry area at Fort Missoula retains any significant

integrity, as the property is continually used and developed by a variety of user groups.

### **Huckleberry Camp (24PA1330)**

- Ownership: Gallatin National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1897-1910
- Comments: Site consists of a severely deteriorated log cabin, trash midden, and associated placer mining features. The site was occupied during the late 1890s by the Quong Chong Company for gold mining purposes. Survey in 2008 discovered the site and pertinent documentation and is reported in Merritt (2010). Artifacts on the surface indicate a mixed assemblage of Chinese and Euroamerican wares. Due to the site's remote location along Emigrant Creek, north of Yellowstone National Park, there is likely a high integrity for archaeological deposits and warrants investigation.

### **Blackfoot City (24PW1021)**

- Ownership: Private, Bureau of Land Management, and Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of building pads, trash middens, placer mining features, and potentially graves connected to the historic mining development of Ophir Creek. Chinese purchased claims along Ophir, Carpenter, and Snowshoe creeks beginning in the early 1870s, and dominated the area's population by mid-decade. Most of the physical townsite is located on private property, though peripheral mining claims are located on BLM and USFS property. A cabin and associated Chinese artifacts were moved to the International Museum of Mining in Butte during the 1970s or 1980s and are still there today. Only a historic and management context was created for the Blackfoot City area (Foster 1992), with no formal excavations of any Chinese features. As most of the property is privately owned, there is little known about the archaeological integrity.

### **Weeksville (24SA0155)**

- Ownership: Private and Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890
- Comments: Site consists of a modern farmstead, and the archaeological remains of the railroad town of Weeksville. Features include dugouts, building pads, and trash middens associated with the 1880s construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Weeksville was one of the most famous camps associated with the railroad's construction phase (see Helterline 1984), and housed hundreds of Chinese workers as they constructed the grade nearby. Limited test excavations by University of Montana professors Dr. Carling Malouf and Dr. Duane Hampton, recovered half a Chinese wok from the site, though no formal report was produced. Site retains any integrity due to expansion of the nearby highway, and continued use of the area by private landowners.

#### **West Noxon Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0591)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on the beach adjacent to the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. Due to the site's location along the shoreline, there are limited intact archaeological deposits and no visible features.

#### **Submerged Noxon Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0592)**

- Ownership: Private (Avista Corporation)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a sandy island usually under the waters of the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. As the site is located underneath the water and periodically exposed to the air, there is limited site integrity.

#### **Thompson River Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0593)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter and tent platform features associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. The site is located on a small bench above the Clark Fork River. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. Site also has the high potential to contain the remains of Chinese workers in shallow unmarked graves (Fullerton 1961).

#### **East Eddy Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0594)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a bench above the Clark Fork River. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and



recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. No distinct features were discovered by Weisz (2003), and there were few surface artifacts suggesting poor integrity.

#### **East Weeksville Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0595)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a bench adjacent to the Clark Fork River Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. There were only a few artifacts discovered and no features identified, thus suggesting the site has limited integrity.

#### **“Last Chance” Railroad Camp (24SA0596)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a bench and beach adjacent to the Flathead River. Workers for the railroad termed this site the “Last Chance” for alcohol before moving onto the Flathead Indian Reservation to the east. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. There appears to be two distinct campsites at this location, with separate clusters of Chinese and non-Chinese artifacts. Due to the site’s proximity to the Flathead River, and the periodic flooding of the area, there is likely high damage to the archaeological integrity.

#### **“Fu Sang” Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0597)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter and tent platform features associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a small flat bench adjacent to the Flathead River, and likely relates to a small satellite blasting or grading camp. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. Weisz noted several tent platforms and potential hearths in concert with the significant archaeological assemblage. The site’s remote location likely suggests the site retains some significant integrity.

### **“Taklamakan” Chinese Railroad Camp (24SA0598)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter and tent platform features associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on the shore of the Flathead River, on a flattened area exposed to severe heat. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. Similar to other camps on the Flathead River, Weisz notes the presence of tent platforms in connection with the artifact scatter. This site likely has significant subsurface archaeological integrity.

### **Perma Bridge Railroad Camp (24SA0599)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana RailLink)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1881-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a Chinese artifact scatter associated with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the early 1880s. Chinese workers provided the bulk of the labor for the construction of this railroad in Idaho and Montana. This site is located on a large flat floodplain of the Flathead River. Weisz (2003) performed an informal site investigation in the 1970s through 1980s and recovered several Chinese artifacts including ceramics, opium cans, coins, and railroad-related tools. Similar to 24SA0596, there is evidence of two segregated worker's camps at this site. Due to the site's proximity to easy access, there has been significant looting of the area and the integrity appears adversely affected.

