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THE EXCAVATION OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY CHINESE MINING SETTLEMENT
AT CROMWELL, CENTRAL OTAGO

Neville Ritchie
Clutha Valley Development
Cromwell

This paper describes recent work on the archaeology of the Chinese mining era in Central Otago. The period in question lasted from 1865 until about 1910 but was at its peak in the 1870s.

The discussion serves a dual role: as a background to the history of early Chinese settlement in New Zealand to place the present research in perspective, and as a preliminary report on the excavations of Cromwell's Chinatown this past summer. Where pertinent, comments are also incorporated from the excavation or survey of other Chinese sites in the Cromwell area over the last two years. My interest in the archaeology associated with the early Chinese in New Zealand stems principally from three factors:-

1. The influx of Chinese miners into Central Otago last century has resulted in 'Chinese Sites' being relatively numerous features in the Cromwell area and amongst those affected by the Clutha power scheme.
2. Secondly, Chinese miners as a cultural group are particularly amenable to archaeological investigation. The majority of them were illiterate (in English at least), in consequence they left few written records. European observers have documented only broad social outlines, although the more recent history of Chinese immigration and assimilation is extensively analysed in several recent theses and books (eg Fyfe, 1948; Ng, 1962; Greif, 1974). Consequently, there is plenty of scope to add to the early written record.
3. The Chinese are especially interesting because they retained many of their values, customs and habits throughout most of the time they were resident here.

Archaeologically, this is most strikingly reflected by the remains of distinctive Chinese artefacts which they continued to import from China through merchants all the time they were domiciled in New Zealand. Overall, largely because of the language barrier and their skin colour, they did not assimilate as readily as most of the other ethnic groups involved in the early gold rushes.

Sources of information

Other than archaeology there are two good sources of data on the Chinese miners in New Zealand. Firstly, the diaries of the Presbyterian missionary/minister, the Reverend Alexander Don who made 'annual inland tours' into Central Otago every year from 1886 until 1906 in quest of the salvation of Chinese souls. Each journey involved over 3000km of travel of which about 800km was on foot (Don, 1886-1906, 1936). Not having much success at conversion he nevertheless remained their friend, confidante and occasionally spokesman. His diaries and photographs have become an invaluable ethnographic record. Besides containing much of interest to an archaeologist, the diaries also vividly portray the feelings of despondency amongst the Chinese miners as their numbers gradually decreased. One recent social history of the Chinese (Butler, 1977) draws substantially on Don's observations.

The other good source of reliable information about the early Chinese is provided by the New Zealand census. The Chinese have always formed the largest non-European/non-Polynesian minority in New Zealand and they were the first to come here (Ng, n.d.:5). The early New Zealand census reports devoted special sections to the Chinese, in particular concerning their numbers, occupations and distribution within New Zealand.

Historical background

During the period defined as the Chinese mining era, the Chinese were overwhelmingly sojourner in outlook, gold mining was their chief occupation and they tended to have minimal interaction with Europeans.

The history of Chinese settlement in New Zealand really began in 1865. In that year the Otago Provincial Council and the Chamber of Commerce agreed to invite Chinese from the Victorian goldfields to rework the Otago goldfields. At the time there was a mining slump in Otago because thousands of European miners had left the province for the newly discovered goldfields in Marlborough, Nelson and on the West Coast (Ng, 1972:4). Thus the majority of the Chinese who came to New Zealand settled in Otago which then included Southland. The only other areas where substantial numbers later established themselves were in Westland and Nelson (Heinz, 1977:35) where several hundred settled.

Almost without exception the nineteenth century immigrant Chinese originally came from Kwangtung Province in south China (Ng, 1972:1), the area of that country with the longest history of colonial contact. Coincidentally, it also had the worst social turmoil in China as a result of the Opium Wars, rebellion, banditry, clan feuds, natural disasters and epidemics, so there were many incentives to leave and gold provided the stimulus.

