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CHINESE ARTEFACTS FROM A SITE AT WAKEFIELD ST, AUCKLAND

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Introduction

During the development of Auckland University of Technology's new Faculty of Business on the corner of Wakefield Street and Mayoral Drive in early 2004 (Figure 1), a 19th century brick-lined well and rubbish pit remnant were discovered (Turner, Hill & Clough 2004). The development site comprised 40–44 Wakefield Street and 87–97 Lorne Street, originally allotments 38–40 and 45, 47 and 48 of Section 32 (Figures 1 and 2). The well was located at 44 Wakefield St (formerly allotment 40) just north of the rubbish pit (Figure 3). No other archaeological evidence was uncovered due to major disturbance created by earlier demolition and development processes, particularly the construction of Mayoral Drive in the 1980s.

No artefacts were recovered from the well, but the rubbish pit yielded a small collection of material (MNI=56 items) comprising mainly ceramics and glass. An interesting feature of this collection is that a number were of Chinese origin. Early Chinese presence in central Auckland had not previously been documented archaeologically and thus this small collection represents a significant find. This paper, therefore, focuses on the Chinese history of the site.

Archival evidence shows that between the 1850s and the early 1900s Wakefield and Lorne Streets were occupied by a mixture of commercial and residential premises (Figures 4 and 5). Information from early title deeds and street directories was consulted to identify the owners and/or occupiers. However, occupants of the properties recorded in directories are often not the owners, and the occupant's given occupation may not necessarily be carried out on the premises. City maps dating to various periods were used to trace the presence or otherwise of buildings on the various allotments at different periods.

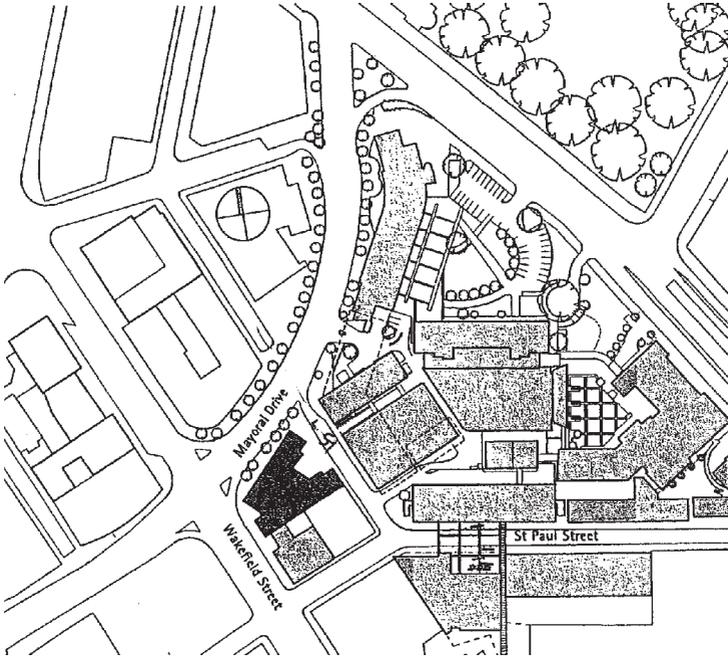


Figure 1. AUT development site



Figure 2. Original allotment numbers on AUT site (38–40 on Wakefield St and 45–48 on Lorne St). SO 48178

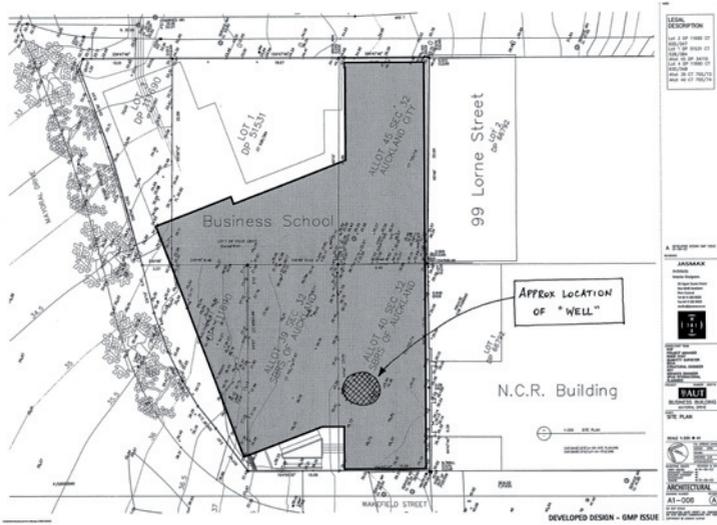


Figure 3. AUT development plan, showing approximate location of well and rubbish pit on allotment 40

