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# RUINS *of a* WORLD



## CHINESE GOLD MINING AT THE MON-TUNG SITE IN THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON

*U.S. Department of the Interior :: Bureau of Land Management  
Idaho Cultural Resource Series :: Number IV*

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Ronald L. James  
University of Idaho

John C. Lytle, Technical Editor  
Bureau of Land Management

Idaho Cultural Resource Series :: Number IV

October 1995



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## CHINESE GOLD MINING AT THE MON-TUNG SITE IN THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON

Harold J. Jones  
University of Idaho

John C. Little, Technical Editor  
Journal of Land Management

Idaho Cultural Resources Series - No. 101

October 1997



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## FOREWORD

**T**HIS VOLUME IS THE second of an Idaho Cultural Resource Series created to increase public awareness of cultural resources on public lands. The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing these resources on public lands in Idaho. *Ruins of a World* focuses on the Chinese miners in southern Idaho. The evidence of their mining activities conducted in the nineteenth century are representative of a variety of cultural resources found on public lands in Idaho. The Chinese played a large role in the development of the State of Idaho, and it is very rewarding to publish *Ruins of a World*, which presents current evidence of the Chinese miners. We trust that this work will aid your understanding and enjoyment of the cultural resources on public lands.

The physical evidence of the cultural resources found on public land are protected by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), and artifacts must not be removed or disturbed. Artifacts observed on the surface must be left in place so other people can have the opportunity to view a piece of our past.

In 1869, gold was discovered in the Snake River Canyon below the Shoshone Falls. During the 1870s, several hundred Euroamerican and Chinese miners entered the isolated interior of the Snake River Canyon searching the rocky slopes and river bars for flour gold. The Chinese formed a distinctive ethnic group that did not readily assimilate with the dominant Euroamerican culture. Nevertheless, the Chinese were an integral and dynamic component of southern Idaho's frontier settlements. Changing social and economic conditions during the 1880s and 1890s resulted in the decline of Idaho's Chinese communities. By the early 1900s, the Chinese and their contributions to the region's history were almost forgotten.

Site 10JE89, named *Mon-Tung*, was a Chinese living site located in the Snake River Canyon near Twin Falls, Idaho. A thorough archaeological excavation of the site's interior conducted during the summer of 1989 recovered an impressive amount of information and artifacts dating to the 1870s. This study includes information gathered from ethnohistorical research and archaeological field studies. The data obtained is compared with previous studies concerning the Chinese experience in frontier mining settings in the American West and New Zealand in order to provide new insights into the history, lifestyles, material culture, and adaptations of the Chinese miners in southern Idaho.

## FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive overview of the history, culture, and development of the Chinese diaspora in the United States. The book is intended for a general audience and is written in a clear, accessible style. It covers the early history of Chinese immigration, the challenges faced by immigrants, and the contributions of the Chinese community to American society. The book also discusses the impact of Chinese immigrants on the economy, culture, and politics of the United States. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history and culture of the Chinese diaspora in the United States.

The book is organized into several chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the early history of Chinese immigration to the United States, including the role of the California Gold Rush. Chapter 2 discusses the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants, including discrimination and exclusion. Chapter 3 discusses the contributions of the Chinese community to American society, including in the areas of labor, commerce, and culture. Chapter 4 discusses the impact of Chinese immigrants on the economy, culture, and politics of the United States. Chapter 5 discusses the current status of the Chinese diaspora in the United States and the challenges it faces.

The book is written by a team of experts in the field of Chinese diaspora studies. The authors have conducted extensive research and have drawn on a wide range of sources to provide a comprehensive and accurate account of the history and culture of the Chinese diaspora in the United States. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history and culture of the Chinese diaspora in the United States.

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### PREFACE

### 'WHY NO CHINAMEN ARE FOUND IN TWIN PILLS'

I should like to express my indebtedness to the many friends who have helped me in the preparation of this volume. I am particularly indebted to Mr. [Name] for his valuable criticisms and suggestions. I also wish to thank Mr. [Name] for his kind hospitality during my stay in his home in [Location]. The book is dedicated to my dear wife, [Name], whose love and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration to me.

This book is intended as a contribution to the study of Chinese literature and thought. It is not intended to be a complete history of Chinese literature, but rather a study of a particular aspect of Chinese literature and thought. The book is written for those who are interested in the study of Chinese literature and thought, and who wish to understand the reasons why no Chinamen are found in Twin Pills.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is a study of the reasons why no Chinamen are found in Twin Pills. The second part is a study of the reasons why no Chinamen are found in Twin Pills. In the first part, we shall see that the reasons why no Chinamen are found in Twin Pills are due to the fact that the book is written for those who are interested in the study of Chinese literature and thought, and who wish to understand the reasons why no Chinamen are found in Twin Pills.



## PREFACE

### “WHY NO CHINAMEN ARE FOUND IN TWIN FALLS”

**I**N SEPTEMBER, 1904, A LONE CHINESE MAN disembarked from the stagecoach that had brought him to Twin Falls, Idaho from the train station in Shoshone 28 miles away. As the man cast his eyes around to survey his new surroundings, he would have seen a site in the process of becoming a town in the midst of an arid, treeless, sagebrush plain. Ambitious and audacious plans were, at that time, being carried out to dam the Snake River and divert its inaccessible waters for irrigation. This agricultural reclamation project of historic proportions was just beginning and burgeoning economic opportunity was attracting settlers from all over North America and Europe to the once deemed uninhabitable Snake River Plain of southern Idaho. The lone Chinese man just off the stage from Shoshone was no exception.

The Chinese man did not receive an encouraging or cordial reception from Twin Falls residents as he strolled about the town. The local newspaper, *The Twin Falls News* would later report that “He stuck his hands in the pockets of his blouse and looked around . . . Nobody paid the slightest attention to him, but the fact of his arrival soon became known and there was a hurried conference of pioneers.” Within an hour of his arrival, a group of concerned, civic-minded citizens approached the Chinese man, took him to the local restaurant, bought him “the best meal the town afforded” and offered him the services of the local liveryman who provided a team of horses and carriage complete with driver. “Just as the Chinaman was beginning to think he had struck the greatest snap of his life,” he was informed of the local citizens’ real intentions. “Now, John, we are not going to hurt you, but we want you to take a little ride with us.” (*Twin Falls News* 1905c)

It was near sundown when the group of citizens’ escorted the Chinese visitor to the Snake River canyon rim and down the Blue Lakes grade to the south bank of the river. The ferry operator, alerted to the group’s arrival, had readied his barge and tied it to the south bank. The Chinese man boarded the ferry and the vessel was taken to the middle of the stream and then secured for the night. “As the weather was warm, the unwelcome visitor did not suffer through having to sleep on the soft side of a plank.”

In the morning, the Chinese man was allowed to land on the north side of the river. There he was commanded to “hit the breeze” for Shoshone and advised to tell other Chinese he might meet that Twin Falls would not welcome them either (*Twin Falls News* 1905c).

PREFACE

"WIT NO CHINAMEN ARE FOUND IN TWIN FALLS"

It is true that in the summer of 1947 a group of Chinese was discovered near the village of Twin Falls. This fact, which had been reported in the papers in Twin Falls, Idaho, led to the discovery of the Chinese in the area. In the summer of 1947 a group of Chinese was discovered near the village of Twin Falls. This fact, which had been reported in the papers in Twin Falls, Idaho, led to the discovery of the Chinese in the area. In the summer of 1947 a group of Chinese was discovered near the village of Twin Falls. This fact, which had been reported in the papers in Twin Falls, Idaho, led to the discovery of the Chinese in the area.