Initially all the Chinese who landed in New Zealand came from Victoria, after the Otago Council's petition of invitation had been circulated around the gold mining centres there. However, after a few years increasing numbers were coming direct from China as word went back to relatives of conditions on the New Zealand goldfields. The characteristic chain pattern of lineage migration developed. With rare exceptions the early New Zealand Chinese were descended from peasant farmers and rural artisans (Ng,1972:1).

Just over 5000 Chinese came to New Zealand in the 1800s, a relatively small number compared to the 100,000 plus who had fled Kwangtung and settled in California after 1848 and the 50,000 who settled in Australia in the 1850s alone. Because they were late arrivals to the California rushes, the Chinese were normally obliged to rework old claims that had been abandoned by European miners. In New Zealand there seems to have been less compulsion to rework the old claims but the Chinese frequently chose to do so. They were content to work for a small steady return rather than chase the elusive bonanza so anxiously sought by the European miners.

The early Chinese in New Zealand had to contend with considerable malevolent and bureaucratic racial discrimination in New Zealand (Ng,1972:5; Butler,1977:23), but they experienced little direct violence compared with the inter-Chinese feuding that developed in the United States and the often virulent treatment they received at the hands of white miners in Australia (Price,1974; Butler,1977).

By the latter half of 1866 the first Chinese were coming into the Cromwell area, less than four years after the founding of the township. They originally set up camp in the vicinity of Gibraltar Rock, a prominent rock face on the banks of the Clutha River about four kilometres below Cromwell (Parcell,1976:148). By about 1870, however, a few Chinese storekeepers had established themselves at the upper end of Cromwell's main street, and had formed the nucleus of a Chinatown. Initially, few miners lived in the settlement, the majority preferring to establish themselves in rock shelters near the workings within the river gorges and side gullies (Parcell,1976:149). Here they constructed shelters by walling up the front of rock overhangs or the open space under boulders with slabs of schist, of which detrital fragments are abundant in the local environment. In areas where there were no natural overhangs they built small stone huts, but the raw materials on hand were the chief determinants of construction techniques. Thus at Waipori and in the Nokomai they built mainly mud brick dwellings, at Round Hill in Southland they made huts of wooden shingles, whilst in Westland they utilised raupo, timber and stone. In some instances, for example, at Lawrence, they used boards, rice sacks and flattened kerosine tins (McGill,1980:31). Fortunately for archaeologists, they shunned tents.

The peak year for Chinese immigration into New Zealand was 1871, by which time there were over 400 Chinese resident in the Cromwell area out of a total of 4000 Chinese miners spread throughout Otago. This compares with 7000 European miners (Ng,1972:3). The heyday of Chinese mining was in the 1870s and 1880s. After the 'eighties the easily worked gold had largely been won and it became the turn of the larger scale, generally European managed, sluicing and dredging companies. Many Chinese became involved in small sluice mining ventures, but with the notable exception of Sew Hoy, the Shotover dredging pioneer, they did not take up the new dredging technology. Gradually their presence on the goldfields began to diminish as they moved to the cities, drifted into other occupations or died.

The archaeological approach

Given an almost complete lack of published details about Chinese sites in New Zealand, it was necessary to approach the investigation of their sites in the Cromwell area with a broadly defined set of objectives in mind. These were:

1. To analyse site distribution and variability.
2. To analyse subsistence and social patterns.
3. To determine what artefacts or products were imported from China, what were of European or New Zealand manufacture and what were made or obtained locally.
4. To determine how the sites fitted into the overall pattern of historic settlement.
5. To record relevant information about the Chinese from elderly informants before they died.

Until this last summer the archaeological programme has concentrated on the excavation of isolated Chinese rock shelters - five of these having been substantially excavated so far - Rockfall 1 (Ritchie and Ross,n.d.), Firewood Creek, Caliche Shelter, Site 21 and Site 22. Another twenty shelters, all of which will be eventually inundated (Ritchie,1979:162), have been test-excavated to some extent. From that work and associated research a picture has developed of life in the rock shelters, particularly with regard to subsistence activities but also providing many insights into the social aspects of Chinese settlement.

The next logical step was to investigate the urban component; and the obvious choice of the sites in the Cromwell area was the township's former 'Chinatown', which was the scene of the major excavation last summer.

