ASSESSMENT OF ACCULTURATION IN DEADWOOD SOUTH DAKOTA’S CHINESE COMMUNITY FROM 1877-1930

by

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Abstract

This thesis takes a look at the notion of acculturation and the extent to which it was taking place in the Chinese community of Deadwood South Dakota from 1877-1930. I have used as a primary source the Deadwood Chinatown report as well as historic books written on the subject. This thesis presents the findings from my archaeological investigation into the Chinese community of Deadwood and the methodology used to come up with my results. By all indications the Chinese community of Deadwood South Dakota was able to maintain their own culture identity while at the same time embracing their new American way of life. The Chinese community was a strong presence in Deadwood and became a significant influence in the towns’ development and history.
Acknowledgments

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing is more iconic to United States history and culture than the American Wild West of the nineteenth century and frontier towns such as Deadwood, South Dakota. These towns laid the foundation for establishing our national identity and cultural heritage. With the exception of their well documented contributions to building America’s railroad, very little attention has been paid to the many contributions of the Chinese community in frontier towns such as Deadwood. The Chinese had a significant presence in western frontier towns and they had an active and vital role in helping settle the American western frontier; however, their contributions have been much overlooked, misunderstood, and are not well known to most people.

The Chinese experience in America’s Wild West and frontier towns up until now has been nothing more than a footnote in the pages of American history. Even in the way of archaeological investigation there has been insufficient research done on Chinese communities in the region. Furthermore any research that has been done in the way of analyzing their artifacts has been completed in a non-Chinese context with very little investigation of actual Chinese culture or history.

In this paper, I focus specifically on Deadwood’s Chinatown because of the amount of archaeological research that has been done in recent years uncovering well over 100,000 artifacts and identifying over 50 features. The town of Deadwood is a good site to focus on because it is the most iconic American western frontier town. It even stands out among contemporary frontier towns of its day such as Tombstone and Dodge City. This is due to the colorful and notorious
historical figures that are associated with Deadwood’s past such as Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok, both of whom are buried just outside of town. Even Wyatt Earp and Morgan Earp temporarily stayed in Deadwood before moving onto other frontier towns to find their fortunes. One of American histories most notorious figures, General George Armstrong Custer, can be linked to Deadwood as well.

Deadwood’s Chinatown dates to 1877-1930 and played a pivotal role in the town’s history as well as the surrounding area of the Black Hills. This study will investigate, through the material remains found at the Deadwood Chinatown site, the notion of acculturation and to what degree it took place within the Chinese community. I specifically examine the degree to which the Chinese community was able to maintain its cultural traditions (at least in regards to material remains), which elements of Chinese material culture were most enduring, and how the material culture of members of the Chinese community at Deadwood underwent change over time.

**BACKGROUND**

The majority of Chinese immigrants coming to America in the mid nineteenth century were disembarking on America’s West Coast, specifically California. They were coming at a time that was seeing a great influx of people to that region due in no small part to the gold rush and new technologies such as the railroad. Despite their important contributions, Chinese Americans have been largely ignored in the history books. Recently a growing amount of interest in the history of Chinese Americans has led to some historical archaeological research on the topic. It seems that a recurring theme in archaeological interpretation is that Chinese communities in
western frontier towns have been viewed as strictly traditional and bounded by ethnic loyalties that resisted any attempts at acculturation into the non-Chinese community (Voss 2005).

In addition to being partially settled by Chinese, Deadwood was also a typical frontier and gold mining town. Initially settled illegally it offered opportunities for overnight success to those who dared come and were willing to face untold hardships. Towns such as Deadwood represent the earliest settlement and modernization of the American western frontier and the beginning of what would eventually become a national identity and what it meant to be an American. This did not come without cost and was the beginning of the exploitation of land and resources that seemed endless and there for the taking. The land grab was also a severe blow for many Native American cultures that had thrived for thousands of years prior to European contact and had long since established a cultural identity that was as diverse and dynamic as any found in Western Europe. This new western expansion not only exploited local resources and the indigenous peoples but also the new immigrants. The expression “mining the miners” came out of this period and the promise of making money off the people coming to mine for gold and get rich overnight, was just as lucrative, if not more than mining itself.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced Chinese left their homelands in the late nineteenth century due to political, foreign and civil unrest. Most Chinese immigrants came from southern China out of the Kwangtung province. This was a region of China during the mid to late nineteenth century that was in a constant state of warfare which brought about famine, poverty and disease to the masses of that region (Voss 2005). Both the British Opium War of 1839-1842 and the TaiPing Rebellion, which claimed approximately 20 million lives from 1851-1864, created miserable living conditions for many in China (Fosha 2008). Chinese immigrants left their impoverished villages to seek a better way of life and potential employment overseas in
which to create new business ventures. News of California’s gold rush in 1849 sparked this idea and a new sense of hope and imagination of unlimited opportunities of prosperity for the common person abounded. By the 1860s, large populations of Chinese immigrants were established throughout much of North America, Peru, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia (Voss 2005).