### **German Gulch (24SB0212)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of over 50 distinct areas of mining-related occupation of German Gulch by both Chinese and Euroamericans. Chinese first occupied the area in the late 1860s, and dominated the district by the mid-1870s. Several hundred Chinese inhabited the gulch, and established a diverse community including a store for imported goods. In the 1980s, GCM Inc., conducted an archaeological project in mitigation for a road-widening project resulting in a two-volume report (Fredlund et al. 1991). Archaeologists recovered several thousand Chinese artifacts, representing the most significant assemblage in Montana from this time-period. Meyer (2001) completed a master's thesis using the assemblage, and there is currently another project underway at the University of Montana to produce another thesis.

**Big Timber (24SW0738)**

- Ownership: Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1882-1940s
- Comments: Site consists of the subsurface archaeological remains of Chinese restaurant and laundry occupied from the 1880s to 1940s. The Northern Pacific Railroad established Big Timber in 1882 as a depot in 1882, and within several years there was a small Chinese community near the tracks. University of Montana archaeologists conducted an archaeological investigation of the laundry/restaurant structure in 2008, retrieving over 35,000 artifacts. The assemblage resulted in a professional project by Moschelle (2009), though there is far more data potential in the collection. Between urban development since the 1880s and the archaeological endeavor in 2008, the site retains little remaining integrity.

**Butte (24SB0765)**

- Ownership: Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1930s
- Comments: Site consists of subsurface archaeological deposits associated with the Chinese quarter of Butte. Butte was one of the most significant Chinese population centers in Montana from the 1880s through 1930s, with dozens of laundries, restaurants, stores, and other associated businesses. In 2007, RTI Inc., excavated an empty lot across the street from the Mai Wah Chinese Museum in Butte, and resulted in a formal report (Rossillon 2008). Archaeologists recovered several thousand Chinese artifacts including whole ceramic and glass vessels, dating to 1900-1930 period. The collection is permanently housed at the Mai Wah museum. Between urban development and the archaeological investigation, there are few areas in downtown Butte that retain any subsurface archaeological integrity.

**Highland City (24SB0067)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of log cabins, trash middens, and mining features associated with the historic development of the Highland Mountains. Prospectors discovered gold in the Highland Mountains in the late 1860s, leading to development in the first years of the 1870s. During this period several Chinese miners and entrepreneurs entered the area. Forest Service archaeologists noted the presence of several rock hearths that share a remarkable similarity to those discovered at 24MN0262 and 24MN0332. Mining development and recreational use adversely affected the site's integrity, though there have been no formal excavations or research conducted at the site.

## *Disproved Chinese Archaeological Sites*

### **“Chinese” Stone Cabins (24BE0173)**

- Ownership: Private
- Period of Relevance: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: This site consists of several hand-stacked dry laid stone buildings and associated cabin features along Grasshopper Creek. According to the original site form, the area was named “Chinese” stone cabins due to the quality of stonework and local stories of Chinese in the area. On closer inspection of the site form, the BLM archaeologists that recorded the site estimated the site’s date, extent, and ethnic affiliation through binoculars from a distance of at least ¼ mile. Regardless, researchers visited the site with the cooperation of the landowner in 2007. Survey of the features and examination of the surface artifacts suggest that the buildings relate to Euroamerican occupations of the late 1800s. Site retains remarkable integrity and should be formally excavated by professional archaeologists. (Figure A.5)

**Figure A.5:** Remains of stone structure along Grasshopper Creek. Photo by author, 2007.



### **House Pad (24LC1719), USFS**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: The site consists of a large habitation pad and associated hand-stacked rock hearth. In Rossillon (2002, 2003), the photographs and drawings of the rock hearth at this site shared similar phenotypic features to known Chinese hearths at 24MN0262 and 24MN0332. However, on closer inspection the hearth actually was a Euroamerican firebox that had collapsed in such a way creating the illusion of a u-shaped feature. The hearth itself is a significant construction regardless of the site's ethnic affiliation. Site retains considerable significance due to its location off the major transportation corridors in Magpie Gulch.

### **Poacher Gulch Terraces (24SA0122)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance: 1905-1930s
- Comments: Site consists of a series of hand-stacked rock terraces, cabin pad, trash middens, and historic wagon roads. This site was recorded as a potential Chinese site in the 1970s, with archaeologists basing that determination off local legend and folklore. In 2006 and 2007, the University of Montana and Lolo National Forest investigated the site for evidence supporting the Chinese hypothesis. However, no archaeological evidence supported this interpretation, as it appears that Euroamerican miners constructed the site in 1905, and then adapted waste-rock into terracing during the 1900-1910s (see Merritt 2006, 2009b; Merritt and McLeod 2010). The site does have a high potential for association with moon-shining operations in the 1910s and 1920s and might warrant further historical investigation. Due to the site's remote location it retains remarkable integrity.