The Chinese urban settlements in New Zealand (known variously as Chinese camps, cantons and in Cromwell's case 'Chinatown') differed considerably in size from clusters of a few huts to the likes of those at Lawrence and Round Hill where 500 plus Chinese lived (Greif, 1974:17; McGill, 1980:36, 88). Although Cromwell's Chinatown has been described as containing "up to 200" (Marsh in Don, 1923:328), Don's diaries (e.g. 1894:21, and Don quoted in Butler, 1977:33) and the physical size of the structures would suggest the main nucleus housed considerably less, in fact probably only about forty. The figure '200' quoted by Marsh would include Chinese living in the immediate vicinity of Cromwell and having regular interaction with the citizens of Chinatown proper.

Cromwell's Chinatown is, to my knowledge, the best preserved example of this type of site in Otago. It also appears to have had the greatest longevity. It existed as a recognised Chinese settlement for at least sixty years. Other major Chinese urban enclaves in Central Otago at Lawrence, Roxburgh, Alexandra, Arrowtown and Queenstown have been virtually destroyed. The potentially extremely interesting settlement at Round Hill in Southland has been extensively fossicked over in recent years by local bottle collectors. In other areas of Central Otago where large numbers of Chinese congregated such as around Bannockburn, in the Shotover Valley, in the Nokomai, the Nevis, the Cardrona Valley, Conroys Gully and the Roxburgh Gorge, they tended not to cluster into sizeable population units. The dispersed settlement patterns are attributable to the topography, the location of established European settlements and the distribution of the alluvial gold in these localities.

Cromwell's Chinatown appears to owe its origins to the arrival of Chinese storekeepers in Cromwell in the late 1860s, not long after the first influx of miners (Parcell, 1976:150). They established a business area on the then undeveloped upper end of the main street of Cromwell and a residential area behind the shops, on the already mined over terrace beside the Kawerau River. The two areas are separated by a steep 40m high bank.

The choice of location for the settlement was probably compelled upon the Chinese as much as chosen of their own volition. By the time they arrived in Cromwell, the surveyed tent-sites had largely been occupied by Europeans. There is no record that the existing European population of Cromwell was violently antagonistic towards the 'Chinese invasion' (although they were at neighbouring Bannockburn - see Parcell, 1976:150), however, the arrival of Chinese in any established European township was "seldom welcomed with open arms" (Butler, 1977:13). The Chinese probably deliberately established themselves on the 'top terrace' because they would not be directly intruding or competing within the white part of Cromwell, thus lessening the possibility of antagon-

ising the European citizens. They would have been aware of anti-Chinese sentiment in other Central Otago towns as they passed through them on route inland, for example, in 1867 the citizens of Lawrence passed a by-law forbidding the Chinese to camp within the town's environs (McGill,1980:36). Undoubtedly, another incentive to settle where they did in Cromwell, was the fact that the area was unoccupied Crown Land, thus they were able to squat there gratis (there is no record that they ever paid any rental to the Crown). Other factors likely to have been pertinent in the selection of the location were that it was central to the work areas (i.e. nearby river banks), the tailings provided a ready source of construction materials, the existence of a reliable spring afforded a good water supply and it was sheltered from the strong northerly winds which blow in the Cromwell area every summer.

The historical development of Chinatown is rather obscure. The Chinese business section was thriving in the mid 1880s, but to begin with there were few Chinese miners living in the settlement itself (Parcell,1976:150). The business sector included general stores, grog shops, gaming rooms (ibid:151) and at least one, albeit short lived, brothel (Cromwell Argus,1890). Across the street from the business area a substantial Chinese market garden was also established. The services offered by the Chinese business community appear to have gradually attracted some miners to live in and around 'the canton'. The storekeepers, in particular, held considerable influence within the Chinese settlements, offering besides provisions, the services of a post office, interpreter, news outlet, a high interest bank and a social centre (Greif,1974:18).