The Chinese communities that were drawn to frontier towns, such as Deadwood, came for the same reason as white Anglo-Saxon Americans, a hope for a better future. Like everyone else, Chinese immigrants were very eager to capitalize on the potential overnight success a gold rush town could provide, however only a small portion of Deadwood’s Chinese were engaged in mining. This was a common theme in most frontier towns. Many Chinese came to set up businesses to service the mining camp, most chose to operate restaurants, boarding houses and the ubiquitous laundry. It is believed the reason for the avoidance of mining and a focus on service-related businesses had everything to do with avoiding unpleasant and most often violent confrontations with white prospectors that were a dominant force in western frontier towns (Zhu 2003). The Chinese often faced such open racist and discriminatory behavior towards them ever since coming to America. This open acceptance of racist discrimination was enabled by the American Government’s overt racist policies to Asian immigrants with the Chinese Exclusion Act of the late nineteenth century (Zhu 2003).

One of the Chinese community’s most successful and well known service-related businesses was laundry service. Because of their low start-up costs, low overhead, and high profit potential, laundries were one of the more popular business choices for the Chinese in Deadwood as well as other frontier towns. In fact, Chinese immigrants were profiting more from what they made at such business ventures than most miners were earning and at one point in
Deadwood history the Chinese community actually held a monopoly on the laundry business for several decades (Zhu 2003).

Some Chinese did work gold claims, but they were in areas considered by most prospectors to be tapped out of gold or in a vicinity that was just too dangerous and in general too poor a condition for mining. With all this adversity thrown at them some Chinese miners did manage to have some noteworthy success which is directly contributed to a deeply rooted cultural phenomenon found in Chinese society. That cultural phenomenon is an ability to work in large groups creating a spirit of teamwork, water management skills brought over from China as well as a nutritious diets, advanced healthcare and adaptability to harsh environmental conditions (Zhu 2003). These cultural attributes were also what made Chinese laborers so renowned and successful in building America’s railroads.

**Acculturation**

To help address the topic of acculturation I analyzed the data from the Deadwood Chinatown excavation report from Deadwood South Dakota (Fosha 2008). The published data from the Deadwood report provides background information that will better explain and put into context where my data sets came from and how they were reformulated for my study specifically to address acculturation. A total of 210,000 artifacts were recovered over four years of excavation. Not every artifact is included or described in the report because of budget and time constraints which limited full analysis of all artifact classifications. In the official Deadwood Chinatown report artifacts were analyzed by material, function, general classification, and place of origin. In the report there were a total of eight distinct artifact classes that were established to best represent those artifacts found. They include Domestic/Household, Personal, Recreational,
Building/Construction, Miscellaneous, Transportation, Communications, and Floral/Faunal (Fosha 2008).

For my research and to focus specifically on acculturation I have combined three of the eight categories, Domestic/Household, Personal, and Recreational under one category Culturally Significant Everyday Objects. I have kept the category of Building/Construction the same and have combined Miscellaneous, Transportation and Communications under Other. Using the appropriate bar graphs from the Deadwood report, I have included specific artifact classes and percentages in my own methodology, but have combined those appropriate categories I created. From that I created my own dataset to narrow down and focus my research and identify areas I felt would best allow an evaluation of acculturation in the Chinese community as shown in Tables 1 and 2, below. In my analysis I examine 3 lots (out of 10) and 11 of the 51 features excavated as they showed occupational consistency through time as shown in Tables 3 and 4, below. Appendix C of the Deadwood Report, a quantitative artifact summary and artifact catalog for individual features was also used to help identify artifacts as either Chinese or non-Chinese origin as well as the artifact function.
Table 1 Building function over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot No.</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1903</th>
<th>1909</th>
<th>1915</th>
<th>1923</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>Chinese Dwelling</td>
<td>Chinese Dwelling</td>
<td>Negro &amp; Chinese Boarding</td>
<td>Negro &amp; Chinese Boarding</td>
<td>Negro &amp; Chinese Boarding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Lot and corresponding feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Feature Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Privy Pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Builder's Trench</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Privy Pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burned structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Burned Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Builder's Trench</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ash Pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Structural Remnants and Stone Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Dump</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary and explanation of excavated features and artifacts

The following data is taken from the Deadwood report and is a summary of the eleven excavated features by lot and explanation of artifact classes that I used in my methodology. This will explain in more detail the artifacts categories that I used and show the breakdown of those artifacts found as either Chinese or non-Chinese in origin as well as function of artifact.