## *Strong Potential yet Unconfirmed Chinese Archaeological Sites*

### **Cow Creek Placers (24BE1511)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a log cabin, trash midden, and associated placer mining features. In the 1870s, Chinese miners purchased the surrounding claims from the Yearian Brothers. It appears that the Chinese or later miners employed hydraulic techniques to remove significant portions of the hillside surrounding the cabin potentially destroying the associated trash dump. Due to the presence of thick pine duff, and the damage wrought by hydraulic mining, archaeologists failed to discover any Chinese-related artifacts at the features (see Merritt 2010).

### **Trapper City (24BE1615)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1864-1870s
- Comments: Site consists of a log and frame stamp mill, building foundations, trash middens, and associated placer mining features. Trapper City was the first settlement established along Trapper Creek during the gold rush to the area in 1864. According to historical records, Trapper City did have some Chinese residents during the 1870s. Survey by archaeologists in 2008 did not locate any pertinent Chinese material culture (see Merritt 2010). However, there is high potential for surface and subsurface Chinese deposits if the site is ever investigated further. Modern mining adversely affected the site's integrity, though the older portions of town appear to retain significance.

### **Pioneer Cabins (24BE1872)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of several collapsed log cabins, trash middens, and extensive placer mining works. The town of Pioneer was the first permanent settlement at the headwaters of Ruby and Cow Creeks on the Montana/Idaho border. Chinese miners worked nearby creeks during the 1870s, and likely established some occupations at the Pioneer townsite. Revisit in 2008 located little evidence of surface artifacts at the Pioneer site, suggesting significant deposition (see Merritt 2010). There is still a strong possibility of locating Chinese deposits at Pioneer, with many areas retaining significant integrity.

### **Ten-Mile Tunnel (24BW0287)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management and Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s
- Comments: Site consists of a long ditch with a tunnel constructed through a mountain near Townsend. According to site records Chinese miners constructed the ditch and associated tunnel during the 1870s. However, there is no further historical evidence to support this assertion and the construction technique of the ditch is not apparently ethnically unique. Modern mining and road development

destroyed most of the ditch and the tunnel during the 1980s and 1990s, thereby destroying the significance of the feature itself. It is possible that there are associated ditch construction camps, though that possibility remains slight.

#### **China Basin Cabin (24FH0446)**

- Ownership: Flathead National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1920s-1930s
- Comments: Site consist of a standing log cabin and associated features near Glacier National Park. According to the site form, a second-generation Chinese trapper occupied the cabin during the 1920s and 1930s. There is no further information available on the occupant of the cabin, and the historical resources consulted to make the determination appear to be local histories and legends. However, the legacy of “China Basin” on maps of the area does provide some support to the area’s occupation by some Chinese individual in the past.

#### **Bedrock Flume or “China Diggings” (24GN0894)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management and Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of a log cabin, trash middens, bedrock flume, and associated mining features. According to the mine claim record from 1892, Chinese miners occupied the site during that year. Chinese miners lived and worked around Beartown several miles downstream from this site in the 1870s and 1880s. Revisit in 2009 discovered the existence of a log cabin and associated trash middens, but there were no clear ethnic markers visible on the surface. Site and associated features retain significant integrity, and the bedrock flume continues to flow water.

#### **Chinese Diggings (24JF0290)**

- Ownership: Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of placer tailings and an unknown number of features associated with mining activities of the area during the 1870s and 1880s. According to the site form, maps, and local knowledge, an area south of Boulder is known as Chinese Diggings. The site form notes that modern mining activity damaged most historical features, and they noted the presence of only post-1900 archaeological materials. As the site is on private land, researchers were unable to visit the site in person to determine the presence of any Chinese archaeological materials.

#### **Yogo Town (24JT0075)**

- Ownership: Lewis and Clark National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1878-1880
- Comments: Site consists of several dozen dugouts and foundations, trash middens, and other features associated with placer mining. Yogo Town boomed as a placer camp in 1878 and collapsed by 1880. The 1880 federal census lists two Chinese occupants of Yogo Town, and revisit by researchers in 2008

discovered a hand-stacked u-shaped rock hearth near the center of the settlement. This hearth shares similar phenotypic features of other hand-stacked rock hearths at 24MN0262 and 24MN0332. Excavations of the tent pad associated with the rock hearth in 2009 recovered no ethnic markers, though remarkably three units recovered only a handful of artifacts (see Merritt and Mogstad 2009; Merritt 2010). The site retains remarkable integrity and there is high potential to discover some evidence of Yogo Town's Chinese inhabitants. University of Montana archaeologists will conduct a full-scale archaeological project in 2010 in support of Master's research.

#### **Old Lincoln (24LC0467)**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of several dozen habitation pads, trash middens, and associated placer and hydraulic mining features. Old Lincoln was the first gold discovery in the area near Lincoln and supported a significant population in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Chinese miners and laundry operators occupied the site in the 1870s. According to Didriksen and Didriksen (1994) there is one cabin relating to Chinese occupants. Revisit to the site by researchers in 2008 failed to relocate the Chinese cabin discussed by Didriksen and Didriksen, though the substantial undergrowth made survey difficult (Merritt 2010). The site is well-preserved thanks to the lack of re-mining, and the Helena National Forest's efforts to remove the area from mineral exploration in the 1990s. Site will likely yield archaeological remains of Chinese habitation during any future excavation.