The business part of Chinatown extended some 150m along the south side of Melmore Terrace, the main street of Cromwell (the area is presently demarcated by Mangos' Furniture store and the houses opposite the Victoria Hotel). As far as can be ascertained the largely wooden Chinese stores and businesses were deserted by about the turn of the century. Around 1930 the then Public Works Department demolished and removed the remaining structures because they were considered a public health risk.

In the last fifteen years substantial finds of Chinese artefacts have been made by some Cromwell residents, within and immediately behind their private properties in the area described above. Mr L.Mangos uncovered a large number of Chinese artefacts and bottles in 1967 when he was excavating for the foundations of his house, and he has added to his collection by subsequent excavations (Ritchie,n.d.a.). Similarly Mr R. Thomson has amassed a large collection of Chinese ceramics from behind his property (Ritchie,n.d.b.). As both collections are dominated by alcohol bottles (both European glass and Chinese ceramic) it seems likely that they had uncovered bottle dumps associated with the former Chinese 'grog shops'.

Undoubtedly the closure of the Chinese stores had a detrimental effect on the life of the remaining citizens in the residential (i.e. the lower) area of Chinatown. The predominantly stone dwellings were gradually abandoned as the old miners left or died, finally being deserted about 1920. Cromwell Borough Council cemetery records indicated that the last Chinese burial in the Cromwell area occurred in 1921, providing a reasonable terminus ad quem for the settlement. Subsequently, the buildings gradually decayed, hastened no doubt by the removal of roofing iron from the structures not long after they were abandoned.

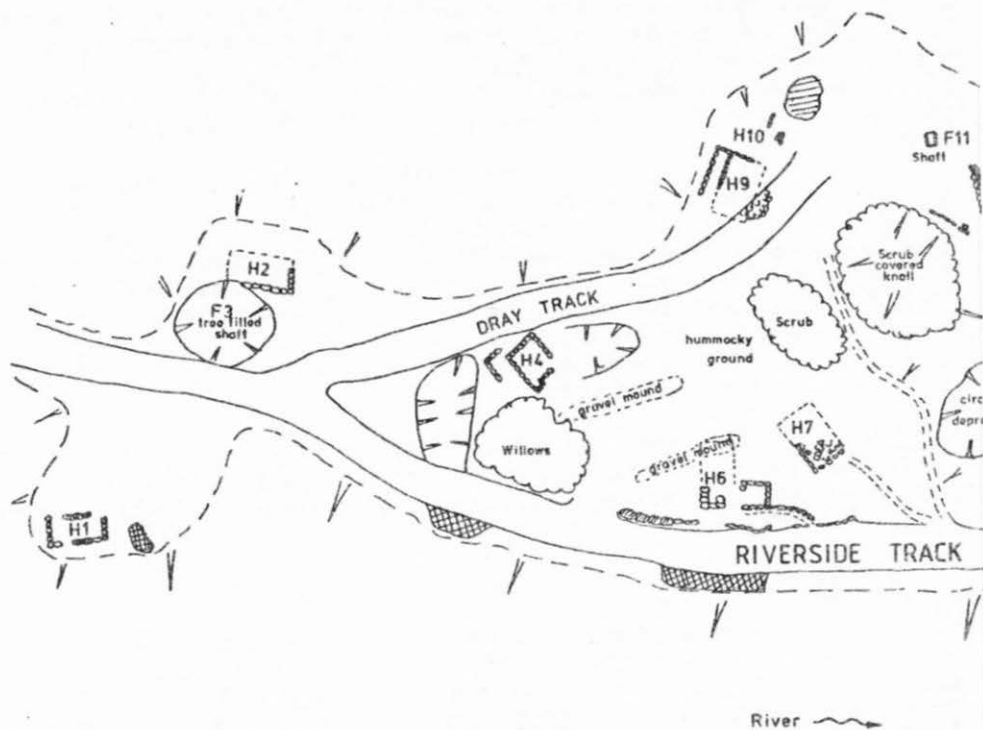
The shady south facing location of the Chinatown site favoured rapid vegetation growth and the area became overgrown within a few years of its desertion. Occasional fruit trees found within the bush near the site are a tangible reminder of some of the horticultural interests of its former inhabitants. The vegetation cover, which consisted of willow, sycamore and elderberry trees, clematis vines, briar and numerous scrubby plants had protected the site from the ravages of fossickers. Some of the willow trees were possibly planted by the Chinese, the rest adventitious introductions.