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Nine months later, on April 13, 1905, the city of Twin Falls was officially incorporated. The *Twin Falls News*, proudly reported the incorporation the following day on page one. On page four, an article titled "Why No Chinamen Are Found In Twin Falls" recounted the just-narrated story of the "Venturesome Celestial." The article faithfully and unabashedly represented the prevailing sentiments of the community towards Chinese settlers by stating "... the idea that Chinamen are a factor in civilization is not entertained here." (*Twin Falls News* 1905c)

The prejudice and persecution that marked the reaction of Twin Falls residents to the presence of Chinese was not unique or even unusual. In fact, the incident was quite mild, even civil, when compared to other anti-Chinese incidents that occurred throughout the West during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Wynne 1978; Stratton 1983; Tsai 1986; Laurie 1990; and Storti 1991) The Chinese man who visited Twin Falls was not physically assaulted and, assuming the report is accurate, was at least given a decent meal before being run out of town.

The Twin Falls anti-Chinese incident and the subsequent newspaper story clearly illustrates the conventional prejudices the Euroamerican community held towards the Chinese. Less than 30 years separated the mining era of the 1870s from the agricultural development period in the early 1900s. Some 32 years before the arrival of the "Venturesome Celestial," Chinese immigrants helped settle southern Idaho by establishing gold mining camps in the Snake River Canyon. In the 1870 census, 4,274 Chinese accounted for 28% of the total population of 14,999 in the Idaho Territory. In fact, Idaho's Chinese population was the second biggest in the West next to California. Perhaps as many as 500 Chinese worked mining claims in the Snake River Canyon between 1871 and the early 1880s. (Lee 1978; Wynne 1978; Chen 1980; Rohe 1982; Tsai 1983, 1986) As members of one of the first pioneer groups to establish a rough but viable society in southern Idaho, the Chinese became crucial influences on the economic and social structures that emerged later.

In the years between the demise of the gold camps in the Snake River canyon and the development of permanent agricultural communities on the Snake River Plain, awareness of the pivotal role the Chinese played in the frontier mining era diminished. The Chinese were, contrary to the judgements passed by the *Twin Falls News*, a vital part of the unfolding settlement process throughout the West. The ruins of several Chinese shelters are still visible in the Snake River Canyon, a fragile reminder of the early mining frontier and the impressive contributions of the Chinese pioneers which have remained obscure and nearly lost in the back pages of history.

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## CHAPTER 1

### RUINS OF A WORLD: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**T**HE SNAKE RIVER PLAIN OF SOUTHERN IDAHO was once a rugged, treeless, and arid region that until 1870 was little known. The arc-shaped volcanic plain extends 400 miles across southern Idaho from Montana to Oregon. The Snake River, the area's main feature, courses through a canyon that is over fifty miles long and more than four hundred feet deep. Most of the plain is covered by basalt that flowed over a period of about five million years.

Nearly 15,000 years ago, Lake Bonneville, ancestor of the Great Salt Lake, suddenly unleashed an immense flood that swept over Red Rock Pass in southeast Idaho and continued west across the Snake River Plain. The Bonneville Flood deposited large, rounded basalt boulders and melon-sized gravel all along the Snake River's course, both within the gorge and on the canyon rim. The flood also scoured soil and rock from the surface of the Snake River plain, creating "scablands" unsuitable for farming throughout the area. The excessive force of the flood sheared off layers of basalt 25 to 50 feet thick, forming alcoves or box canyons along the Snake River Canyon's north rim, such as Devil's Corral near the Twin Falls. (Maley 1987: 159-162; Dee 1989).

The forbidding emptiness created by the plain's volcanic past made early exploration extremely hazardous. The first recorded Euroamericans to penetrate the plain along the writhing course of the Snake River were the members of Wilson Price Hunt's ill-fated overland Astorians. Hunt and his expedition attempted to navigate the Snake River in the fall of 1811, unaware that the river ran through a gorge with some of the most impassable rapids and waterfalls in the West. Hunt's water borne journey ended abruptly and tragically at Caldron Linn, near the Snake River's confluence with Dry Creek. To this day, the Snake River, called "Mad River" by Hunt's voyageurs, has never been successfully navigated from source to mouth. Captain John C. Fremont traversed the Snake River plain during his second expedition in 1843 but managed to miss viewing the area's spectacular Shoshone Falls. (Volpe 199900: 3-15) In 1849, Major Osborne Cross led a regiment of mounted riflemen on an overland march to Oregon. One of Major Cross' subordinates, Lieutenant Lindsay, visited the great falls, then called "Canadian Falls." Lindsay "pronounced it one of nature's great wonders" and considered the falls equal to Niagara in grandeur. "Having been the first who had ever taken the trouble to examine [the falls] carefully, and wishing to change the name said to have been given by a priest many years since, they decided on that of the Great Shoshone falls,

CHAPTER I

RITZ OF A WORLD: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Ritz Hotel in London is a story of luxury and... the building was designed by James Gibbs... in 1771... the hotel was opened in 1784... the Ritz Hotel was founded in 1906... the Ritz Hotel was founded in 1906... the Ritz Hotel was founded in 1906... the Ritz Hotel was founded in 1906... the Ritz Hotel was founded in 1906...

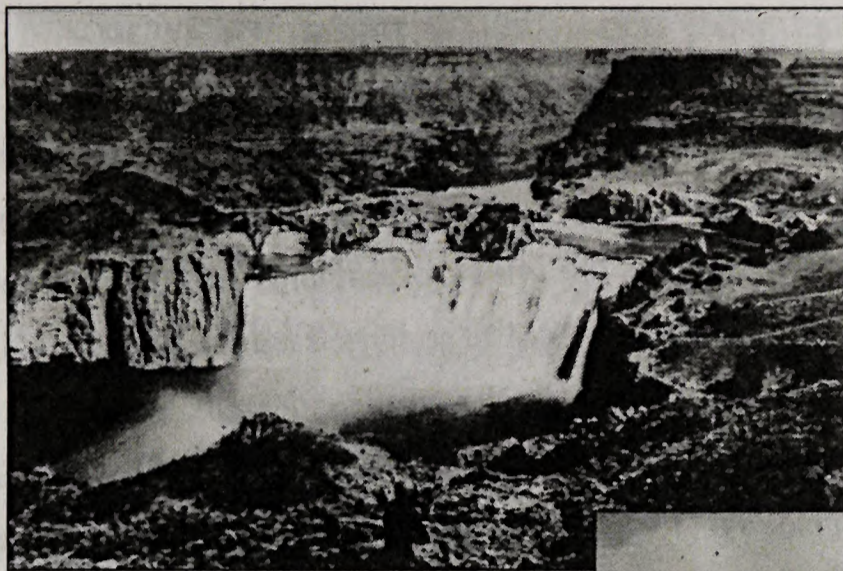


Figure 1.1a. The Shoshone Falls, 1868.  
Photo courtesy National Archives,  
photographer: Timothy O'Sullivan.

instead of Canadian, as being the most appropriate." (Cross 1850: 78-79). The great photographer Timothy O'Sullivan also visited Shoshone Falls in 1868 while with the King Expedition of 1867-69. O'Sullivan documented his visit by recording stunning photographic images of the falls. An article describing the