Fieldwork for the Deadwood Chinatown excavation began in the summer of 2001 starting in June and continued each season through 2004. Lots excavated in 2001 and 2002 were
adjacent. In 2003 excavations pass over two lots 13 and 15, and Lots 17 and 19S were excavated. The next field season, 2004, Lots 13 and 15, between the 2001 and 2003 investigations, were excavated. Laboratory work was conducted during the off season of each year (Fosha 2008).

Artifact classifications are organized and grouped according to their mixed function or morphological criteria. Eight distinct artifact classes were determined by Fosha et al. to best represent those artifacts found. They include Domestic/Household, Personal, Recreational, Building/Construction, Miscellaneous, Transportation, Communications, and Floral/Faunal. This is what I used as a basis for my data analysis. The following is a brief description of each artifact class (Fosha 2008).

The Domestic/Household class was the largest class of artifacts and represents all items associated with creating and maintaining a household. This would include such things as cooking and eating utensils, household furnishings, and heating and lighting equipment. Bottles and bottle glass and ceramics are also included in this class. Personal artifacts include clothing, jewelry, and personal hygiene items. Also included in this class are objects associated with opium smoking including: opium pipe and pipe bowl fragments and opium tin and tin fragments; firearms and ammunition; and coins, both American and Chinese. Recreation artifacts include poker chips and gaming tokens, dice, game pieces and children’s toys. The Building/Construction artifact class is made up of artifacts that are either directly or indirectly associated with the construction of buildings and the maintenance of those structures. Tools were also included in this group. The Transportation class includes items associated with all types of transportation. The Communications class is made up of items used for written and telephone communication. The Miscellaneous class includes items that do not fit into another class or
items whose function is indeterminate. The last category is the Floral/Faunal class. This category is made up of anything that comes from an animal or plant source (Fosha 2008).

The artifact types that have been quantified and analyzed include: bottles, ceramics, smoking paraphernalia, toys, ammunition, floral remains, and faunal remains. The bottle and ceramic artifacts have undergone detailed attribute analysis. The bottle database includes all complete bottles, partial bottles, and identifiable fragments. All household ceramic materials are included except ceramic insulators, doorknobs, and brick. Floral and faunal remains are included as archaeological material that resulted in human activity (Fosha 2008).

There were a total of 58 features found throughout excavations conducted from 2001-2004. Of the 58 features 37 are structural in nature and include retaining walls, stone building foundations, construction features (i.e. stone and brick piers, wood posts or post molds, retaining walls, and builder’s construction trenches), and features related to the function of buildings. Other features consist of privies, dumps, middens, pits, an historic trench, a stone refuse pile, a depression, and several areas of reduced or burned area deposits.

The lots are arranged by consecutively odd numbers 1 through 19, Lot 19 officially is divided into Lot 19 South and Lot 19 North; see Figure 1 (Fosha 2008). Table 2 is an overall snapshot of the lots and features I have included in this report. It shows a breakdown of certain artifact classes by either percentages or total number of artifacts found. It did not show a breakdown of every artifact as either Chinese or non-Chinese in origin.
Lot 1, Feature 2 a Privy

Artifacts found here totaled 8469 which included seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. The majority of artifacts fall into the Domestic/Household classification, and include glass bottles and ceramics, with 61% of the ceramics identifiable as Chinese. 11% of the artifacts are construction related, the majority of which are window glass and nails. Personal items make up 17% of the total and include men, women and children’s shoes and shoe fragments, clothing, fabric leather, ornamentation, opium pipe and pipe bowl fragments, opium can fragments, 18 Chinese coins, two U.S. minted coins, 1871 half-dime and a five cent piece minted between 1867 and 1883, and one ice skate (Fosha 2008).

The majority of bottles found in the lower strata of the privy pit are from alcoholic beverages. Ceramics manufactured in both England and the eastern United States are represented. The majority of Chinese ceramics is represented by the common designs referred to as Four Seasons, Bamboo, and Winter Green, and includes vessel types such as rice/soup bowls, tea/liquor cups, and spoons. Chinese storage vessels of stoneware are also represented (Fosha 2008).

Lot 1, Feature 3 a Builder’s trench

Artifacts found here totaled 1773 and included five of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. The majority are domestic/household items that consist of bottle glass, including beverages and medicinal types; domestic ceramics, and cooking tools and utensils. The Domestic/Household classification holds the highest percentage of artifacts by far, at 66 percent. This may be due to the secondary deposits associated with the fill of the builder’s
trench that most likely came from previous building episodes. Most of the building items are nails and window glass fragments. Few artifacts are of Chinese manufacture and include opium pipe bowl fragments, opium containers, five ceramic fragments, and a Chinese coin. There were several items related to personal use including clothing and eyeglasses. One U.S. minted coin, a 1900 silver dime, was recovered within the fill associated with the feature (Fosha 2008).