In the winter of 1978 I slashed my way around the jungle that covered the residential part of the site and tried to determine its extent, what was left of it and the problems likely to be involved in clearing it.

The excavation

The excavation began on 7 January 1980 and lasted ten weeks. The first two weeks were entirely taken up with clearing the site of vegetation. This involved an area of 200 x 50 metres. Although the clearing was tiring work, there were many pleasant surprises as new huts and features were exposed within the bush each day. The aim of the clearing operation was to leave the site in a 'park-like' state; all standing trees being left, but all scrub, fallen trees and leaf litter were cleared.

After the vegetation had been removed, it was apparent that the settlement had been built on hummocky ground resulting from the working of the terrain prior to the arrival of the Chinese. Within the cleared area a total of twenty definite huts, six suspected hut sites, several sections of stone revetted terraces and tracks, a spring and two possible shafts were uncovered. No obvious middens were apparent, except for a lot of debris in the north east corner which we concluded had been dumped down the bank in more recent times (some of it resulting from fossicking in the upper part of Chinatown). An ash dump located just beyond the western margin of the site was tested but proved to be a later European deposit.



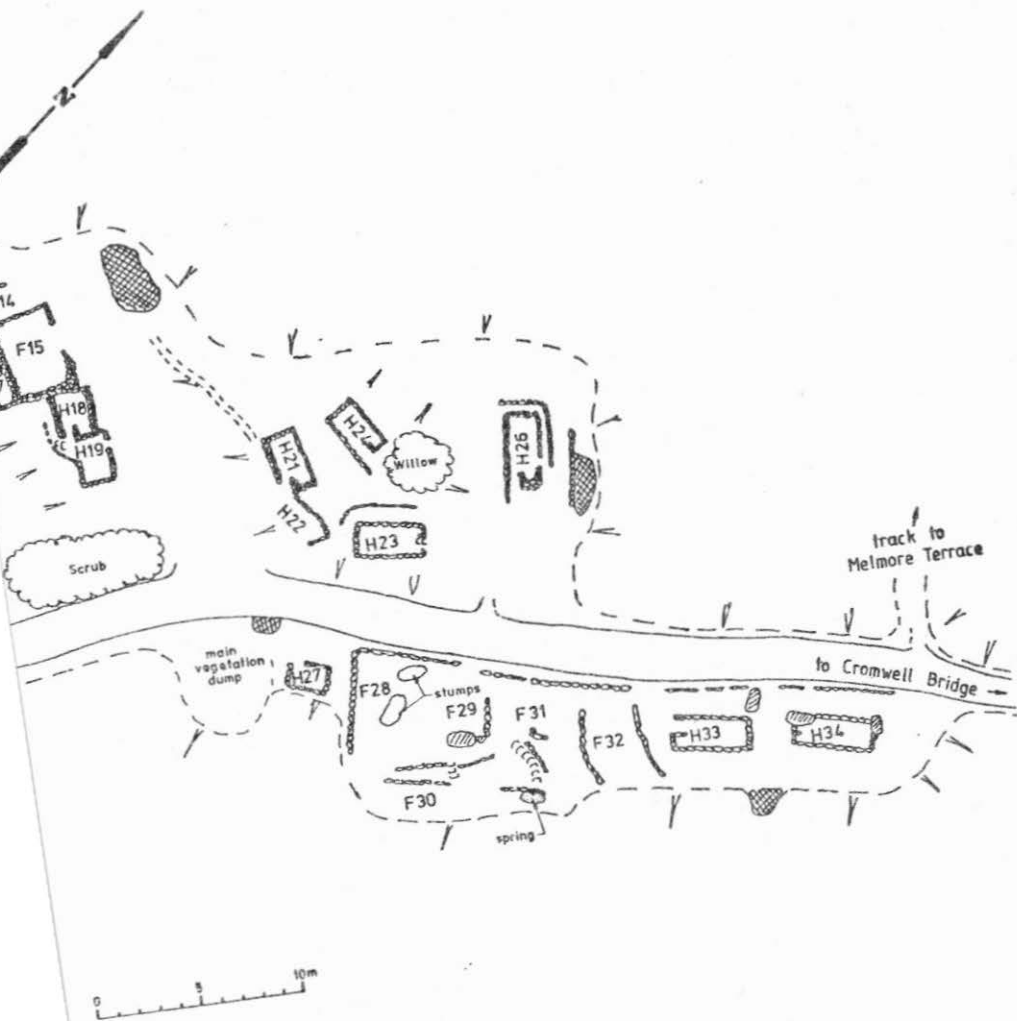
CHINATOWN

S133/48

KEY

- H Hut
- F Feature
- Stone walling
- Stone steps
- Pathways
- Spoil dump
- Edge of bush
- Inferred extent
- Patches of bush
- Large boulders

FIGURE 1. Plan of 'Chinatown', Cromwell.



The excavation was concentrated in the interiors and immediate surrounds of the various huts, with smaller sampling excavations being undertaken on the garden terraces and in and around other features such as the dumps. The surrounding bush was also extensively searched for at least 300m either side of the cleared area to ensure that we had in fact determined the full extent of the site. Excavation proved difficult in some areas because of a build up of dense root-mats which were often 20cm thick.

Some consistencies of orientation and construction were readily apparent within the structures of the settlement. Several of the huts were located adjacent to the riverside track (see Fig.1) which must have been formed quite early in the historic era, probably by 1870. This track which passes through Chinatown was later used by wagon teams conveying coal to Cromwell from the coal pit upstream of the Chinese settlement (Parcell, 1950:261). Ethnographic records would suggest that the Chinese deliberately orientated their huts at various angles to hinder the passage of evil spirits (Don, quoted in Butler, 1977:33), but the hummocky topography also imposed its own limitations. The Chinese seem to have taken advantage of the undulating ground within the site. In almost all cases at least two walls of each hut were built into the adjacent gravel or earth banks, which were retained by stone revetting.