#### **Austin Mining District (24LC1112)**

- Ownership: Private and Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of an entire mining district including cabins, habitation pads, trash middens, and associated mineral exploration features. According to a variety of historical resources the Austin/Greenhorn mining district contained significant Chinese populations during the 1860s through 1880s. Locals suggest that Chinese-related artifacts continue to appear in recreational and commercial mining endeavors. Due to consistent mineral exploration since the 1860s, any Chinese site discovered in the area would likely not retain much significance or integrity.

#### **Upper Cave Gulch Camp (24LC1716)**

- Ownership: Helena National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of nearly a dozen dugouts and building pads, trash middens, wagon road, and associated mining features. Rossillon (2002, 2003) notes that this site is likely the remains of a small and possibly unnamed settlement in Cave Gulch. As this was a settlement in an early placer mining district, there is a high possibility that there would be a Chinese component. Excavations by RTI Inc., failed to recover any Chinese artifacts though they spent



most of their time on other sites in the area. Recreational traffic and mining adversely affected the site's integrity, though there are some areas that appear undisturbed.

#### **Yreka (24MO0179)**

- Ownership: Private and State of Montana (University of Montana)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a handful of features including habitation pad, trash middens, and associated mining development. Prospectors discovered gold in the Elk Creek area in the 1860s, and a thousand people called the area home during the early 1870s. Chinese miners and entrepreneurs lived in the towns of Yreka and Reynold's City, and worked claims on Elk Creek and adjacent drainages throughout the 1870s. During the early 1900s, gold dredges worked the bottom of Elk Creek destroying most of Yreka and Reynold's City. Currently, the only existing features relating to the early history of Yreka are located along the fringes of the settlement. Recent logging by the University of Montana's Department of Forestry severely damaged several features at the town. Thus, there is little remaining archaeological integrity at the site.

#### **Reynold's City (24PW0138)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management, State of Montana, Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a handful of features including habitation pad, trash middens, and associated mining development. Prospectors discovered gold in the Elk Creek area in the 1860s, and a thousand people called the area home during the early 1870s. Chinese miners and entrepreneurs lived in the towns of Yreka and Reynold's City, and worked claims on Elk Creek and adjacent drainages throughout the 1870s. During the early 1900s, gold dredges worked the bottom of Elk Creek destroying most of Yreka and Reynold's City. Currently, the only existing features relating to the early history of Yreka are located along the fringes of the settlement. The State of Montana rehabilitated the site in the 1980s and destroyed many of the remaining cultural features. Thus, there is little remaining archaeological integrity at the site.

#### **Emmetsburg Cemetery (24PW0392)**

- Ownership: Bureau of Land Management
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1860s-1870s
- Comments: Site consists of several unmarked graves and a large marble monument commemorating the settlement Emmetsburg and the unknown deceased. Emmetsburg was one of the primary placer mining settlements established along Henderson Creek in the late 1860s, and boasted several hundred occupants including several Chinese mining companies. According to the site record, a former resident of Emmetsburg donated the money for the marble monument in the early 1900s. In the commemoration the speakers also mentioned that several Chinese were also buried in the Emmetsburg cemetery, though it is unclear whether they were disinterred for burial in China.

Emmetsburg was destroyed by dredging operations in the early 1900s, but the cemetery lies on a slope well above the creek bottom. The site likely retains significant integrity, though without excavation it will be impossible to determine the presence of Chinese remains. Excavation is, however, not recommended.

#### **Fort Owen (24RA0148)**

- Ownership: State of Montana (Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1867-1870
- Comments: Site consists of a historic fort with an original adobe barracks and ghost foundations. Fort Owen was first established by Major John Owen in 1850, and operated as a trading post and agricultural center throughout the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s. During the late 1860s, Major John Owen employed several Chinese cooks imported from Missoula at the Fort to feed his employees. It is likely that the Chinese cook left some evidence of their occupation at Fort Owen, though the extensive and destructive excavation techniques at the site during the 1950s through 1980s did not discover any evidence. Before Owen's departure from the site in 1872, he took wagonloads of trash and debris outside the fort's wall for disposal, thus suggesting that any evidence from the period of Chinese occupation is located on adjacent private land.

#### **China Ditch (24SA0105)**

- Ownership: Lolo National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s
- Comments: Site consists of a several-mile long earthen ditch with rock supports on the Montana and Idaho border. According to local history, Chinese workers constructed the ditch on contract for Idaho miners. There are some varying accounts on the content of that story, though most agree that Chinese did construct the ditch. Researchers discovered no supporting historical or archaeological evidence that the Chinese worked on the ditch (Merritt 2010). Regardless, the site remains affiliated with the Chinese on official Forest Service records and in their on-site interpretation. The upper end of the ditch retains significant integrity, though the modern highway destroyed a small portion.