Lot 1/3, Feature 5 a Burned Structure

This lot had many significant cultural artifacts. Artifacts found here totaled 22,508 and the majority fall within the Domestic/Household classification. As can be expected in an area where a fire has occurred, many of the artifacts show signs of being exposed to heat, and in some areas, the fire was hot enough to melt glass and light metal. The majority of artifacts are fragmented, as is typical (Fosha 2008).

The household items consisted of beverage and medicinal bottle glass, domestic and Chinese ceramics, and cooking tools and utensils. Significantly, close to half of the household ceramic artifacts are Chinese manufactured. Other artifacts of Chinese manufacture are opium pipe bowl fragments, opium containers, and 18 Chinese coins. Two additional Asian coins have been identified as Vietnamese. Two U.S. minted coins were recovered from this feature: a Five Cent piece and a One Cent coin dated 1898. The date on the five cent piece minted between the years 1867 and 1883 was unreadable (Fosha 2008).

The high percentage of bottle glass and household ceramics among the Domestic/Household classification, 93% jointly is significant given that Belt Cities Directory, 1908-1909 indicates that a Chinese “saloon” was located at this site. Over a period of years from at least 1891 to 1915 the structure functioned as both a Chinese and Afro-American residences at
which time a Chinese merchant named Hi Kee Co, owned the building. Hi Kee may have used a dividing wall of the structure at this site as inventory storage for his store next door and there were only a few personal effects that remained of the one resident (Fosha 2008).

Personal related items were lightly represented. Clothing fasteners, fragments of eyeglasses, hygiene related items, and opium smoking paraphernalia. Only one occupant lived at the residence in 1917 according to the following article in the Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times (Fosha 2008:4.38-4.39; Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times 1917).

...6 o’clock last evening...fire...in a one-story frame building adjoining the store of Hi Kee in Chinatown...entire interior of the building was blazing...fire breaking out of the roof...soon put out and stopped from spreading...building is owned by Hi Kee, and was occupied by a Chinaman known as Old Jim, who lost most of his personal effects and all of the furniture in that place...

Building/construction items make up one quarter of the artifacts recovered in this feature, the majority of which are nails and fragmented window glass. The construction items most likely are leftovers of burning and demolition activities. Temporal differentiation of cut nails and wire nails, a technological marker, suggest this building was constructed sometime in the late nineteenth century (Fosha 2008).

Lot 1, Feature 16 a Midden

Feature 16 was a midden deposit and had a total of 106 artifacts that were recovered. Artifacts include only two of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. The majority of the artifacts were related to domestic/household classification and consisted of bottles, bottle glass, and household ceramics. There were no Chinese manufactured artifacts identified. The datable characteristics of some of the bottles recovered indicate that the midden
feature deposit predates the turn of the 20th century. The artifact assemblage for this feature does not indicate mixing of temporal periods (Fosha 2008).

Lot 1, Feature 17 a Pit

Lot 1, Feature 17 Pit is a small oval shaped pit and was analyzed in a master’s thesis by Christopher Leatherman. It has been identified, most likely, as a ceremonial feature for the Chinese mortuary ritual known as Shao Yi or burning the clothes (Leatherman 2007:38-39). The following quotes are taken directly from the Deadwood report to explain the Shao Yi ceremony as well as associated artifacts that were found in this feature (Fosha 2008:4.67-4.68).

The Shao Yi is a ceremony conducted by the family a few hours after an individual dies. In this ritual all of the deceased’s personal belongings are gathered together, wrapped into their clothing, placed in a circular pit or space and incinerated. Burning the possessions eradicates items contaminated by death and converts them into a spiritual essence (smoke) that the departed use in the afterlife.

The material unearthed in Feature 17 is consistent with offerings observed in the Shao Yi ritual. Ethnographic studies suggest that the Chinese coins used in funerals as talismans to protect the dead and as symbols of wealth, while the food items were offering’s to feed the deceased soul. A lack of burn marks on the bone suggests the meat offerings were not cooked. The first food offerings made for the deceased would not have been cooked thus signifying the distant relationship between the living and the dead (Fosha 2008:4.68; Rouse 2005:95; Watson 1988:13; Tong 2004:112).

The opium and tobacco smoking paraphernalia were unquestionably the personal possessions of a single individual. The two Chinese water pipes were the only such artifacts found in the excavation of Deadwood’s Chinatown suggesting they were items of a high status person. All of the opium paraphernalia were intentionally destroyed before being placed into the pit, an act that is consistent with the Shao Yi ritual.

This feature was excavated by strata and the first stratum was a post-ritual layer consisting of residential trash deposits. At this first layer artifacts found included construction materials, cloth and buttons, ceramics and bottle glass, household items and many other materials. Artifacts from the final layer include two Chinese coins, seeds from 13 types of fruits, bone of
six animal species, over 100 spent matches, opium smoking paraphernalia (pipe bowls, tube, lamp, possible needle and tray) two Chinese water pipes, much of which was wrapped in a Chinese vest made of black felt with brown textile lining. The wall of this layer was lined with large wood fragments the majority of which were burnt (Fosha 2008).