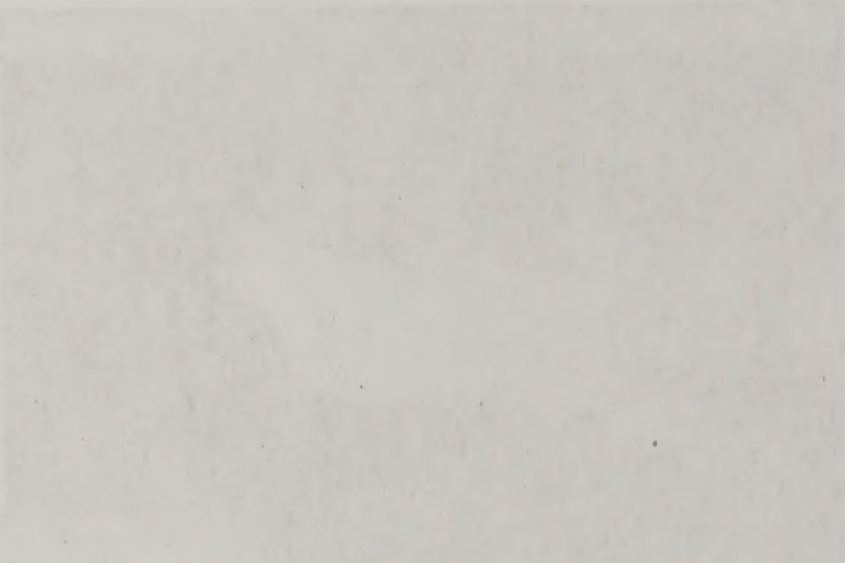
Figure 1.1b. Twin Falls. Photo courtesy Ron James family.

King Expedition, illustrated with engravings from O'Sullivan's photographs, appeared in the September, 1869 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. In the article, O'Sullivan described his reaction to seeing "one of the most sublime of Rocky Mountain scenes" as:

a feeling that you are, if the not the first . . . who have ever trod that trail, certainly one of the very few who have ventured so far; . . . you . . . feel sensible of the fact that you are in the presence of one of Nature's greatest spectacles as you listen to the roar of the falling water and gaze down the stream over the falls at the wild scene beyond.

The Snake River Canyon area was so remote and little known that the General Land Office map of Idaho for 1871 misplaced the Shoshone Falls, placing them below the confluence of the Snake River and Rock Creek when in fact they are located approximately eight miles above and east of the mouth of Rock Creek. (Preston 1978) The arid sagebrush Snake River plain was one of the most desolate regions that Oregon Trail emigrants had to traverse and they crossed it just as quickly as they could. Washington Irving, who never saw the Snake River Plain and its rocky chasm, nevertheless captured its essence when describing the Great American Desert in *Astoria*. He wrote of "a land where no man permanently resides, a vast, uninhabitable solitude with precipitous cliffs and yawning ravines, looking like the ruins of a world." (Irving 1836: 185-186)

From the 19th century till the  
present day, the world has  
experienced many changes.



The world is a vast and diverse  
place, with many different  
cultures and languages.  
It is a place of constant change  
and growth, and it is a place  
where we can learn so much  
about ourselves and the world  
around us.

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around us.

## PLACER MINING ON THE MIDDLE SNAKE RIVER

The Boise and Bruneau Shoshoni bands of Indians did live permanently on the Snake River plain. The Oregon Trail passed through their traditional territories and as emigrant traffic increased, so did the number and intensity of confrontations between pioneers and Indians. The infamous Ward Massacre, that occurred near Fort Boise in 1854, resulted in troops commanded by Major Granville O. Haller being stationed at Fort Boise to protect the emigrant wagon trains from Indian raids. (Madsen 1985: 9-54) While enduring their tour of duty at Fort Boise, several of the troops attempted placer mining in the Snake River. The soldiers' efforts yielded minor amounts of flour gold but no further prospecting ventures followed up these limited discoveries. (Wells 1983: 89)

When miners began entering the Boise Basin and Owyhee Mountains of southwest Idaho, the Shoshoni began mounting more frequent attacks. The settlers retaliated and a vicious cycle of violence ensued. During the summer of 1864, a party of well-equipped prospectors left Boise in search of possible placer deposits along the upper Snake River and its tributaries. The prospectors turned back following a skirmish with the Shoshoni and abandoned their plans. (Raymond 1870: 198; *San Francisco Bulletin* 15 July 1870) In May, 1866, a large party of Chinese miners enroute to the Boise mines were attacked by Shoshoni at Battle Creek in southeast Oregon. Reports vary but at least 50 Chinese were killed. Intense fighting continued between Indians and armed miners supported by the U.S. Army. Placer prospecting became very dangerous in the Owyhee mining district and the Snake River country to the east remained virtually closed. One intrepid prospecting expedition that entered the Snake River area had 11 horses stolen while camped on Rock Creek near present day Twin Falls. (U.S. Department of the Interior 1868: 98) In the autumn of 1866, 68 prospectors "embarked upon a prospecting tour on the upper waters of the Snake River." Of the 68 men, 12 became separated from the main party and were attacked by Indians, 10 were killed, and the survivors fled for the safety of Fort Boise (U.S. Department of the Interior 1868: 99)

When General George Crook took command of Fort Boise in December, 1866, the "whole country . . . was in a state of siege. Hostile Indians were all over . . . dealing death and destruction everywhere they wished." (Crook 1946:142) Crook launched a relentless campaign, engaging the Indians in 40 firefights and killing and capturing more than 550 Shoshoni and Paiutes. The tribes sued for peace in mid-1868 and surrendered on July 1, 1868 at Fort Harney, Oregon. (*Owyhee Avalanche* 1868; Crook 1946: 142-148; Utley and Washburn 1982: 246-247)

## PLACES MINING ON THE WILD RIVER

The first mining on the Wild River was done in 1861 by a party of men who were prospecting for gold in the mountains near the mouth of the river. They were successful in finding gold and a number of other minerals. The discovery of gold led to a great influx of miners and the establishment of several mining camps. The most important of these was the camp of James W. Wadsworth, who discovered gold in 1861. Other camps were established by James H. Cook, John W. Cook, and others. The mining industry on the Wild River was very successful and produced a large amount of gold and other minerals. The discovery of gold on the Wild River was a great event in the history of the West and led to the development of the mining industry in the region.

With the Indians subdued and confined to reservations, the Snake River plain was open for scientific surveys, such as the King Expedition, and prospectors could resume their persistent searches for new El Dorados.

### THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON GOLD RUSH

A prospector named Jamison discovered gold on the Snake River near the Shoshone Falls in the fall of 1869. Jamison, an associate of Captain Elias D. Pierce in the first gold discoveries in northern Idaho, was convinced that workable gold deposits could be found along the middle Snake as well. Jamison began his reconnaissance near the mouth of the Snake and proceeded upriver as summer ended and autumn began. (*Idaho Statesman* 23 March 1870) Jamison located sufficiently profitable gold deposits near the Bruneau River. The prospects improved further upriver with additional finds of "float gold" that proved difficult to recover. Jamison finally found a placer bar, located about 300 yards above the Shoshone Falls, that yielded gold "as high as \$40 to the hand," according to an account published in the *Idaho Statesman* on March 23, 1870.

The gold discovery in the Snake River Canyon came during a period of drought and low water levels in many of the streams that flowed through the Boise Basin and Idaho's central mountains. (Raymond 1870: 199) Ironically, the same drought conditions that impaired placer mining operations in the Boise Basin helped open up the Snake River to gold mining. Rossiter W. Raymond, the federal mining inspector, had completed a tour of the Snake River Plain just prior to Jamison's discovery. In his 1870 report, Raymond described his impressions of the Snake River's potential as "not promising for river mining." Raymond went on to state that, ". . . I . . . believe that the gold deposits of this part of the river are limited in extent and quite moderate in their yield . . . the operations of mining are difficult in the most favorable seasons, and, quite impracticable when high water prevails." (Raymond 1870: 199-200)

At first, the news of Jamison's gold discoveries did not generate a lot of excitement in Silver City and Boise. A party of Silver City miners, led by Colonel Kirkpatrick, went to the new diggings in late February, 1870. The *Silver City Avalanche*, in the meantime, cautioned its readers to "wait for further news before making a rush." (*Avalanche* 26 February 1870) Colonel Kirkpatrick returned to Silver City in mid-March and essentially said that the view of Shoshone Falls was far more rewarding than the gold prospects. Kirkpatrick reported seeing only seven men with rockers working a claim that "was nearly worked out, being only about 20 by 30 feet of black sand less than a foot in depth." (*Avalanche* 12 March 1870; 19 March 1870) The *Avalanche*

With the Indian tribes and nations to recover the whole world was open for  
the American people, and the first step was to go west  
to the great mountains and the great rivers.

## THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON GOLD RUSH

A party of men from England, who had been in the United States for some time, had been in the Snake River Canyon in the year 1825, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains.

The first discovery in the Snake River Canyon was made in the year 1825, when a party of men from England discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains.

It is believed that the first discovery of gold in the Snake River Canyon was made in the year 1825, when a party of men from England discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains.

The first discovery in the Snake River Canyon was made in the year 1825, when a party of men from England discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains. They had been in the mountains for some time, and had discovered some gold in the mountains.



reported that another party of four men were mining seven miles below the Shoshone Falls, which would have been in the vicinity of the confluence of Rock Creek and the Snake.

(*Avalanche* 19 March 1870)

A *Statesman* correspondent visited the Snake River canyon in early March and reported that mining claims were "being worked by several pioneer miners from the Boise Basin." The *Statesman* reporter also wrote that "Jamison & Co. have two rockers running about six miles below the Falls, near the mouth of Rock Creek." The mining community in the canyon at that time was described as "... four companies, consisting of 12 miners, making average wages. In addition ... from six to ten prospectors scattered along the river looking for places worth planting their rocker upon. The reports that hundreds of men are mining ... are all bosh ..." (*Statesman* 22 March 1870)

Interest in the Snake River mines increased in April when reports began filtering out of the canyon that rich gold bearing placer bars were being found. Prospectors reported claims that paid "from \$25 to \$30 to the rocker, and as high as \$100 a day to the hand." (*Statesman* 30 April 1870; *Avalanche* 7 May 1870) The gold that was being recovered, though fine and difficult to obtain, was also very pure in content. During a one week period in May, 1870, 100 ounces of flour gold were shipped to Boise where it assayed at \$15.62 per ounce. At the same time, the *Statesman* also reported "over 5,000 feet of lumber and three tons of merchandise were shipped to the Snake River mines within two days." (*Statesman* 28 April 1870; *Avalanche* 7 May 1870) The Snake River Canyon gold rush was on.

In the early spring of 1870, the Snake River rose considerably due to snow melting in the mountains. The effect was that "nine-tenths of the miners are idle, but are keeping close watch on their claims, and anxiously awaiting the time when work can be resumed." (*Statesman* 19 May 1870)

The high water posed severe hazards for adventurous gold seekers. Colonel Ike Jennings, a prominent Silver City prospector who distinguished himself in 1866 by leading a volunteer company of miners into action against hostile Indians, entered the canyon in April, 1870. Jennings and a miner from Rocky Bar named Charles Berry were attempting to ford the river when Berry's horse lost its footing and pitched Berry into the swift river current. Jennings made "every effort to assist him but ... the stream [was] so dangerous, that nothing could be done." Berry's body was never recovered (*Statesman* 19 May 1870; *Avalanche* 28 May 1870)

More and more miners continued to arrive and set up camps along the Snake River from the present day town of Hagerman east to Caldron Linn. Idled by the high spring runoff, the miners

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scouted claim sites or toured the canyon, viewing the remarkable scenery. Boise miners H. Way, N. B. Lindsey, A. Gortz, and Al Pence built:

a very fine yacht [and sailed] up the river a distance of . . . four to eight miles, and witnessed scenery for splendor almost indescribable . . . the steep walls along the entire distance traveled . . . are more formidable than the walls surrounding ancient cities. The clear water gushing from the high banks forms falls along the north side, at the foot of which are great resorts for mountain trout [*Statesman* 19 May 1870]

It was during this period that Chinese miners attempted to gain access to claims in the canyon. But the Chinese who arrived in the spring of 1870 received no encouragement from the Euroamerican miners to stay. A miners' convention was held on May 18, 1870 at the Shoshone Falls "to prevent Chinese emigration and colonization of the Snake River mines." The white miners gave the Chinese "plenty of time to emigrate peacefully" and threatened to "eject him downstream, 'tail-tied,' if he refuses to git." (*Statesman* 19 May 1870)

### EARLY TRANSPORTATION ROUTES TO THE SNAKE RIVER MINES

The Snake River mines had the advantage of being near a good supply route due to the establishment of the new Kelton Road (Figure 1.2). After the Central Pacific and Union Pacific transcontinental railroads were completed, new stage and freight routes were set up to connect the railroad terminus at Corinne in northern Utah with southwest Idaho. John Hailey started a stage line that connected Boise City to Kelton, Utah. Hailey's stages crossed the Snake River at Clark's Ferry, located approximately 20-25 miles downstream from Shoshone Falls. Hence, the transportation and supply systems necessary for the mining camps' very existence were in close proximity to the Snake River mines. (*Statesman* 23 June 1870; *Daily Utah Reporter* 16 July 1870; *Avalanche* 23 July 1870; Wells 1983:90)

The Rock Creek stage station and trading post was one of the facilities that serviced the Kelton Road stages and the Oregon Trail emigrants. The Rock Creek station, located approximately eight miles south of the Snake River canyon, was the only permanent Euroamerican settlement between Fort Hall and Fort Boise at that time and functioned as a critical commercial establishment where miners could buy supplies. Rock Creek also provided access to and from the Snake River mines, connecting the otherwise remote camps to Boise and Salt Lake City. (Walgamott 1926: 3-4; Madsen 1980: 65-70)



Three western communities served as gateways to the Snake River mines: Boise City via the Kelton Road; Elko, Nevada which also had access to the Kelton Road; and the “Gentile Capital” of Utah — Corinne. Built in 1869 on the Bear River at the end of the line of the Central Pacific Railroad, Corinne was ideally situated as the jumping off place for miners heading to southern Idaho and western Montana. (Madsen 1980: 65-70) Corinne’s political and business leaders quickly recognized the economic opportunities presented by the Idaho and Montana mining rushes. The town’s *raison d’être* became that of promoting the Snake River and Montana mines as well as providing for the various needs of the miners, teamsters, and immigrants who crowded Corinne’s bustling streets during the boom years of the early 1870s. John Eaves exemplified the enterprising energies of Corinne with his expansion of the transportation network. Eaves started regular stage shuttle service from Corinne to the Snake River mines in mid-July. The fare was \$15.00 for about a 24-hour journey. (*Reporter* 10 July and 16 July 1870)

Throughout much of the summer of 1870, Corinne’s newspaper, *The Utah Reporter*, featured prominently placed articles that provided favorable descriptions of the Snake River placer mines. The *Reporter*’s enthusiasm for the mines was undisguised boosterism spurred by ulterior motives.