#### **NPRR Eddy to Weeksville (24SA0348)**

- Ownership: Private (Montana Rail Link)
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1882-1890s
- Comments: The site consists of the track and bed for the Northern Pacific Railroad constructed through Montana in the early 1880s. Currently the tracks are owned by Montana Rail Link, and they have done significant work on them over the last decade. This is the only site recorded that comprises the actual bed and track of the Northern Pacific constructed by Chinese labor. However, there have been significant modifications to the bed, and replacement of the tracks, thus destroying any integrity left of the original construction period.

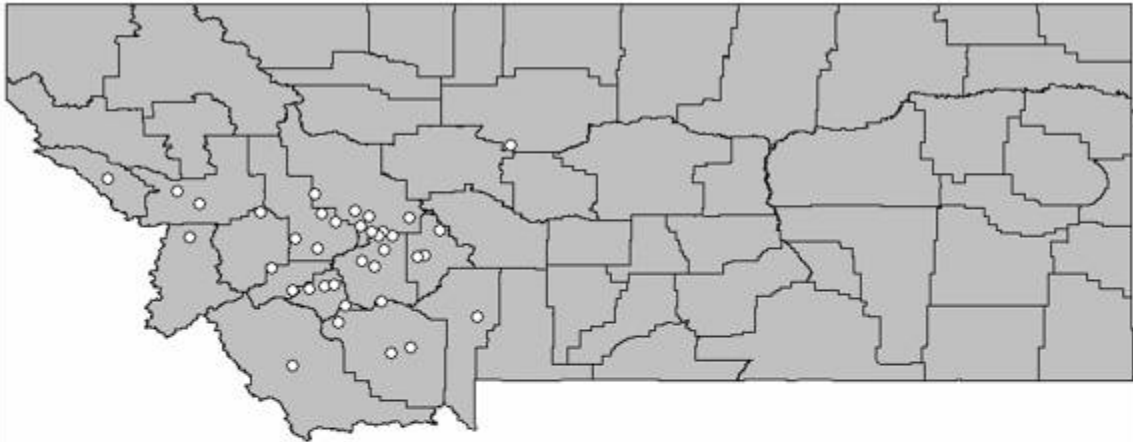
**White Pine (24SA0568)**

- Ownership: Private
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1880s-1920s
- Comments: Site consists of the White Pine Store, trash middens, and potential foundations relating to a Chinese section house occupied from 1882 to the 1910s. According to local oral history and Fullerton (1961), Chinese section hands lived in a small building located adjacent to the White Pine Store. White Pine grew up as a Northern Pacific Railroad depot in the 1880s and 1890s, with Chinese and Japanese section hands performing maintenance on the tracks in the vicinity. Chinese men, reaching into their elderly years, lived at the section house until the 1920s. Due to the property's private ownership, researchers lacked the opportunity to perform surface survey of the site for any relevant Chinese archaeological materials. The section building itself has been removed, though it is unclear if there was ground disturbance at the site. Site has undetermined integrity.

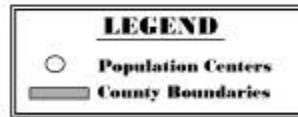
**China Gulch Pads (24SB0742)**

- Ownership: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Period of Relevance for Chinese: 1870s-1890s
- Comments: Site consists of several habitation pads, two trash middens, and a rock hearth. The site is located on the upper end of China Gulch, south of Butte. According to site records there were several low-scale mining operations in the area during the 1870s and 1880s, including some charcoal-making operations. Revisit in 2008 could not locate all recorded features due to the dense undergrowth present at the site located near a spring (Merritt 2010). However, the rock hearth located adjacent to one habitation pad, shares phenotypic features with the known Chinese hearths at 24MN0262 and 24MN0332. Only test excavations could determine any further ethnic or temporal information on the site. The rock hearth in conjunction with the site's location in China Gulch provides enough evidence for listing as a potential Chinese site.