There was close to 6000 artifacts and eco-facts were distributed among three strata graphic layers. Over half comprise the Floral/Faunal classification and were recovered in the flotation samples sorted and analyzed for botanical remains. The floral remains identified as a food source include watermelon seeds, peach pits, chokecherry pits, olive pits, ground cherry seeds, grape seeds, and peach skin. Other botanicals include marijuana seeds, acorn fragments, and charcoal. Numerous whole and fragmented spherical seeds could not be identified. Animal bone included chicken, cow, pig, sheep, and wild turkey (Fosha 2008).

The classification of personal items make up over a quarter of the artifacts and include more than 1000 glass seed beads, buttons from Chinese garments, Chinese clothing items, personal hygiene related items, and tobacco and opium smoking paraphernalia. Other items include pencil and paper fragments, fragments of an ornamental hair comb, fragments of household ceramics (some Chinese manufactured), and wood and glass from a small framed opium bowl container (Fosha 2008).
Lot 1, Feature 23 a Privy Pit

Artifacts found here totaled 2278 and included seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. The largest percentage of artifacts is of the floral/faunal classification. Botanical remains number 1448 and represent 83% of the assemblage collected. There were also a number of animal bones collected. Additionally, the domestic/household artifact class consisted mostly of bottles and bottle glass, chimney lamp glass, and ceramics. Twenty-five percent of the ceramics were identifiable as Chinese manufacture. Personal items include fragments of opium pipe bowls and opium cans. The building/construction class was comprised of nails, window glass, and wood (Fosha 2008).

Lot 3, Feature 1 a Burned Structure

Lot 3, Feature 1 is a structural feature. Some building materials were likely obtained and manufactured locally or within the larger Black Hills region. These materials are dimensional, milled lumber, brick, mortar, and lime plaster. Construction artifacts brought in from beyond the Black Hills include flat or window glass and fasteners such as wrought, cut, and wire nails. These nails assist in determining its period of construction and provide a relative technological marker and temporal differentiation occurrence between cut nails and wire nail usage. Using these analytical tools, this structure was likely constructed sometime in the late nineteenth century. The earliest Sanborn Insurance map, created for this area, does not illustrate any building for this location prior to 1891 (Fosha 2008).

There are a total of 2884 artifacts associated with this feature and include seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. Seventy-five percent of the artifacts are assigned to the building/construction materials and domestic/household items.
Most of the building items consist of nails and window glass fragments. Cut nails make up nearly 27 percent of the total number of nails for which identification was possible. The high percentage of building materials may be due to a mix of demolition fill from the structure with the feature associated artifacts (Fosha 2008).

The household items consisted of bottle glass, including beverages and medicinal types; domestic ceramics, and cooking tools and utensils. Few artifacts are of Chinese manufacture and include an opium pipe bowl fragments, opium containers, and five ceramic fragments. There were several items related to personal use including clothing and adornment. One Chinese coin and one U.S. minted coin, a liberty seated half dime dated 1861, were found within the fill associated with the feature (Fosha 2008).

**Lot 3, Feature 6 a Builder’s Trench**

There were a total of 301 artifacts that were recovered from feature 6. These artifacts include seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. Over half of the artifacts fell within the domestic/household class, the majority of which were bottle glass and ceramics. Less than one-quarter of the ceramics are of Chinese manufacture. The building/construction class consisted mainly of nails and window glass and was the second largest classification in this feature. There were very few personal items. Although these artifacts were not in their original context, they fit into a representative and relative sampling of the artifacts recovered in the overall area (Fosha 2008).
Lot 3, Feature 25 an Ash Pan

Feature 25 is a remnant of an ash pan and had a total of 2831 artifacts which included seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. Nearly half of the artifacts fall into the building/construction group and nails and window glass are the majority of construction items. The domestic/household class is the next largest group of which bottle glass, chimney lamp glass, and household ceramics make up the majority of items. Only six pieces of ceramic were identified as Chinese manufactured. The personal class contained at least 20 one-of-a-kind types of items that an individual would possess or wear; some related to the male and/or female gender and possibly children. These items include: an ornamental hair comb, ring, pin or pendant, watch chain, pocket knife, toothbrush, comb, brush, writing material and pencil, doll part, figurine fragments, as well as clothing and clothing fasteners. Clay and opium pipes and opium can fragments are also represented. Currency was represented by ten coins, five U.S. minted and five Chinese coins. The American coinage included three, five cent pieces dating 1870, 1877 and one illegible date, and two dimes with dates of 1873 and 1877 (Fosha 2008).