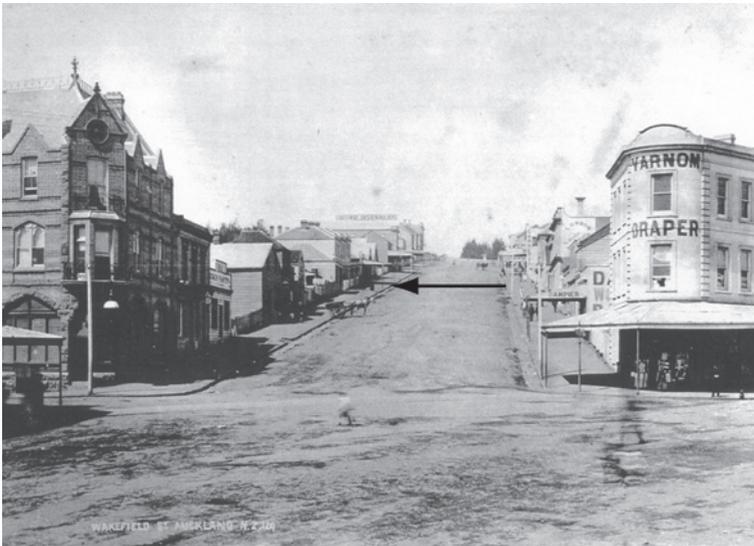


Figure 4. View up Wakefield St from Queen St ca1880–1889. The development site is on the left about two-thirds of the way up. APL neg. A16089



Figure 5. View showing the full length of Wakefield St running up from Queen Street (marked by the statue of Sir George Grey) ca 1908. The arrow is pointing to the stables on allotment 38. APL neg. W947

These sources make only brief reference to Chinese occupation. In 1897 James Wong Gong, a storekeeper, and his wife Helena are recorded as buying allotment 45 (97 Lorne St), which abutted allotment 40 where the well and rubbish pit were found (Figure 2) from James Quin (LINZ R58–190). There does, however, appear to be some overlap in occupancy, as Quinn’s listing in the street directories continued through to at least the early 1900s, while Mrs Gong was listed in the directories from 1895 to 1909. Most of the street directories for this period refer to a Mrs Mary Jane Gong, but James and Helena Gong are both listed in the 1908 directory, James at 95 Lorne St (allotment 46) and Helena at No. 97 (allotment 45). Valuation Lists and Field Sheets have James Gong listed as an occupier until 1920, around which time the wooden house on allotment 45, which appears to have dated back to at least 1866, was removed (ACC 213/916; Vercoe & Harding map 1866). In that same year Gong sold the property to George Tait, a tallow manufacturer. A member of the Gong family with the initial W (possibly standing for Wong, and therefore still James Wong Gong), whose business involved importing and general dealing, was also listed in street directories further along Wakefield Street at No. 50 for some years from 1908 and during the 1910s.

The artefacts

Comb

The only non-glass or ceramic item recovered from Wakefield St was the curved mid-section of a rather delicate comb (Figure 6). It was probably a decorative hair comb rather than one used for combing the hair.

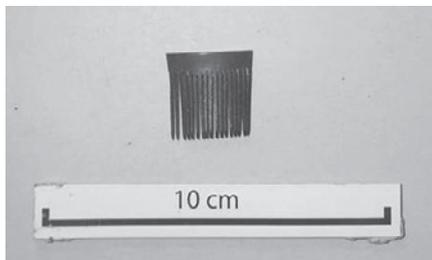


Figure 6. Comb made of synthetic material

Glassware

A minimum number of 20 items of glassware were recovered: 16 bottles, 3 tumblers and an unidentified burnt item. Of the bottles, 8 were alcohol bottles (both black beers and green ringseal beer bottles, 2 square gins, 1 hock, 1 aqua spirits bottle); 2 were non-alcoholic drink bottles (aerated water); 2 were condiment bottles (vinegar and pickle); and 4 were pharmaceutical bottles (2 cobalt blue bottles, one a castor oil bottle and one poison, one clear glass chemist's prescription bottle and one pill bottle). Datable items include the two aerated water bottles. The Codd's patent bottle is embossed with W.M. Handley's name and trademark. Handley operated an aerated water factory in Auckland between 1880 and 1917 (Macready and Goodwyn 1990: 80). The other is probably a crown-top type with Grey & Menzies' initials on the base. Grey & Menzies were a major Auckland aerated water manufacturer from 1902 to 1964 (Rusden 1979: 25).

European ceramics

Though the number of vessels is small, there is considerable variation, with 14 different patterns represented. Several common patterns were present, including Willow and Rhine, but most could not be identified by any formal name (Mica Plowman pers. comm.). Some of these latter patterns, however, have been found in other Auckland historic sites (www.bickler.co.nz/china).

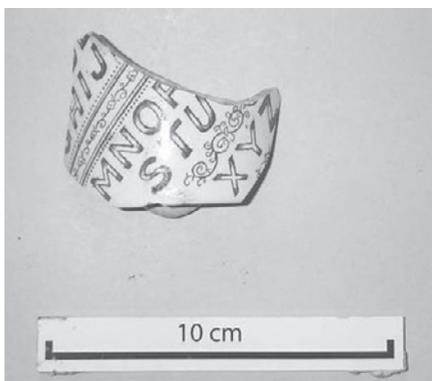


Figure 7. Child's alphabet cup.