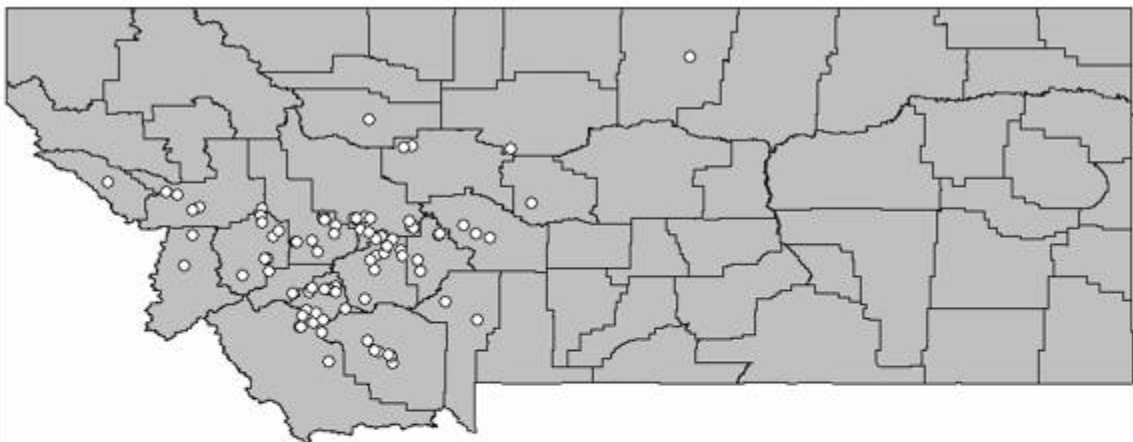
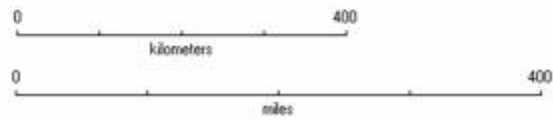
**APPENDIX B: CHINESE POPULATION BY LOCATION  
(1870-1930)**



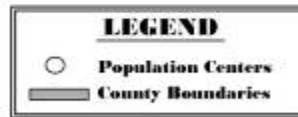
**Chinese Population  
1870**