Lot 17, Feature 51 Structural Remnants of a Stone Foundation

Lot 17, Feature 51 is a debris dump based on 1891 and 1897 Sanborn Company maps. In May 1883 a flood damaged numerous buildings belonging to the Chinese. One of those buildings was the Chinese Temple, Joss House, establishing a time period of at least 1883 for a building on this lot. The Black Hills Daily Times published an article on June 1, 1883 stating that the Joss House was to be rebuilt and describing the multi-functions of the building (Fosha 2008:4.152; The Black Hills Daily Times 1883).

The Chinese are rebuilding their joss house a short distance from the old
site. In addition to being used as a place of worship, it is a laundry, a Masonic hall, concert and banqueting hall, and gambling and opium den.

Lot 17, Feature 51 had a total of 969 artifacts which included seven of the eight classes established for general analysis from the Deadwood report. Over 50 percent of the artifacts fell under building/construction materials. Over 80 percent of the window/flat glass is painted with Chinese landscape scenes and most likely represent artifacts from the temple function. The household items consisted of bottle glass and household ceramics. Seven ceramic fragments are Chinese manufactured. Few items were related to personal use. One fragment of a Chinese coin was recovered. Two sets of Chinese coins threaded together with red cord were recovered among the brick rubble associated with the interior dump debris in feature 52. Based on the information provided in appendix C of the Deadwood report, the cataloged artifacts recovered in Feature 51 do not appear to reflect the function of this feature as a Chinese temple (Fosha 2008).

Lot 17, Feature 52 Dump

Feature 52 is a dump and had a total of 9954 artifacts found and all eight classes established for general analysis of the Deadwood report are represented. Domestic/Household, Building/Construction, and Miscellaneous classifications almost equally dominate the artifact assemblage. Cultural material consists of bottle glass including alcohol, pharmaceutical, medicinal, and household; Chinese and American ceramics; clothing items such as buttons, buckles, fabric, and leather, footwear, and personal adornment; household artifacts such as stove parts, metal cans, and accessories; opium paraphernalia, Chinese coins, and food remains. Building materials included nails, window glass, wood, brick, mortar, plaster, and other interior construction items. Ten percent of the window glass is painted as a Chinese scene as seen in
Feature 5. The majority of the nails were so corroded that identification of type, cut or wire, was unattainable (Fosha 2008).

**METHODOLOGY**

I am exploring the degree to which Chinese populations underwent acculturation in Deadwood South Dakota, a period that spans from 1877-1930, by analyzing the material remains recovered from the Deadwood’s Historic Chinatown excavations.

To address the issue of acculturation, I analyzed the data from the Deadwood Chinatown excavations (39LA3000CL, CT02, CT03, CT4A) from 2001-2004 in Deadwood South Dakota. As a first step I look to define a typology that identified artifacts as either Chinese in origin or non Chinese in origin. Once artifacts were placed in one of these categories I explored artifact function specifically. I examined the statistical significance of the proportions of artifacts based by origin, function, associated feature, as well as change over time. Patterns identified through these analyses are explored and potential explanations for the patterns are offered.

Ultimately this study explores how much of Chinese culture was maintained and what aspects of Chinese culture is reflected in material culture they were holding onto. For example, within a domestic household did the Chinese in Deadwood maintain certain aspects of domestic life intact culturally in the way of family dining, to religious and ceremonial practices, and/or clothing fashions? Furthermore, I examine what Chinese merchants were actually selling. Did they sell actual Chinese imports such as traditional folk medicines or non Chinese medicines (i.e. typical “snake oils”), and did economic demand force these items to change over time? In order to address these questions I examine changes in the proportion of various Chinese artifact classes
over time. By making these distinctions it will show the degree of acculturation going on in Deadwoods Chinatown. If proportions of Chinese artifacts remain constant through time then there is evidence for maintaining of culture, however if proportions of Chinese artifacts degreases through time then there is indication of acculturation into the non Chinese community.

RESULTS

The two highest percentages of archaeological artifacts recovered from the excavations of the Deadwood Chinatown site were under the category of Domestic and Building/Construction. This comparison of the two categories is shown in figure 2 and table 5. When comparing the two categories it is clear that there are a higher percentage of artifacts that relate to daily human activity in comparison to the Building and Construction material that were recovered. This indicates a high probability of daily activities taking place in this area in the way of domestic and household functions as well as personal and recreational activates. If that is the case, then it would be a good snap shot into the kinds of specific cultural and non-cultural activities going on and a good indication to what degree of acculturation was actually taking place in the Chinese community.
Table 5. Total artifact count and percentage by feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Description</th>
<th>Domestic artifacts</th>
<th>Building/Construction</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feature 1. Burned Structure</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 2. Privy Pit</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 3. Builder's Trench</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 5. Burned Structure</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 6. Builder's Trench</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 16. Midden</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 17. Dump</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 23. Privy Pit</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 25. Ash Pan</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 51. Structural &amp; Stone</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 52. Dump</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On further analysis of the data, the category of culturally significant everyday objects can be further broken down into three categories for a more accurate picture of what specifically was taking place in the Chinese community. This is shown in figure 3 and table 6.