Sixty five percent of the twenty well defined structures in the settlement were single isolated units. The other seven were massed back to back, forming a central group clustered around a stone walled enclosure which probably originally housed pigs. As many of the adjoining walls were of double thickness very little energy or materials was saved by building the huts back to back.

The huts were constructed of cobbles of greywacke and slabs of schist derived from the tailings debris (see Plates 1 and 2). Mud mortar was usually employed to bind the stones but in some instances a lime mortar was used. Lime mortar also served as a plaster inside one hut. Although the huts were essentially surface features, some would have had a semi-subterranean appearance because they were built into the adjacent banks. The stone walls were surmounted by roofs consisting of corrugated iron sheeting supplemented by scrappy offcuts of zinc and iron sheeting and flattened kerosine-type tins. Internal supports were provided by timber frames. In the instances where the post butts survived (the wood type has not been determined yet) they were found to be made of milled timber, although saplings and driftwood were probably also used for framing.

Some of the huts had flooring made up of interlocked slabs of schist, whilst in others the floors consisted of the compacted river terrace gravels. In each instance the door was located beside the stone fireplace and chimney at one end of the hut; the limited post butt evidence suggesting that the bed or sleeping platform was built across the opposite end wall. Some of the huts had wooden or stone steps and in many instances short pieces of metal standards were used to support the door jambs. Both the structural remains and photographic evidence indicate that windows and vents were entirely absent. Some concern over security was indicated by the finding of several old padlocks.

The huts varied in size but two size groupings stand out (3 x 2 and 4.5 x 2.5 metres). It would be tempting to speculate that the size differences had social significance but the presently unanalysed material evidence is not strong enough to support such contentions. They probably reflect more functional reasons such as the nature of the ground, the availability of stone, the number of people who lived in them and the whim and energy of the respective hut builders. It is readily apparent that the huts were built by different people, probably over the space of a few years, because of the observable variations in the construction of the stone walls, despite the fact that they were all using the same basic materials.