Of the 27 European items the majority are tableware, as is

usually the case in historic sites. Of interest is a piece from a mug decorated with the letters of the alphabet, presumably used by a child (Figure 7). Manufacturers marks were found on two plates. One light blue Willow pattern saucer had “Doulton Burslem England/Willow.” A dinner plate, represented only by a plain centre fragment, had “Burslem Pottery England” in olive green print. The Burslem pottery operated between 1894 and 1933 (Godden 1991: 119).

Other items include a chamber pot and a number of doll pieces comprising two porcelain female dolls’ heads and two arms. All doll pieces are miniature in size and were probably made for doll’s houses.

Chinese Ceramics

Eight Chinese ceramic artifacts were recovered. The information used to interpret the Chinese artefacts comes almost entirely from Neville Ritchie’s (1986) extensive archaeological study of Chinese miners living in the goldfields of central Otago. Excavations there produced a large quantity and a wide range of Chinese artefacts including examples of the types of artefacts found at Wakefield Street.

It is likely that all eight of these artefacts were made in China and thereafter imported by Chinese traders for Chinese residents in New Zealand (Ritchie 1986: 206). A range of ceramic materials and objects are represented.

Brown-glazed stoneware

Three items are brown-glazed stoneware containers of a type called Jian You. Such vessels were made in one piece on hand wheels by numerous independent potters in China, and while they followed a set design, their hand-made nature resulted in a certain degree of variability in form, finish and dimensions (and therefore capacity). They are characterised by a distinctive brown glaze that ranges from dull to glossy. They are glazed on the outside by being dipped in glazing fluid while holding the base, resulting in an often uneven coating around it. Glaze is poured into the interior and sloshed about, again resulting in a rather uneven coating (Ritchie 1986: 231, 234, 237).

The one complete (though cracked) item in the present collection is a soy sauce pot, although they were also used to store other liquids such as black vinegar and black molasses (Figure 8). This squat dome-shaped container has a short neck, narrow mouth and a short narrow spout. It measures 13 cm wide at the base, is 12.5 cm high and has a mouth width of 2.5 cm. The mouth would usually have been plugged with a cork. Of the three types known archaeologically, this type was the largest size and additionally the only type known in New Zealand from any archaeological context (Ritchie 1986: 234, 237).



Figure 8. Chinese soy sauce bottle.

A base fragment may derive from the same sort of vessel as it has precisely the same characteristics and dimensions. A problem identified by Ritchie, however, is that bases of soy sauce pots are identical to those of shouldered food jars, which are the same size and shape except for their much wider mouths, roll top rim and lack of spout (see Ritchie 1986: 239 for drawn example). They had earthenware lids made of a different

type of clay that turned to a buff-red colour during firing. These food jars were far more common than soy sauce pots in the Central Otago sites, and therefore it may be more likely that the base fragment belongs to one of these jars rather than a soy sauce pot (Ritchie 1986: 234, 238). These jars generally held more solid foodstuffs, a range of which is listed by Ritchie, including shrimp paste, gherkins and preserved and salted vegetables (1986: 242).

A third example of Chinese brown-glazed stoneware is the side/rim piece from the lid of a barrel jar. It is straight sided, thick walled and is broken where it just begins to curve over to the top of the lid. An example of both lid and jar are illustrated by Ritchie (1986: 251–252). Barrel jars are very large containers used to store and transport a variety of items, for example a shipment of ceramic items such as rice bowls (see below) could be transported safely in these jars, packed in straw or sawdust. They were often used by storekeepers, who left the contents in the barrels on the shop floor until the contents were sold. They were commonly re-used and were particularly useful for storing large or bulky items like large cuts of meat and bulk rice. The lids were slightly concave to allow stacking. One intact example was found at Arrowtown in an upright position with the bottom knocked out for use as a probable planter. This particular item gives an indication of the size of these jars: 43 cm high, base width 34.5 cm and mouth 29.5 cm wide (Ritchie 1986: 250, 253).

Porcelain tableware

Four items were made of a finer ceramic material; porcelain. There were two or possibly three rice bowls and one dinner plate. The most distinctive is a 'celadon' rice bowl (Figure 9). Celadon is the name given to porcelain tableware with a distinctive blue-green glaze. It is known from China as early as 800 AD and was much admired for its beauty and likeness to jade. Celadon ware was the most common Chinese tableware found in central Otago Chinese sites, making up 76%, and the standard rice bowl was the most common item (Ritchie 1986: 207).



Figure 9. Chinese celadon ware bowl.