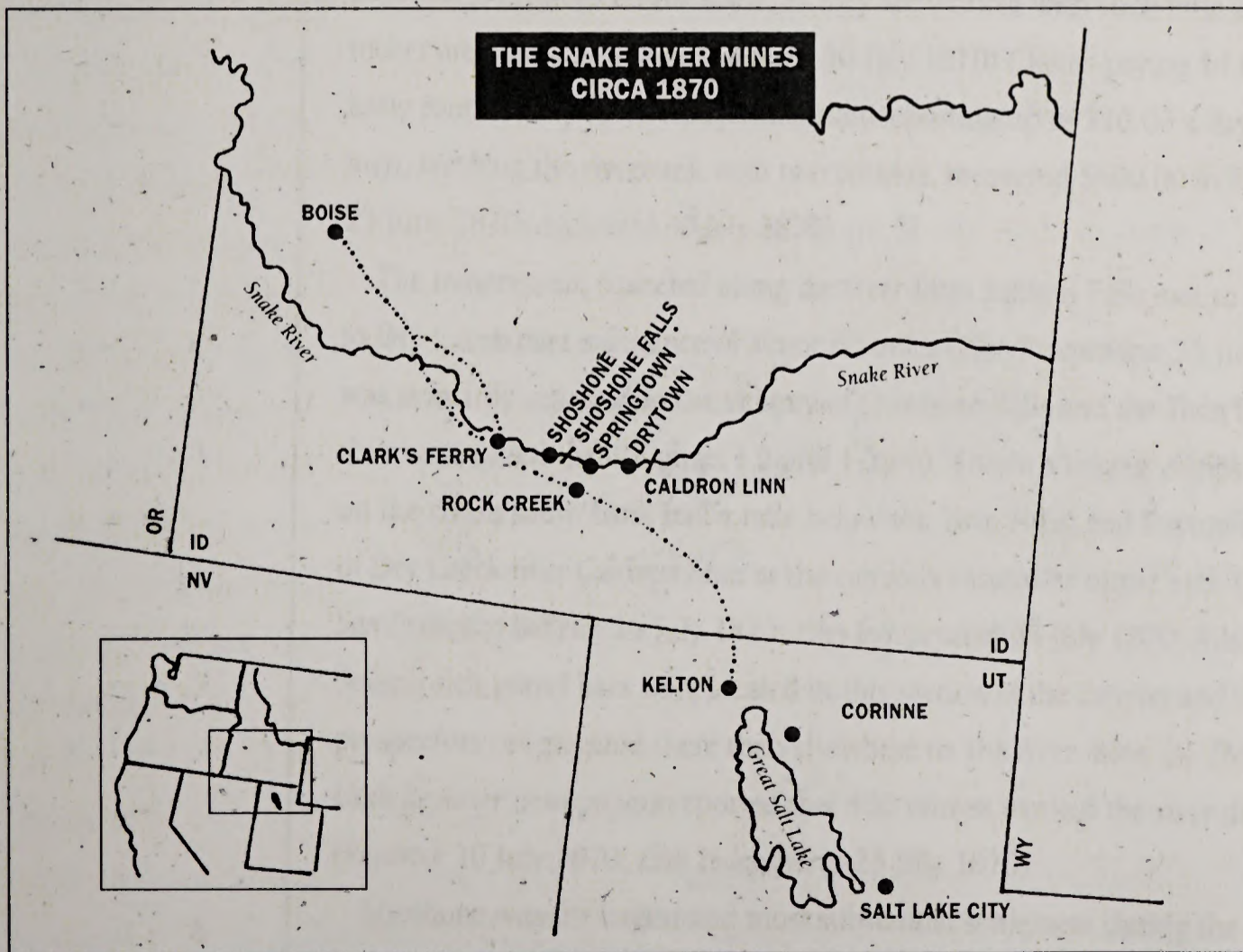


Figure 1.2. The Snake River Mines, circa 1870.

The world's rivers are the main source of water for the world's population. They provide water for drinking, irrigation, and industry. The world's rivers are also a major source of transportation. Many of the world's largest cities are located on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of energy. Many of the world's largest power plants are located on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of recreation. Many people enjoy fishing, boating, and swimming on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of food. Many of the world's largest fisheries are located on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of culture. Many of the world's largest cities and civilizations were founded on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of history. Many of the world's largest empires were founded on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of art. Many of the world's largest works of art were created on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of science. Many of the world's largest scientific discoveries were made on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of religion. Many of the world's largest religions were founded on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of music. Many of the world's largest works of music were created on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of literature. Many of the world's largest works of literature were written on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of philosophy. Many of the world's largest works of philosophy were written on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of art. Many of the world's largest works of art were created on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of science. Many of the world's largest scientific discoveries were made on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of religion. Many of the world's largest religions were founded on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of music. Many of the world's largest works of music were created on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of literature. Many of the world's largest works of literature were written on rivers. The world's rivers are also a major source of philosophy. Many of the world's largest works of philosophy were written on rivers.



Figure 1. The world's major river systems.

Corinne hoped to benefit from the influx of miners and immigrants that the railroad was bringing out West. Corinne also had its sights set on usurping Salt Lake's position as the center of political power in the Utah Territory. (Madsen 1980) Federal mining inspector Rossiter W. Raymond may have had Corinne and the *Reporter* in mind when he referred to the "manufactured excitement" and "artificial enthusiasms" pervading the Snake River gold rush in his 1870 report to the Secretary of the Interior. (Raymond 1870) Nevertheless, strategically located Corinne was the nearest point of supply for the Snake River mines and town merchants provided a significant amount of the equipment and provisions that reached the Snake River country.

### "THE BEST POOR MAN'S DIGGINGS ON THE COAST"

The pace of mining activity in the Snake River canyon picked up steadily as the spring runoff receded. By July, greater numbers of miners were beginning to prospect and optimistic reports coming out of the canyon created high expectations for profitable placer yields. A miner wrote to the *Owyhee Avalanche* that "the mines are better than I expected . . . They are no doubt the best poor man's diggings on the coast, as they are worked with such little expense; a little grub and a rocker are all one wants." (*Avalanche* 30 July 1870) Claims paying \$4.00 to \$20.00 per day were fairly routine with some exceptional sites reporting up to \$50.00 a day. One company of four men, working the riverbank with two rockers, recovered \$600.00 in five days. (*Statesman* 23 June 1870; *Avalanche* 30 July 1870)

The miners were scattered along the river from Salmon Falls east to Clark's Ferry and upriver to Dry Creek over a distance of about 60 miles (*Elko Independent* 23 July 1870) The gold rush was primarily centered in the vicinity of Shoshone Falls and the Twin Falls or Little Falls, as they were called then (Figures 1.2 and 1.3a-b). The two biggest camps were Shoshone, located on the river's south bank half a mile below the Twin Falls, and Drytown, situated at the mouth of Dry Creek near Caldron Linn at the canyon's eastern or upper end. (*Reporter* 10 July 1870; *San Francisco Bulletin* 15 July 1870; *Elko Independent* 23 July 1870; *Avalanche* 30 July 1870) Several rich gravel bars were located in this section of the canyon and consequently more prospectors congregated there than elsewhere on the river. Both the *Elko Independent* and the *Utah Reporter* newspapers reported that 400 miners worked the river during July, 1870. (*Reporter* 10 July 1870; *Elko Independent* 23 July 1870)

Shoshone was the largest and most substantial settlement during the summer of 1870. According to the *San Francisco Bulletin*, the camp consisted of "four canvas shanties and a tent,





all used as trading posts . . . At the mouth of Dry Creek, 15 miles above . . . there are four stores and a restaurant, which with some half dozen miners' tents constitute the bulk of that town."