Figure 3 and table 6 are a breakdown of Domestic objects into Domestic/Household, Personal, and Recreational (Fosha 2008). When comparing the three categories the Domestic/Household is significantly higher in proportion to the other two categories, with the
exception of feature 17. The next highest proportion is Personal while the category of Recreation is clearly considerably less than the other two categories. This high proportion of Domestic/Household artifacts implies that a significant amount of daily household activities was taking place and these specific artifacts were helping sustain those every day household activities.

Figure 3. Distribution of Domestic/household, Personal and Recreational artifacts by feature

Table 6. Total artifact count and percentage by feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Domestic/Household</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feature 1, Burned Structure</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>2884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 2, Privy Pit</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>8469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 3, Builder's Trench</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 5, Burned Structure</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>22,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 16, Midden</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 17, Dump</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 25, Ash Pan</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>2831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 52, Dump</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
<td>9954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 and table 7 are a breakdown of two categories the Domestic/Household and Personal items into Chinese and non-Chinese in origin for two specific artifacts, coins and
ceramics. Again most of the artifacts were not broken down in this manner as I had initially anticipated.

Many coins of both Chinese and U.S. origin were recovered in several of the features at the excavation sites, however Features 2 (privy), 5 (burned structure), and 52 (dump) had the most significant amount. Features such as privies, are great areas to look for human activities occurring in the past, because that is where most things seem to get lost. Burned structures and dumps preserve a significant amount of artifacts because given the nature of them they serve as a kind of time capsule and are good indicators to the types of specific human activities taking place in that area. Finding these artifacts in this context is important because it indicates an understanding and usage of both culture’s currency.

The majority of ceramics found were Chinese in origin. This is significant because it is an indication that traditional Chinese activities such as cooking, serving, eating, and storage were continued here in America. Also important is that the typical Chinese vessel types recovered from the excavations show traditional foodstuff were possibly available and purchased as well.
Another important find in the artifact assemblage in regards to acculturation is in the category of Personal items as indicated in table 8. I used the descriptions from the write up in the Deadwood Chinatown report which outlines the artifacts’ cultural significance and functions and shows a clear indication of acculturation taking place. However it did not provide a breakdown of percentages of individual artifacts.
Table 8. Personal items by feature, class and artifacts’ function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature, Class</th>
<th>Ceramics</th>
<th>Glass Bottles</th>
<th>Personal items mix of Chinese &amp; non-Chinese origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feature 2, Privy Pit</strong></td>
<td>Ceramic vessel types include rice/soup bowls, tea/liquor cups, and spoons (Fosha 2008:4.20)</td>
<td>Alcoholic &amp; Non Alcoholic Beverage, Household, Pharmaceutical/Cosmetic (Fosha 2008)</td>
<td>Opium pipe &amp; pipe bowl fragments, opium containers as well as men, women, &amp; children's shoes and shoe fragments, clothing, fabric leather, and ornamentation (Fosha 2008:4.19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feature 5, Burned Structure</strong></td>
<td>Cooking, serving, eating vessels.</td>
<td>Beverage and medicine bottle glass</td>
<td>Opium pipe bowl fragments, opium containers, clothing fasteners (buttons), fragments of eyeglasses, hygiene related items (Fosha 2008:4.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feature 52, Dump</strong></td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Alcohol, pharmaceutical, medicinal, &amp; household.</td>
<td>Buttons, buckles, fabric, leather, footwear, personal adornment, &amp; opium paraphernalia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that opium pipe & pipe bowl fragments, opium containers as well as men, women, & children's shoes and shoe fragments, clothing, fabric leather, and ornamentation were part of Personal items found at the excavation sites. Opium, and tobacco and opium smoking were noticeable and among the residence of Chinatown. Opium was legal, accessible, and used by both Chinese and non-Chinese in Deadwood. The use of opium is significant because this traditional Chinese practice was very common back in China, something the Chinese brought with them to Deadwood, and its recreational use crossed over into the non-Chinese community with ease and expectance.