All celadon items have a cobalt blue mark on the base. There is some debate as to the meaning of these marks. It is possible that originally they denoted the maker's mark or/and place of manufacture, but over time the patterns have degenerated and become meaningless until they became simply a part of the design tradition. The mark on the Wakefield Street example is very similar to that illustrated by Ritchie (1986: 211).

The two other rice bowls are more fragmentary. A plain white base and small side fragment has the merest hint of decoration at one edge, a leaf tip. Another curved fragment has a denser hand painted pattern of green leaves and possibly parts of a flower against a white background. This pattern is similar to a large piece from the centre of a probable dinner plate where more of the pattern is evident, featuring flowers, leaves, red berries and butterflies against a white background (Figure 11). Two fragments from a rice bowl with a similar pattern were found by Ritchie at one Arrowtown site (Ritchie 1986: 221–222).



Figure 10. Chinese porcelain plate.

Opium pipe bowl

While the artefacts thus far discussed have largely concerned the storage or eating of food, the final item is of a different nature and consists of the bottom two-thirds of an opium pipe bowl (Figure 11).

There are three main opium pipe components: the stem, usually made of bamboo and approximately 60cm long and 10cm in circumference; the ceramic pipe bowl; and the connecting saddle which is usually made of brass (Figure 12). The pipe is sealed off at one end and the pipe bowl fits about two-thirds

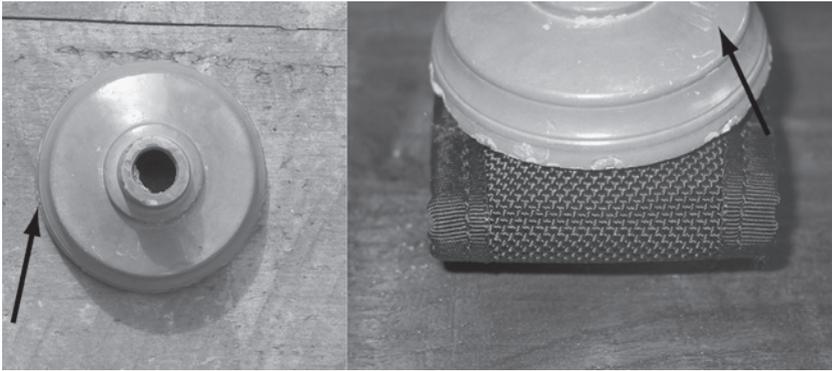


Figure 11. Opium pipe bowl, with flowers on side (left) and faint stamp (right).

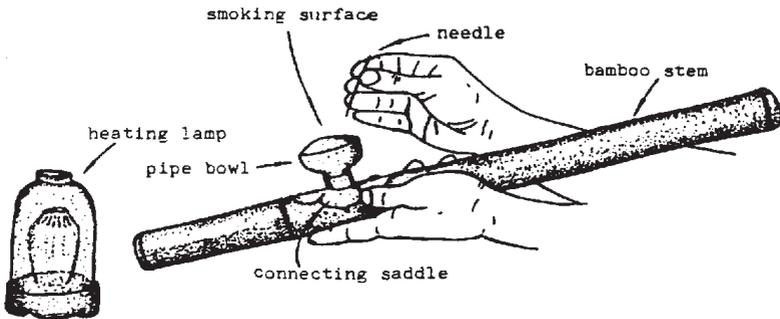


Figure 12. Opium smoker's kit (from Ritchie 1986: 36). down its length.

Other items related to opium smoking are the brass cans in which it is imported and sold, heating lamps, needles for positioning the heated opium within the bowl (in urban areas, the use of hatpins for this purpose was not unknown), knives for cleaning the ash out of the bowl and a tray for all this equipment. Several smoking techniques appear to have been used involving either heating or 'cooking' the opium globule before placing it inside the bowl, or placing it in the bowl then heating it (Ritchie 1986: 366–367; Eldred-Grigg 1984: 111).

In Ritchie's study of 20 Chinese Central Otago sites dating between 1875 and 1925, 16 had opium related artifacts, including 1075 pipe bowl fragments (MNI=127 bowls), 182 brass opium cans, 51 heating lamps and 29 other related pipe components (Ritchie 1986: 368).

The pipe bowls were made in two pieces from stoneware or earthenware and then slip-welded together. On broken pieces fingerprints can often be seen on the inside of the bowl where the two pieces have been joined. This junction is obviously a weak point as bowls are often found broken at this join. This is the case for the specimen found at Wakefield Street, where the top portion is missing revealing finger impressions near the break across the join (Ritchie 1986: 369).

Little is known about the nature of production, though the standardisation of form and size suggests that production was large scale and organised. But while the pipe bowls were of a standard shape and size there was a range of different styles. Together with 17 other examples from private collections, some 12 different types of pipe bowl and 26 subtypes were identified by Ritchie from the Central Otago sites. It is possible that the different styles reflect different production centres. Like the Wakefield Street example, many have framed Chinese characters stamped on the sides that may also indicate the kiln or village of origin. In both cases, however, these possibilities remain unconfirmed (Ritchie 1986: 366–372).