(*San Francisco Bulletin* 15 July 1870) The camps were well stocked with provisions and supplies due to the close proximity to the Kelton Road and Oregon Trail routes. Prices were quite reasonable. The cost of freight from Corinne to the Snake River mines was 2.5 cents a pound while indispensable rockers could be bought at the trading posts in Shoshone and Drytown for \$25.00. A Boise miner commented that prices for basic commodities such as flour, sugar, coffee, and bacon were "as cheap or much cheaper" than in Boise or Silver City. (*Avalanche* 30 July 1870)

The rapid, spontaneous, and unorganized growth enjoyed by the Snake River canyon camps of Shoshone and Drytown during the summer of 1870 was typical of temporary gold rush camps throughout the West. The first post office in the area that is now the eight counties of the Magic Valley was established in Shoshone. It was located on the north side of the Snake River Canyon, in what was then Alturas County, overlooking the Twin Falls. The post office, which opened on May 25, 1870, operated just eight months until it was transferred to the trading post at Rock Creek on January 10, 1871. The summer of 1870 also brought the first effort to bring a brewery to the canyon. Tolan and

Campbell, owners of the Pioneer Brewery and Saloon in Corinne, attempted to establish a brewery at their branch saloon located at Drytown. The brewery was built six miles from the mouth of Dry Creek and was "provided with teams to deliver fresh beer every day through all the camps," according to the *Utah Reporter*.

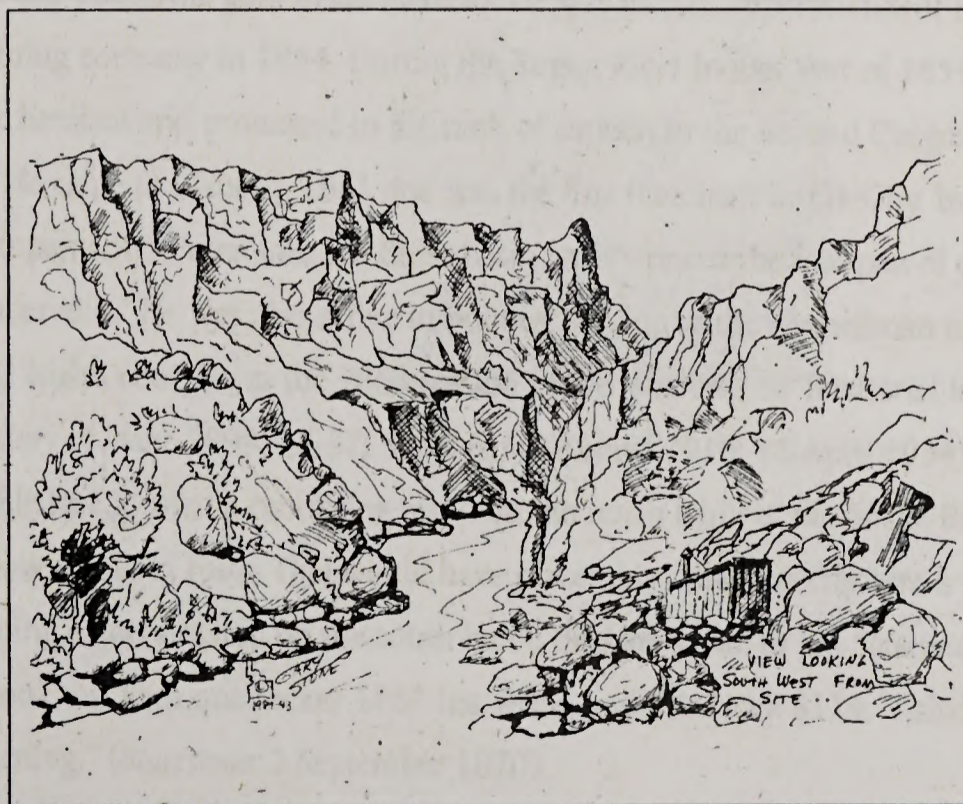


Figure 1.3a. View of Site 10JE89 — Shoshone vicinity toward southwest.  
(Illustration by Gary Stone)

The timing of Tolan and Campbell's decision to build a brewery, however, was inopportune. By August of 1870, Drytown had "proved a failure . . . money was made very rapidly till the canyon was filled, by which time it was 'panned out' and nothing remained." (*Reporter*, 26 August



1870) Shoshone remained the only camp "on the river that amounts to anything" (*Reporter* 26 August 1870) Replete with "stores, saloons, a dry goods house, butcher shop, restaurants, and last but not least, one small house, the domicile of a 'soiled dove,'" Shoshone was making every effort to cater to the needs of the miners. (*Reporter* 4 August 1870)

The reports concerning the amounts of flour gold being recovered during August of 1870 were varied and contradictory. Both the *Statesman* and the *Reporter* mention gold being shipped out of the canyon mines and large quantities of supplies being freighted in (*Statesman* 26 July 1870; *Reporter* 26 August 1870). While most claims turned out to be virtually worthless and scores of discouraged prospectors began leaving the canyon during the summer, a few companies succeeded in making \$15.00 to \$25.00 per day well into the late summer and early autumn.

One individual who was very successful in finding placer gold along the banks of the Snake River was Captain Relf Bledsoe (Figure 1.3c). Perhaps the most promising prospector in the canyon, Bledsoe was already a prominent and well respected Idaho pioneer when he came to the Snake River Canyon mines during the summer of 1870.

Bledsoe was an astute, veteran miner who began his career by leaving his native Kentucky for the California gold fields in 1850. He was elected superintendent of a southern Oregon mining company in 1854. During the Rogue River Indian War of 1854-1856, Bledsoe was cited for heroism and promoted to the rank of captain in the Second Oregon Infantry.

He came to Idaho in 1861 and was the first merchant in Elk City. In 1862, Bledsoe led a company of 66 men into the Boise Basin and "worked the first pan of dirt in the vicinity of Placerville." He was also active in politics, serving as the councilman representing Nez Perce and Idaho counties in the 1863 session of the Washington Territorial legislature. (*Illustrated History of Idaho* 1899, 35-37; *Statesman* 6 August 1910; 15 April 1934)

Bledsoe located a promising claim on the north bank of the Snake River, about half a mile below the Twin Falls. This would have placed his claim directly across from the Shoshone mining camp situated on the south bank. Bledsoe wrote to the *Statesman* on August 14, 1870, "I took out with one rocker \$167 last week, and this week \$114. I shall start a sluice this morning." (*Statesman* 3 September 1870)



By September, Bledsoe was reported to be operating a string of sluices that were making \$10.00 per day. His publicized earnings, combined with more modest successes by other miners, may have perpetuated false expectations about the Snake River mines. One miner complained that during August:

this country is overrun with might be termed 'fancy prospectors.' They work on the 'sniping principle': expect the treasure to roll into their purses without work. They parade along the banks and venture to guess at the richness until they are tired, then with the cry of 'bilk', take their departure . . . [Statesman 30 August 1870].

The low summer water level permitted placer mining to continue well into November. The miners, at this time, discovered pay dirt in the gravel bed underlying the basaltic formation. Using black powder and drills, they blasted and burrowed into the bench placers, 50 to 70 feet away from the riverbank. The gold was deposited along rocky slopes and terraces of the riverbank during a period of time when the river level was higher. The Bonneville Flood also probably deposited flour gold on the upper benches.

(Maley 1987: 197) Evidence of this mining still exists. The conspicuous remains of shafts, tailings mounds, stacked cobbles, and other features attest to the difficult and extensive endeavors that marked the Snake River Canyon's historical mining period. (Statesman 12 November 1870; James 1991)

The Special Commissioner for Mining Statistics in the States and Territories, Rossiter W. Raymond, in his report to Congress and the Department of the Interior on Western mining in 1870, mentioned the ongoing activity in the Snake River Canyon. Raymond's summary, more detached and objective than the regional news journals, briefly analyzed the dynamics of the Snake River gold boom:

Several thousand miners were attracted to the bars of Snake River . . . but this region is so near the railroad that the equilibrium of population was soon established, and a manufactured excitement was impossible. Such artificial enthusiasms are usually due to . . . the presence of a crowd of unemployed, adventurous, and sanguine men, who keep up their courage . . . because they cannot get away; and secondly, to the merchants who . . . encourage, by every means, the maintenance of the public interest and the increase of the population [Raymond 1870:1-2].