We know from immigration records and recorded observations, reinforced by the type of artefacts that were uncovered, that the settlement was a male domain. Even in 1901 the census records state that there were only fifteen Chinese wives in New Zealand (although it is known that many of the Chinese miners were married before they came to New Zealand (Ng, 1972:3)). The size and layout of the huts, supported by Don's observations, indicate that the huts were seldom occupied by more than two men.

Interesting differences were evident within the artefactual assemblages associated with each hut. Those at the eastern end of the site were undoubtedly occupied by Chinese miners based on the assemblages found therein. However, some of the huts at the western end, although they may have been built by the Chinese, were later occupied and modified by 'down and out' Europeans during the depression years of the 1930s.

About thirty pieces of English currency uncovered within the site ranged from 1870 to 1907, neatly spanning the main period of Chinese occupation. The highest value coin found was one shilling. When the coins and assemblages from each hut are analysed in detail it may be possible to obtain a reasonable accurate idea of the period each dwelling was occupied.

One hut (Hut 23) produced more evidence of opium smoking (in the form of opium tincture phials, opium heating lamps made from bottle necks, 'funs' trays for holding opium deals and fragmental pipe remains) than any other. It appears likely that this hut served as an opium den.

Hut 26 was especially interesting. It had been gutted by fire as evidenced by charred timbers and burnt debris within the structure. The heat had been so intense in some parts that bottle glass had melted. The objects which survived the fire appear to have been largely undisturbed. It is conceivable that the hut's occupier had some experience in making or using gun powder (for use in Chinese fireworks?) or metal salvage, because several large globs of lead and over 200 pre-World War One .303 calibre projectiles (not the cartridges) were found within the hut.

The same hut also contained two deposits of Chinese coins numbering over 120 in total. Another fifty were found elsewhere in the settlement. Although Chinese coins were brought to New Zealand as currency, they had little cash value here and became increasingly used for gambling and talismanic purposes. Chinese coins also have little value for dating because they were retained in circulation for several centuries (G.S. Park, pers. comm.).

A large stone-walled enclosure (F15) built amidst the main cluster of huts would appear to have been either a walled garden plot or a pen for pigs or chickens. Test excavations within the area provided few clues as to the area's use, however, analysis of soil samples taken from this area may yield useful information.

Some smaller structures adjacent to the larger huts appear to have served as storage sheds or 'lean-tos'. One contained two discrete layers of local Cromwell lignite suggesting it served as a coal shed. Beside coal the Chinese are also known to have collected driftwood for fuel.

A rectangular depression on the north west side of the site was excavated to determine its usage. The stratigraphy revealed by the excavation indicated that it was probably an abandoned coal prospecting shaft, and possibly post dated the Chinese occupation.

Although no quantitative analyses have been undertaken yet, first impressions are that the range of artefact types found in Chinatown is not significantly wider than that found in the more remote shelters. Many more artefacts were recovered during the Chinatown excavation, ² but on the other hand a considerably larger area was opened up, 210m

in fact, whereas the excavation associated with any particular Chinese rock shelter would normally involve only about 40m² (Ritchie, n.d.a.).

A notable feature of the surveys and excavations undertaken to date in the Cromwell area has been an apparent absence of concentrated midden dumps associated with the Chinese habitation sites. The normal pattern has been to find intermittent scatters of midden material in and around structures and occasionally small caches or lens of midden. Although this pattern of midden disposal might be anticipated in relatively short term rural mining camps, ethnographic analogy with practically any sedentary cultural group one could name, would suggest that a large urban population, such as that at Chinatown, would produce a considerable volume of rubbish. One might also expect the rubbish to be habitually dumped in or near the same locations. This apparent lack of concentrated middens associated with a relatively sedentary occupation requires further investigation.