Two types of fine clay were used; orange and grey. Both have South China origins but it is not known if the different colours came from different areas. All of the reconstructed pipe bowls from the Central Otago sites were unglazed, but a number of grey and orange sherds had a shiny glaze. The Wakefield example is made of orange clay with a high polished exterior glaze (Ritchie 1986: 370–371).

The 12 different types are based on: the shape of the bowl which, in the Central Otago sample, was either circular (by far the most numerous), octagonal or hexagonal; as well as other features such as the curvature of the sides and the presence of decorative motifs. Most bowls were between 4–5 cm high and 5–8 cm in diameter (Ritchie 1986: 371). The Wakefield example matches

Ritchie's Type C7 (Ritchie 1986: 376)—Figure 13 shows what the complete form would have looked like. This particular circular form was uncommon in Ritchie's sample, accounting for only two specimens, each found at a different site. The decoration on both examples was slightly different and the decoration on the Wakefield Street example, while similar, has more flowers (about nine regularly spaced around the circumference) than both, but not the diagonal and vertical lines seen on one specimen.

It is likely that the ceramic pipe bowls entered the country from China in the same way as other ceramic containers and tableware. Like Chinese bowls they could have been packed in straw in barrel jars—certainly they would have required careful transportation to avoid breakage. They, with other smoking paraphernalia, were generally available in Chinese shops along with a range of other Chinese goods. Interestingly, the Wakefield example is very clean inside, and is, apart from chips at the point of breakage, in good condition. It is possible that it is an example of a bowl broken during the transportation process, as was suggested for similar examples in Ritchie's sample from Central Otago (1986: 370). It is not known how much opium pipes and their components cost in New Zealand, but in America stems were the most expensive at a dollar each (American currency), with bowls at 50 cents each (Ritchie 1986: 370). Opium itself was usually sold in the small brass tins mentioned above for about 35 shillings (New Zealand currency) each. They contained about 185 grams (6.5 oz) of opium in a treacle like form and would provide a moderate to heavy smoker with enough opium for about five weeks (Ritchie 1986: 361, 378; Ng 1995: 297).

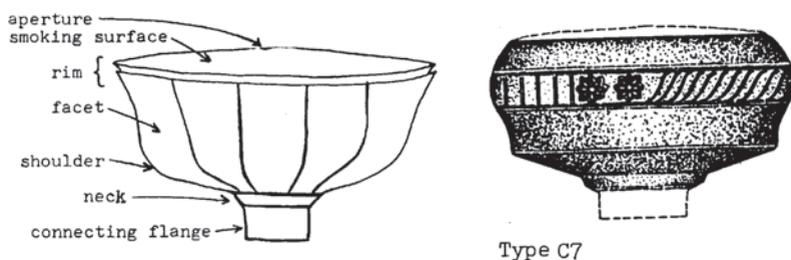


Figure 13. Left, construction of an opium pipe bowl. Right, Ritchie Type C7 bowl, similar to the Wakefield St example (from Ritchie 1986: 372, 376).

Summary of artefacts

Most of the artefacts are typical of domestic refuse in Auckland historic sites in terms of the range of items evident. The dolls, alphabet mug and the comb in particular suggest that a family was in residence and was responsible for the rubbish pit. Perhaps the only artefact that does not quite fit into this scenario is the opium pipe bowl. This and the other Chinese artefacts, however, do strongly indicate that the family in question was Chinese. Though small, there was a range of Chinese artefacts relating to foodstuffs including soy sauce, and the barrel jar fragment could suggest probable bulk buying of Chinese foods, possibly for sale in a store.

Evidence for Chinese occupation

As the archival evidence shows (see introduction above), only one Chinese owner is officially recorded in any of the allotments that make up the AUT site. James Wong Gong and his wife Helena owned 97 Lorne Street (allotment 45), abutting allotment 40 where the well and rubbish pit were found, in the late 19th and early 20th century. Cleave's Street Directory also lists a number of other Chinese occupiers along Wakefield Street between Queen Street and Abercrombie Street (later St Pauls St), though none can be identified in the 19th century within the study area, as prior to 1900 individual street numbers were not given. The names listed are: 1884, Thomas Chong, fancy goods; 1891-1898, James. A. Kew; 1891, Mon Wong, general dealer; and in 1915 Sam Hee, who had a laundry at Number 74.