Figure 1.3b. Captain Relf Bledsoe (right) and George Abbott.

The proposed budget was reported to the committee in early July with a request for \$100 million for the proposed program. The committee was asked to consider the proposed program and to report to the House by September 15, 1977.

The committee held a series of public hearings on the proposed program. The first hearing was held on July 27, 1977, in the House Chamber. The committee also held a series of public hearings in the House Chamber on August 1, 1977.

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## CHINESE MINERS ENTER THE CANYON

During the autumn of 1870, the Euroamerican miners in the Snake River canyon repealed their ban on "Chinese emigration" enacted the previous May at the Shoshone Falls. This action on the part of the Euroamerican miners indicates that the initial flush period had ended. Many of the high paying surface deposits on the exposed banks had been exhausted and mining the underlying gravel bed on the upper riverbank would prove more expensive and labor intensive. With the river bars nearly depleted, many Euroamerican miners, discouraged by the diminishing returns, began leaving the canyon. "The Chinese," wrote one miner, "are better adapted to this sort of mining and there is room here for 500 of them. Therefore, let them come. They can work in peace." (*Statesman* 21 January 1871; Rohe 1982:2-19) Captain Relf Bledsoe wrote to the *Avalanche* in April of 1871 that "quite a number of new arrivals are coming in. Chinamen are arriving, who will be allowed to work there this season."

The transfer of placer claims from Euroamerican miners to Chinese miners was very prevalent throughout the Idaho Territory as yields declined. (Rohe 19982:11) In 1870, the total population of the Idaho territory was 14,999, of which 4,274 were Chinese. The census counted 6,579 miners in the territory and of that figure, 3,853 were Chinese. (*Ninth Census* 1870) Willing to work abandoned claims for a fraction of the minimum pay Euroamericans expected, the Chinese came to dominate placer claims in Idaho during the 1870s. Snake River miner Ike Mann noted in August, 1873 that "Chinamen make from \$1.50 [per day] . . . while what ground the whites own yields from four to six [dollars]." (*Statesman* 12 August 1873) A British observer in the Western gold fields wrote that "The Chinese are the very Quakers of enterprise; they . . . work the heaps . . . that have been abandoned and their skills and perseverance could make a living out of what has been disdainfully cast away." (*Statesman* 21 August 1869) The Federal mining inspector, Rossiter W. Raymond, estimated in his 1872 report that "probably two-thirds of all the claims now worked are in the hands of Chinese." The following year, Inspector Raymond found the Chinese dominating Idaho placer claims: ". . . for every well paying claim worked by white men, we find at present probably not less than five or six which return profit only Chinamen, and a few camps are almost exclusively worked and owned by them" (Raymond 1873:198; 1874:243).

Euroamericans also transferred most Snake River mine claims to Chinese. Relf Bledsoe, perhaps foreseeing that the pay streak he had so successfully exploited would diminish, sold his claims along the river across from Shoshone and left the canyon in November, 1871. By sheer

### CHINESE MINERS ENTER THE CANYON

During the summer of 1871 the Government learned that the Snake River Canyon was rich in silver. The discovery was made by a party of men who had been sent to explore the region. They found that the canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore. The discovery was made by a party of men who had been sent to explore the region. They found that the canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore.

The discovery of silver in the Snake River Canyon led to a great influx of Chinese miners. The Chinese had been mining in the West since the early days of the gold rush. They had learned the art of mining from the Chinese and had brought their knowledge to the West. They found that the Snake River Canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore. The discovery was made by a party of men who had been sent to explore the region. They found that the canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore.

The Chinese miners were not only skilled but also hardworking. They worked long hours and made great discoveries. They found that the Snake River Canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore. The discovery was made by a party of men who had been sent to explore the region. They found that the canyon was rich in silver and that the mountains were covered with silver ore.



chance and good fortune, the deed documenting the transfer of Bledsoe's claim near the Twin Falls to a Chinese miner was found in the canyon during the summer of 1986. (*Times News* 26 June 1986; Stone 1990) Bledsoe "bargained and sold" to Ah Mon Mong and the Tung Toek Tong the "claim . . . together with all the tools thereon also 1 blacksmith shop, 2 cabbins [sic] also 700 feet lumber . . . the above is held by said company for wages due them from R. Bledsoe" (Bledsoe Deed 1871) The fact that the claim was turned over to the Chinese in lieu of wages owed implies that Bledsoe had employed the Chinese miners during the summer and fall of 1871 as wage laborers. That makes it likely that other Snake River canyon miners hired Chinese to work for wages, replacing Euroamerican miners. Rather than pay the Chinese out of purse with precious gold dust, it would have been more convenient and less costly to just turn all claims and equipment over to the Chinese who intended to stay. The archaeological site (10JE89) called *Mon-Tung* after the Chinese miners named in Bledsoe's deed, may quite possibly be the placer claim described in the deed. (Walgamott 1926:8; James 1991) The Mon-Tung site contains the remains of a rock wall shelter that was abandoned with many of the occupants' furnishings and possessions left inside. The site's location on the north bank of the Snake River, approximately half a mile below the Twin Falls, matches identically Charles Walgamott's description of "Bloodsaw's Bar," described as "one of the richest bars on the river . . . owned and operated by Captain Bloodsaw [Bledsoe]." (Walgamott 1926: 8) The site, excavated in 1989, contained hundreds of artifacts dating to the middle and late nineteenth century, including Chinese ceramics, opium smoking paraphernalia, British ironstone plates, and American mining tools. The riverbank and talus slopes around the site still retain evidence of extensive and sustained mining efforts. (James 1991)

During the transitional period in which Chinese miners replaced Euroamericans, the mining camp of Springtown became the "metropolis of the river." Located five miles east or upriver from Shoshone, Springtown became the largest and most important camp after interest in the Snake River placer gold had waned. As a result, Springtown, with its predominantly Chinese inhabitants, was not described in the contemporary news journals for posterity as the camps of Shoshone and Drytown were. The best documentation of Springtown was furnished by Charles S. Walgamott who wrote a series of vignettes recounting pioneer life in southern Idaho. Walgamott came to Rock Creek Station in the Idaho Territory in 1875. He worked there for a short time as a placer miner before turning to storekeeping at Rock Creek. Walgamott described Springtown, circa 1875-1876, as "several general stores, the largest of which was run by [Herman] Stricker and Botzet; there were four saloons and dance hall, [and] a ferry to take men

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and goods across the river . . .” Springtown was also called the “town in shadow” because the canyon walls blocked out the sunlight. “Often men would cross the river [and] clumb the wall rock . . . to obtain an interval of sunshine.” (Walgamott 1926: 9, 105-106; 1936: 17-26, 28-34) Access to Springtown was provided by a narrow, winding trail on the south side of the canyon and precarious wooden ladders that descended the walls on the north side of the canyon. Old-time residents recall finding Chinese artifacts among the Springtown ruins during visits to the canyon in the early 1900s. Several rock wall structures, including the possible remains of Herman Stricker’s first trading post, still endure. During the 1930s though, Depression era miners destroyed many of Springtown’s historic features in the course of recovering flour gold during a latter day gold boom. An unbroken series of mining claims can still be seen along the riverbank in the Springtown area. The site of the old camp is now overgrown by brush, vines, and trees. Unfortunately, many important features, including reported Chinese terraced gardens have been obliterated and lost forever. (Bennett 1990; Dean 1991; James 1991; Sanger 1991)