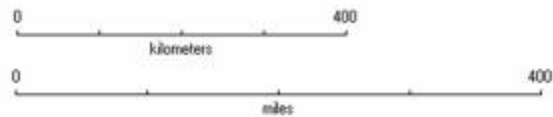
Map By: Chris Merritt Date: 11/15/09  
 Data From: 1870 Federal Census  
 Mapped Using: Diva-GIS, Datum WGS84

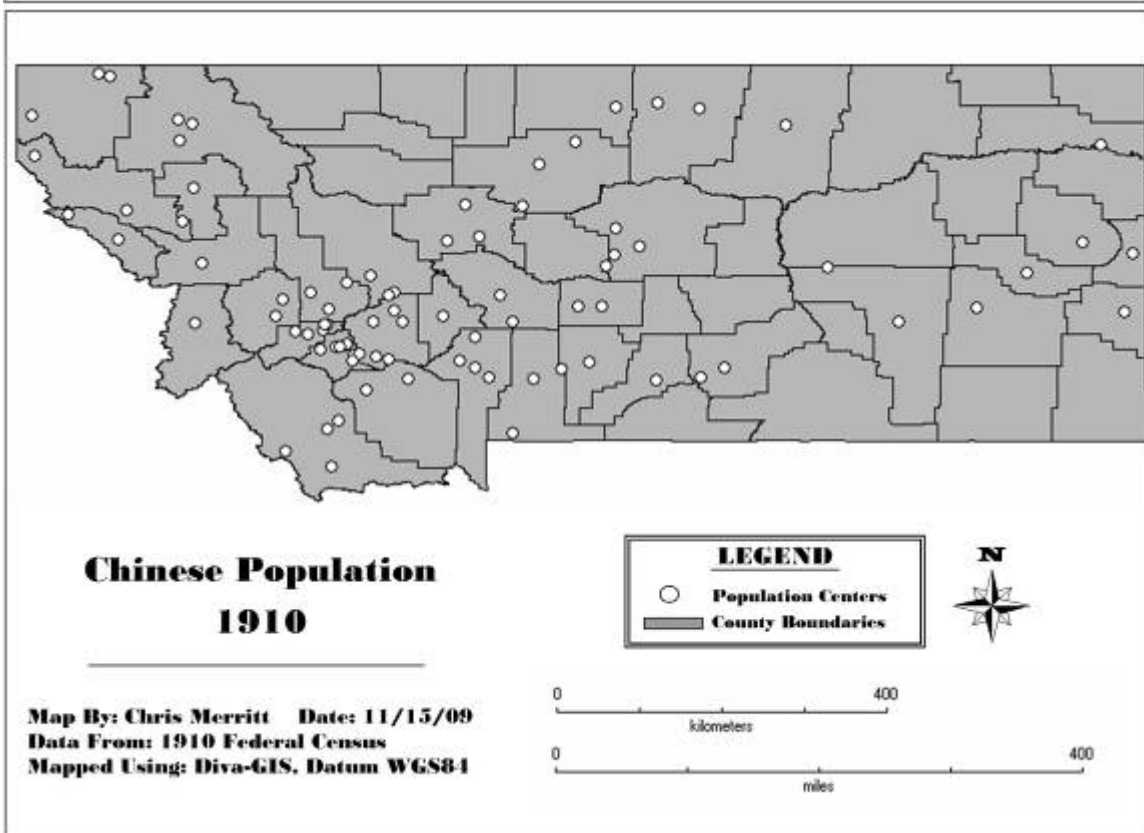
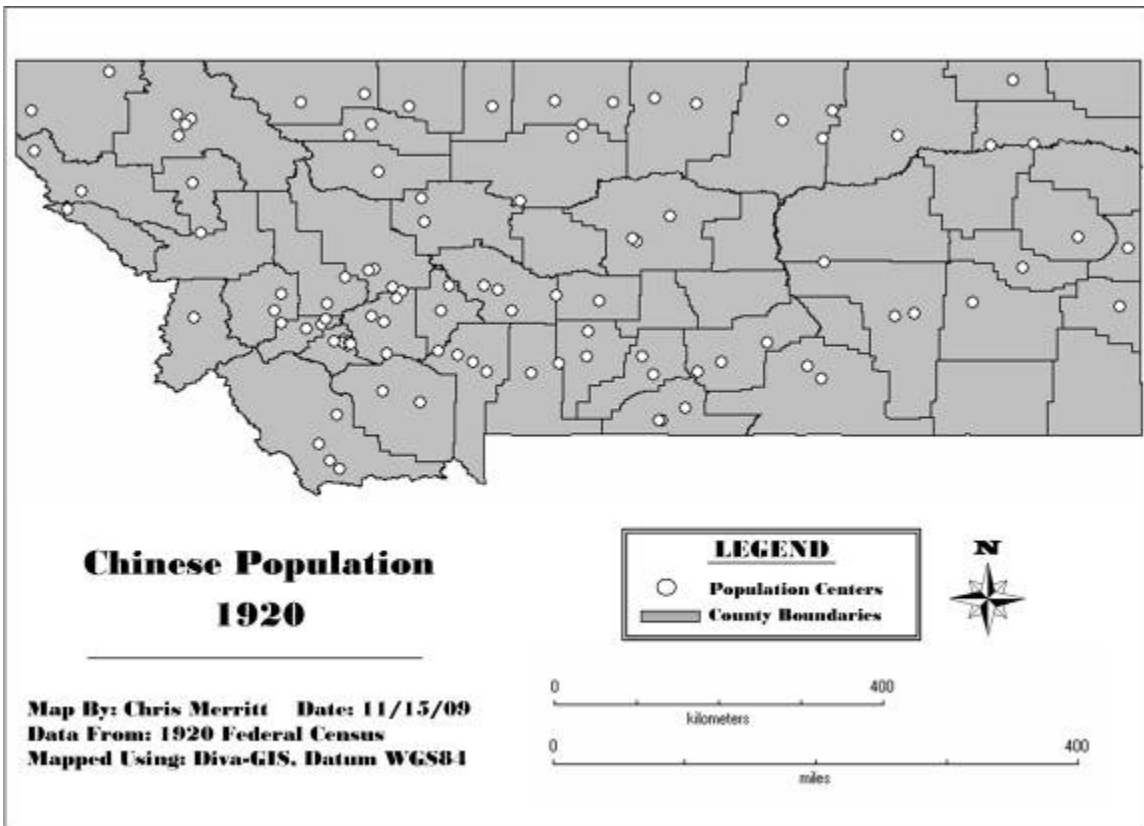