The Gong family

James Wong Gong, a storekeeper, and his wife Helena owned 97 Lorne St (allotment 45) from 1897 to 1920. They are not, however, listed in Cleave's Street Directory at this address for most of this period, apart from in 1908, when Helena Gong is listed at No. 97 and James Gong at No. 95. Otherwise the street directory lists Mrs Mary Jane Gong as occupier of 97 Lorne St from 1895 to 1909. No occupation is given, so she may have used the premises as a domestic residence. However, the 1898 street directory lists J.A. Gong & Co., importers and general dealers, in Wakefield St, and a W. Gong, importer and general dealer, is listed as occupier of No. 50 Wakefield St in 1908 and during the 1910s. It is not clear how the street directories were compiled in Auckland's earlier years, and there may be some inaccuracies, or only one person listed at an address when more in fact were living there. W. Gong was probably [James] Wong Gong, though he may have been another member of the family.

From this evidence the Gongs appear to have comprised an extended family (James, Helena, Mary Jane and possibly a W. Gong). They lived in Lorne

St within the AUT site, owning No.97 and possibly also renting no. 95 at one stage. And from at least 1898 to 1915 they ran a general store of sorts at 50 Wakefield St, not far from the AUT site. James Gong is described in the title deeds as a storekeeper, and in the street directory as an importer and general dealer. The term ‘importer’ may suggest that Chinese goods may have been among those sold at the store and this is strengthened by the nature of the Chinese artefacts recovered (for example the bulk food barrel jar). Mrs Mary Jane Gong may have leased the premises at 97 Lorne St from Mr Quinn from 1895, and then rented from a relative who purchased the property in 1897, perhaps a brother or an uncle, but not a husband, as James Gong was already married to Helena. She remained there until 1909, though for some of this time at least Helena Gong also lived there. After 1909 the property was leased to a succession of tenants (the directory lists upholsterer Frederick Headley in 1911, linesman Terrance Farrelly in 1915 and labourer John Jones in 1920).

Alternatively it is possible that the Gongs lived at 50 Wakefield St and may have run another business there but also ran a store or business at 97 Lorne St with Mary Jane Gong living and/or working there as well at least until 1909.

It is difficult to say with certainty that the Gong family were the ones to whom the artefacts once belonged, although they are strong contenders. The time period of the late 1890s to early 1900s is consistent with the artefactual evidence, for example the W.M. Handley and Grey & Menzies bottles, and the plate manufacturer’s mark.

The location of the rubbish pit is relevant here. It is close to the boundaries of allotment 40 and, more pertinently, to the backyard boundary of allotment 45 (97 Lorne St), owned by James Wong Gong and occupied by Mary Jane Gong (and Helena Gong for at least part of the time) between 1895 and 1909 (Figure 4). The Gongs are not recorded as living at allotment 40 at any stage, but encroachment and rubbish dumping from neighbouring properties would have been common in early Auckland before the days of regular rubbish collections, especially if properties were left temporarily unoccupied at any point.

In light of Chinese history in New Zealand and in Auckland in particular, this is a rare archaeological discovery and its historical background is worth reviewing to understand the significance of these finds.

The Chinese in New Zealand

The first Chinese to come to New Zealand were men who headed for the South Island goldfields to seek their fortunes beginning in the mid-1860s. By 1867 the population stood at 1219 and peaked in 1881 at 5004. Of this number only nine were women (Belich 2001: 228; Ng 1995: 295). Chinese men saw their presence in New Zealand as transitory. They hoped to make enough

money to pay off their debts and improve the economic status of themselves and their families in China (Ritchie 1986: 16). In the late 19th century, as the gold rush waned, so too did the Chinese population, registering at 2837 in 1901 and 2147 in 1916, with many returning to China (McGill 1982: 119; Ng 1995: 295). Others moved to cities large and small throughout New Zealand. A large number became market gardeners with a smaller number working in laundries and restaurants (Belich 2001: 227; Ritchie 1986: 12).

During this time the Chinese population was dominated by men and the number of Chinese women remained low. By 1911 only 50 full blooded Chinese women were recorded for the whole of New Zealand (Ng 1995: 261; Ritchie 1986: 83) and many of the men were by this time elderly. These data reflect the perceived temporary nature of the Chinese presence in New Zealand, the expense of bringing wives and families to New Zealand and the general public and political prejudice toward Chinese both on the goldfields and later in the towns. While the bad reputation of the 'yellow peril' was generally unsubstantiated, there were legal constraints on immigration so that it was difficult for Chinese men to bring their wives into the country, and by 1880 there was a £10 poll tax on every Chinese immigrant. Chinese people also earned on average half the wage of a European and were excluded from the old age pension and the vote (Ng 1995: 263; McGill 1982: 117; Belich 2001: 229).

While generally disapproved of by both Chinese and Europeans, mixed marriages between Chinese men and European (and, rarely, Maori) women did take place. The New Zealand census records show that by 1886 there were 93 Chinese-European marriages, but by 1901 this number had declined to 43 with a total of 106 children produced (Ng 1995: 240). Some European women went with their husbands when they returned to China (Ng 1995: 258).