Conclusions

Although no major analyses have been undertaken on the materials excavated from Chinatown as yet, some patterns are immediately evident. There was a continuing reliance on food and other products imported from China. These products were initially brought in by Chinese merchant-entrepreneurs in Dunedin (Sew Hoy being one of the most notable) and then retailed by Chinese storekeepers in Cromwell and in other goldfield settlements. The range of products imported was extensive. It included the following foodstuffs: tea, (in copper tins); rice (in sacks); soya oil, preserved ginger, a range of dried vegetables and products such as salted garlic, salted radish, pickled lemon and shrimp sauce (Greenwood, 1978:46) all in ceramic containers. Ng Ka Py and Shao Hsing (saki) alcoholic beverages were also imported in distinctive ceramic containers. Other imported products included a wide variety of ceramic bowls, cups and spoons, brass and iron wok ladles, chop sticks, opium (in copper tins), Chinese medicines (in glass phials), opium pipes (bamboo shafts with ceramic bowls), cloth, gold scales (Li Ding type), pearl buttons, coins and gambling pieces such as counters and dominoes. Analysis of the manufacturing techniques of the various imported Chinese artefacts is an interesting field in its own right but is beyond the scope of this paper. The Chinese also used many items of European (mainly English or New Zealand) manufacture, many of which were obtained from stores run by their fellow countrymen. For example, one Kum Goon Wa advertised in the Cromwell Argus (17/5/1881) that he was a "Chinese Storekeeper and Fancy Goods Warehouseman". He stated that he had "One sale, at prices which will command a ready market, Teas, Sugars, and General Groceries for English as well as Chinese customers, and of superior qualities to any hitherto introduced into the district".

Although the Chinese retained many of their own customs, they quickly adopted the wearing of European miners working clothing because of the cold. They also used or made similar tools to those used by the European miners such as picks, shovels, gold pans, and cradles. Other items of western manufacture which are frequently uncovered during the excavation of Chinese sites in the Cromwell area include clay and briar pipes, bone handled brushes, knives and combs, crocks and cutlery, enamelled and iron pots, alcohol bottles (particularly square case gin - which they also used in cooking), aerated waters (mainly Dunedin and Alexandra manufacturers), numerous medicine and universal painkiller containers (glass and ceramic), condiment bottles (notably vinegar, sauces and pickles), ceramic toothpaste and ointment containers, many varieties of tinned products (such as fish, jams, tea, matches and tobacco) and a wide range of nails, spikes and buttons. Buckets and kerosine tins were used for conveying and storing water.

The main faunal materials indicate consumption of cattle, pig and sheep meat, chickens, ducks, hens eggs and fish. Although the Chinese are reputed to have had a marked preference for pig meats, cattle and sheep bones are well represented in the faunal assemblages. The Chinese had their own pigs and chickens in Chinatown and probably maintained breeding populations. The fish bone is most likely derived from tinned fish.

The Chinese miners appear to have collected and re-used many discarded European items such as pieces of iron standards (used for fire bars and door stanchions), off-cuts of tin sheeting and kerosine-type tins for roofing and walling) and wire (from which they made various small tools). These materials would have been readily available from either the numerous tips around the riverbanks of Cromwell or the European blacksmiths. They also re-used the imported ceramic dried vegetable containers for cooking, and several items notably the opium deal (funs) trays, were produced from spent herbal tea tins.

Early writers have painted a broad scenario of the Chinese as a frugal, adaptive people who retained many of their own customs. Archaeological investigations of Chinese sites supports these impressions. However, all too often historical accounts of the Chinese lean heavily towards an anecdotal rather than a factual and balanced record of their life style and activities. Controlled excavation of Chinese sites, coupled with thorough literary research can help redress this imbalance.

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Approval for the Chinatown excavation was given by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dunedin. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance and resources of the Ministry of Works and Development through the Project Engineer, Cromwell, and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

Postscript

The Chinatown excavation has been made into a television documentary by Ciscen Films of Dunedin. It will be screened on TVNZ later this year. A display based around the Chinatown excavation is presently being set up in the Ministry of Works Information Centre in Cromwell. Until the site is eventually inundated, it will be maintained by the Otago Goldfields Park Board.

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CHINATOWN EXCAVATIONS Plate 1. Excavation in progress.



CHINATOWN EXCAVATIONS Plate 2. The remains of stone dwellings.