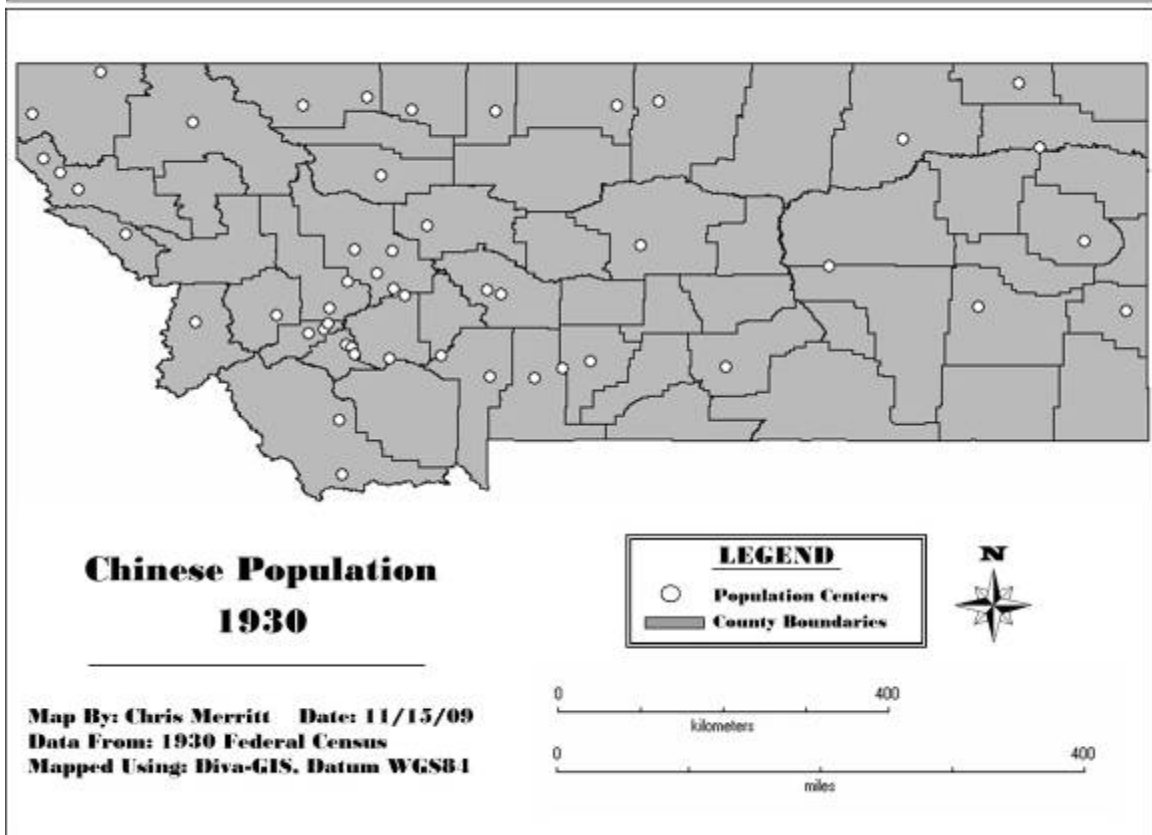
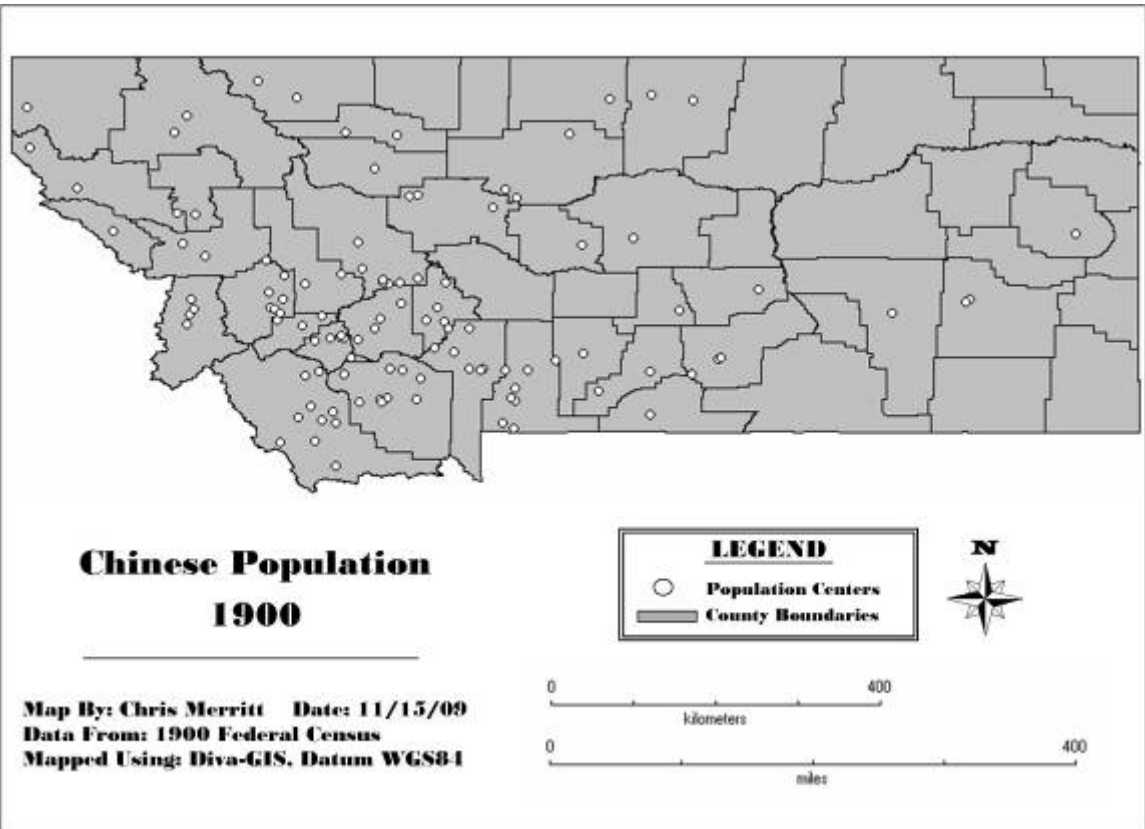
**Chinese Population  
1880**



Map By: Chris Merritt Date: 11/15/09  
 Data From: 1880 Federal Census  
 Mapped Using: Diva-GIS, Datum WGS84







## **APPENDIX C: NEWSPAPER EXTRACTIONS**

All newspaper citations within this dissertation are posted on this website for future researchers, and will be permanently housed by the University of Montana, College of Arts and Sciences.

<http://www.cas.umt.edu/anthro/anth495cim/researchresources.htm>