It is not known whether Helena or Mary Jane were Chinese women or European women who had married Chinese men. Statistically the latter is more likely given that in 1901 there were only 32 Chinese women in the country including children, of whom only 18 were recorded as wives (Ng 1995: 261). Chinese men and women quite commonly adopted European Christian names and gave them to their children. Almost all the Chinese people known to have lived in Wakefield St and Lorne St had European first names, so these cannot be used to ascertain whether, for example, Mr and Mrs Gong's marriage was a mixed one. The adoption of European Christian names as well as dress and other customs made it easier for Chinese to be accepted in European society (Ng 1995: 250).

But it seems that the presence of Chinese women and even European women married to Chinese men was uncommon in Auckland. Between 1867 and 1871 only one Chinese woman was recorded living in Auckland and she was gone

by 1874 (Ng 1995: 260). By 1888 only seven mixed marriages between European women and Chinese men are recorded as existing in Auckland, with a total of six children. The first full-blooded Chinese wedding took place in Auckland in 1886 in Mechanics Bay (census details cited in Ng 1995: 260, 270).

After the goldfield days were over, the largest Chinese population existed in Otago. Over time, however, there was a drift northwards with 34% of the Chinese population living in Wellington by 1926 (Shum 2003: 74; Ng 1995: 270). At the time the Gongs were living in Wakefield and Lorne Street, the Chinese population for all of Auckland is recorded as numbering 78 (Ritchie 1986: 82, from 1901 census).

The Chinese presence in Wakefield and Lorne Street, as indicated by the historic evidence above, is not highly visible. But, as Shum noted for the well known Chinese population in Wellington's Haining Street "there is barely a mention of Chinese in either of the otherwise comprehensive street directories [and] little remains to give any indication of Haining Street's past" (2003: 74–75). Even in Otago concentrations of Chinese people were never enough to declare an area a 'Chinatown' but certain streets were well known as being 'Chinese quarters.' Among these are Wellington's Frederick and Haining Street, Stafford St and Walker St in Dunedin and Grey's Avenue and Wakefield Street in Auckland (Belich 2001: 228; Shum 2003: 74; Ng 1995: 306). Other evidence suggests a very strong Chinese presence in Wakefield St. A Royal Commission Police Force report undertaken in 1898 noted that "they are all Chinamen on that side of Wakefield Street" (cited in Ng 1995: 334). This could be a generalised and exaggerated statement, more an impression than fact, especially given that the total Chinese population in Auckland at around this time is given as only 78. The reality is probably somewhere between these two sources of evidence. Undoubtedly the Chinese people had good reason to keep a low profile given European disapproval and prejudice, particularly when it came to official records, so records such as census and street directory information may well under-represent the Chinese population in any given area (and at the time the Gongs were living in Wakefield and Lorne St, prejudice against the Chinese was at an all time high).

By the time Chinese moved in to these streets the wooden buildings were generally in a run down condition and therefore rents were quite cheap; few Chinese actually owned the properties they lived and/or worked in (Shum 2003: 75; Ng 1995: 305). The Gong family can be considered a rare exception in this respect.

Typical Chinese dwellings were described as lodging houses, tea houses and stores (Belich 2001: 227; Ng 1995: 305), seen by most Europeans as fronts for brothels, and gambling and opium dens. These places, along with laundries, were primarily social meeting places. General stores provided post office and

banking services. The lodging houses and tearooms were called ‘everyone happy house’ or ‘que lok bao’ by the Chinese (Ng 1995: 305). They were similar to the European pub but with gambling games such as pakapoo, fan-tan and mahjong as the chief activities. Food was provided, often cooked in the backyard, and generally there was a room set aside for opium smoking. There was usually at least one Chinese doctor in the street also. Even in these urban streets the Chinese population was dominated by men, many elderly bachelors by the late 19th century. The few Chinese families present generally lived in the back or upper floor of commercial premises like laundries and stores. Chinese families and children, including those from mixed marriages, seldom participated in European social and sporting events (Ng 1995: 264, 305; Shum 2003: 78, 83).

Much was made in the press about the dilapidation and shabby nature of Chinese residences in streets like Wakefield, Haining and Walker. The boarding house or ‘cookshop’ in Walker Street was described in 1900 by the Otago Witness as the worst building in Dunedin and was already condemned to demolition by that time (cited in Ng 1995: 305). The motive behind such reports was to aid and abet the reputation of Chinese as amoral and corrupt, so they are likely to be much exaggerated. The best kept premises were likely to be the shops and other public areas (Ng 1995: 305, 308).