I also included the category of glass bottles and ceramics. The glass bottles were all non-Chinese in origin and the ceramics were a mix with a higher percentage being Chinese in origin. The bottle assemblage in general reveals consumption of alcoholic beverages, mostly beer, and the use of medicinal products, both Chinese and non-Chinese. Several Chinese ceramic bottles holding rice whiskey were also found (Fosha 2008).
The proportions of glass bottles and ceramics as well as point of origin is significant because it show that while maintaining their own traditional culture by using Chinese ceramics they were also willing to incorporate a significant amount of American made bottles. The bottles function as both alcoholic beverage and medicinal container also indicate that the Chinese accepted non-Chinese practices in the way of recreational consumption of alcoholic beverages and stored their own traditional medicines as well as non-Chinese medicines in these bottles. Again these artifacts are showing a clear indication of maintaining their own cultural identity, and at the same time accepting non-Chinese practices in daily activities.

Men, women, & children's shoes and shoe fragments, clothing, fabric leather, and ornamentation were part of Personal items I included in table 8. This is significant because it indicates customary practices of traditional clothing as daily wear, were evident in the numerous buttons and a few clothing items recovered, giving credibility to the few known photographs of Chinese living in Deadwood dressed in traditional gender clothing. There are numerous fragments of fabric that are waiting to be analyzed to the raw material and possible cultural identity as well as clothing item (Fosha 2008).

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

My objective was to look at acculturation of the Chinese community of Deadwood South Dakota. I wanted to answer two questions. Were the Chinese able to hold onto much of their cultural heritage and is there evidence of this in the archaeological record? And how much acculturation
of the Chinese community into the non Chinese community was taking place and vice versa and to what extent?

I identified specific artifacts as culturally significant to everyday activities in the way of domestic and household function as well as personal and recreational uses. In doing so this gives an accurate picture of what daily life of the Chinese community in Deadwood was actually like, or close to it. The next step I took artifact categories and identified specific artifacts as being Chinese or non-Chinese in origin.

I took a couple of the artifact categories and used percentages in order to make comparisons of artifacts that were Chinese or non-Chinese in origin as well as some discussion points highlighted in the Deadwood report of personal items that were a mix of Chinese & non-Chinese in origin. This is represented and broken down in Table 8. Social and customary practices are reflected in the artifacts assigned to the personal and recreation classifications. Numerous Chinese and non-Chinese in origin smoking paraphernalia were recovered. Again the percentages were not broken down clearly and only brought up in discussion points in the Deadwood report. However the report indicated that the smoking paraphernalia recovered was for tobacco and marijuana use, and a significant amount used for opium consumption.

The majority of ceramics found fell under Domestic/House in function as well as being Chinese in origin. The function specifically for these artifacts indicates they were being used for such activities as cooking, serving, eating, and storage. The typical Chinese vessel types recovered from the excavations suggest that the traditional foodstuff were available, purchased, and consumed among the Chinese and non-Chinese population alike (Fosha 2008).

The archaeological record along with historical documents provides information significant to the past experience of the Chinese community in Deadwood as well as the degree
of acculturation taking place. By all accounts, the Chinese community was not a segregated community. This is supported by historical documents such as local newspapers of the day which indicates a significant amount of cultural interaction among the Chinese and non-Chinese community. There are many accounts of gambling and other recreational activities among Chinese and non-Chinese alike and even other intercultural gatherings taking place (Fosha 2008). The Chinese presence was a visible and integral part of the daily activity in Deadwood from 1877-1930.

As I stated earlier, not much investigation into the Chinese communities has fully been explored both archaeologically and historically. The little that has been done has suggested a community fixed strictly on cultural tradition and very little flexibility in cultural assimilation into the non-Chinese community. This may hold true in some cases as most Chinese communities in the west had a large male population due to the immigration laws enforced at the time. In those particular cases the family unit has not been represented.

This does not seem to be the case in Deadwood’s Chinatown based on the archaeological record and historical text of the time. From this new evidence we see an image of a Chinese community that is quite different from what has previously been in depicted. Deadwood’s Chinatown appears to have been tied to the social, political, and economic foundation of the non-Chinese community as well as showing significant diversity within Chinatown itself. The archaeological and historic records solidly indicate that the Chinese were interconnected to the larger non-Chinese community of Deadwood.

Based on my archaeological analysis of the Deadwood Chinese community along with incorporating historic documents and pictures of the time I firmly believe that the Chinese were able to hold on to important aspects of their culture, while at the same time embracing many
aspect of American culture. I do not get the impression that the Chinese were resistant to American culture or so set in their own ways. It appears by all accounts that the Chinese community found a happy balance of both cultures. This balance enabled them to become successful business men and at the same time an acceptance by the non-Chinese community as well.

**Future Research**

Once all the artifacts excavated at the Deadwood Chinatown site have been identified, I believe that further analysis of them will shed more light into the degree of acculturation of the Chinese community into the non-Chinese community was taking place. Also it would be helpful to make a comparative study of the results from other Chinese communities in the west with Deadwood and see if they show similar findings or not. By doing so it may uncover other aspect to our country’s history that otherwise would have gone unnoticed.
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