The degree to which opium smoking and other ‘disreputable’ practices like gambling and prostitution took place in these streets by Chinese, and the degree to which Europeans were involved is difficult to gauge. Certainly the Chinese were feared and shunned by Europeans because it was believed that proximity to Chinese areas put their own morality at risk. The luring of young women into prostitution and adults into gambling and opium dens were public causes of concern, but again appear to be more imaginary than real. The report of the 1898 police commission mentioned above is one example where evidence of such debauchery and corruption was unsubstantiated; despite numerous police raids, very few arrests were actually made (Ng 1995: 324; Shum 2003: 79). The only evidence for possible prostitution (among Auckland Chinese) noted by the Commission was “a cab-proprietor did mention taking away one of two young girls he saw going into run-down Chinese premises in Wakefield St” (cited in Ng 1995: 324). Gambling among Chinese and Europeans at Chinese establishments was more common. In Haining Street the gambling game pakapoo was popular with Europeans because it was easy for non-Chinese to play and winnings were relatively easy to achieve (Shum 2003: 81).

The degree of opium smoking is also unclear. The archaeological evidence from the central Otago Chinese sites suggests that, on the goldfields at least, it was a popular habit. Ritchie estimates from this and other forms of evidence that 60% of Chinese smoked opium but less than 10% were heavily

addicted (1986: 365). The milk from the opium poppy works on the nervous system to induce feelings of well-being and relaxation but without interfering unduly with muscular co-ordination (Eldred-Grigg 1984: 110). Preparing opium for smoking took about 15 minutes, actual smoking only one minute and effects lasted one to three hours (Ng 1995: 297). Until the later 19th century there was little objection to opium taking, perhaps because it generally did not incite the types of aggressive behaviour associated with alcohol (Eldred-Grigg 1984: 234). James Ng likens the relationship between Chinese and opium to that of Europeans and alcohol—there was a general disapproval of overindulgence, but much as only a small percentage of Europeans became alcoholics, so only a small number of Chinese became opium addicts (1995: 296). Shum states that in Haining Street opium was smoked mainly by elderly men (2003: 80).

Regarding the degree to which Europeans took opium opinions are divided. James Ng presents a table (1995: 295) that shows that the amount of opium imported into the country increased and decreased relative to the rise and fall of the Chinese population, indicating that almost all the opium was being smoked by Chinese. Eldred-Grigg, in contrast, suggests that at least among the gentry, opium smoking was popular, Sir George Grey being an example (1984: 112). For the general public, opium was readily available in other forms, particularly in the form of patent medicines. Pills and tinctures promising to prevent and/or cure a wide range of ailments commonly contained opium or opium derived products like codeine and morphine (Eldred-Grigg 1984: 110, 112; Ng 1995: 294). After the smoking forms of opium were made illegal in 1901 patent medicines became the main source of opium for addicts (Shum 2003: 80; Eldred-Grigg 1984: 238).

The opium pipe bowl

The opium pipe bowl found at Wakefield Street may suggest two scenarios. The most obvious and probable is that the smoking of opium was undertaken on or near the site by its Chinese occupants. Another possibility, however, is suggested by two pieces of evidence: the clean but broken bowl pipe which may not have been used; and the site's likely connection with the Gong family, who may have run a general store that sold Chinese goods. It might be that the pipe bowl was among others intended for sale in the shop before it broke. The bulk barrel jar lid fragment adds further strength to this admittedly rather speculative possibility.

Conclusion

The first wooden buildings appeared in Wakefield Street and Lorne St in the 1850s and were occupied and owned by a variety of people mainly

if not entirely of European extraction at least until the latter part of the 19th century. The study area appears to have contained a variety of residential and commercial addresses, including the Golden Livery Stables at allotment 38 (40 Wakefield Street).

The artefacts recovered from the rubbish pit appear to relate to the late-19th/early-20th century period. By this time a number of Chinese had moved into Wakefield Street. The actual number of Chinese and the nature of their occupations are not clear from the historic record, perhaps reflecting the desire of Chinese to keep a low profile in a society that generally despised them. The archaeological finds in Wakefield Street, therefore, are a rare and significant discovery.

While small, the artefact collection provides a rare glimpse of Chinese life in Auckland at the turn of the century. The artefacts represent activities relating to everyday life and leisure activities, of both European (the drinking of alcohol and soft drinks) and Chinese (the smoking of opium) origin. They relate to customs from both places and cultures, a pattern that was replicated on the goldfields (Ritchie 1986). Chinese food such as rice and soy sauce, and condiments in European bottles but with products popular in both cultures (pickles and vinegar) were present. There was both Chinese and European tableware, with the willow-patterned plates (original Chinese legend pictured, European manufacture) acquiring an ironic aspect in this context, and representing an incidental blend of both cultures.

Furthermore the artefacts suggest an even rarer situation: that of a Chinese family, with the presence of toys (dolls), a child's alphabet mug and a delicate hair comb indicating women and children. This is complemented by the historic evidence, which records Helena, Mary Jane and James Gong as living at and/or owning 97 Lorne Street and 50 Wakefield Street between 1895 and 1920. The location of the rubbish pit close to the boundary of 97 Lorne Street makes it likely that this family owned and disposed of the artefacts. James Gong is recorded as a storekeeper, and thus the Gong family may have lived at one address and run a store the other.

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Maps

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