Charles Walgamott’s sister, Lucy, was married to merchant Herman Stricker who operated trading posts at Drytown and Springtown. In 1876, Stricker purchased the stage station and trading post at Rock Creek from James Bascomb. He operated the Rock Creek Store until it closed in 1897. (Walgamott 1926: 52-55, Friends of Stricker 1986) Mrs. Lucy Stricker, reminiscing in 1942 on her 83rd birthday, said there were “about 600 Chinese who mined gold . . . the medium of trade was gold dust and the Chinese in the area had a bad habit of weighting their gold with dirt.” (Stricker 1942)

Mrs. Stricker’s remark reflects her suspicions about the integrity and character of the Chinese. In contrast, her brother, Charles Walgamott, wrote admirably of the Chinese. He described their calculation of gold dust weight as usually being accurate. In one account, a Chinese miner furnished Walgamott and a friend with fresh bean sprouts grown in a canyon garden watered by springs. Walgamott praised “the Chinese resourcefulness and . . . aptitude for adapting himself to new conditions.” He praised the Chinese as “good miners” and respected their “ingenuity which they used in building their cabins and fixing up their living quarters. They seemed to have a natural knack for taking the material at hand and transforming it into something useful.” (Walgamott 1936: 28-29)

One of the more unusual stories related about Springtown’s Chinese and Euroamerican miners by Walgamott, Mrs. Stricker, and other ‘old timers’ concerned a tragic accident that claimed the lives of a white man and two Chinese miners when a makeshift ferry went over Shoshone Falls in 1880. Walgamott provides the most detailed account with slightly different versions appearing in



Mrs. Stricker's 1942 interview and a 1914 article in *See Idaho First*. Tom Bell, a fiddle playing Scotch miner, operated a ferry above the Shoshone Falls and one day, after "imbibing freely of strong drink," attempted to take three Chinese men and their supplies across the river to the north side. An oar was either lost overboard or broken and the ferry began to "swirl and plunge bow first towards that awful chasm." One of the Chinese miners had the presence of mind to jump from the ferry onto a large, protruding rock, thus saving himself. As the doomed ferry went over the falls, carrying its three passengers into eternity, Tom Bell picked up his fiddle, "stood up in the prow and played their requiem as they were swept over the falls, never to be seen again" (*See Idaho First* 1914; Walgamott 1926:61-63). Lucy Stricker later stated that one of the Chinese men killed in the accidental plunge over the falls was an individual named Mon Chu, "the leader of the Chinese in the area" (Stricker 1942)

The duration of the Chinese settlement in the Snake River Canyon has not been ascertained since when they abandoned their mining claims and left the Snake River is still undetermined. The account of Tom Bell's ferry plunging over Shoshone Falls provides evidence of a Chinese presence as late as 1880. Robert E. Strahorn, in his guidebook, *The Resources and Attractions of Idaho Territory*, written in 1878-1879, briefly described the Snake River gold mines. He wrote, "In Shoshone Canon, 38 miles below Raft river, 60 Chinamen and a few white miners stick to the primitive 'rocker', and clean up \$3 to \$5 per day." (Strahorn 1881: 54)

## THE DECLINE OF CHINESE SETTLEMENTS

A period of dispersion occurred between 1880 and 1900. During this time, many regions of the Pacific and Mountain West lost substantial portions of their Chinese populations to Atlantic seacoast cities such as New York and Boston. Those Chinese who stayed in the West tended to migrate to Chinatowns in larger cities, particularly San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, in search of work and improved economic security. The Chinese probably began quitting the Snake River mines sometime during this period. (Lee 1960: 31-56)

The overall migration of the Chinese population from the West to other regions of the United States was due, in part, to the closing of the frontier period. By 1880, the placer gold rush area was receding and in its place large scale industrial lode mining operations that employed great numbers of Euroamerican wage workers while excluding Chinese laborers were emerging. The massive transcontinental railroad building projects were also being completed at this time and the layoffs that resulted left thousands of Euroamericans and Chinese workers without jobs.



Throughout the West, the Chinese were subjected to a variety of legal harassments that persistently eroded the status of their civil rights. The various western states and territories, for example, passed legislation restricting Chinese property rights and preventing Chinese from testifying in court against whites. It should be noted that the Idaho Supreme Court, in civil cases decided during the late 1800s, generally protected the rights of Idaho's Chinese residents. Legal scholar John Wunder has concluded that "the Idaho Supreme Court upheld a tradition of fundamental fairness and remained a bastion of justice for the Chinese of frontier Idaho." (Wunder 1981: 32). By 1880, banishment and exclusion of Orientals from American shores had become contro-versial policy issues. Organizations such as the Anti-Chinese League, the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor used inflammatory rhetoric to keep the emotionally charged issue of Chinese immigration in front of the American public. Congressional approval of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act marked the first attempt of the United States' to curb immigration on the basis of race and nationality. The Exclusion Act prohibited the entry of "Chinese laborers" into the United States. Idaho's territorial governor, Edward A. Stevenson, repeatedly advocated excluding the Chinese from Idaho between the years of 1885 and 1888, citing their "filthy habits." (McCun 1979: 84; Twain 1980: 291; Limbaugh 1982: 177-78; Stratton 1983: 113-114; Tsai 1986: 56-70; Arkush 1989: 57-58)

A grave consequence of the escalating social, racial, and economic tensions was increasing violence against the Chinese. The violence peaked in 1885 when angry white miners, many of them immigrants from Europe, rioted in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory and killed 28 Chinese. Soon after the Rock Springs massacre, vigilantes in Pierce, Idaho Territory lynched five Chinese suspected of killing a white merchant. The deadliest incident was the 1887 massacre of 31 Chinese miners working placer claims on the Oregon side of the Snake River in Hell's Canyon. No one was convicted or punished for the well publicized mass murder. Racism and indifference were cited as the compelling reasons why the case was not prosecuted more thoroughly. (Limbaugh 1982: 178; Stratton 1983:124-125; Tsai 1986: 67-72; Laurie 1990: 44-59; Storti 1991)

Documented incidents of hostility and violence between whites and Chinese in the Snake River Canyon camps were not reported in the news journals of the day. In separate conversations, long-time southern Idaho residents Dow Rathbun and John Bennett recalled that as young boys, they both heard stories about cowboys employed by Sparks-Harrell riding over to the canyon rim near the vicinity of Springtown and "taking potshots at them [Chinese] for fun."





(Dow Rathbun 1989; John Bennett 1990: Personal Communication) Another resident, Don Dean, said he heard a story from old ranch hands about cowboys who caught two or three Chinese butchering an unbranded stray cow near the Rock Creek trading post and then hanged them for rustling. (Don Dean 1991: Personal Communication)

Infringements on the basic rights of the Chinese to work placer claims in Idaho came before the courts in 1889 through 1890 when three Chinese miners who had been forcibly evicted from a claim in north Idaho's Elk City mining district filed suit in district court. The district court judge, Willis Sweet, ruled that the "Chinese have no rights whatever on mining lands in the United States." (*Moscow Mirror* 2 May 1890; *Idaho Statesman* 3 May 1890; Wunder 1981: 30-31) The immediate effect of Judge Sweet's decision was to, in the words of the *Idaho Statesman*, "knock out what little ground was left standing under the Chinese . . ." (*Idaho Statesman* 3 May 1890) Diminishing placer yields and Judge Sweet's ruling may have been the most important factors in the individual and collective decisions made by the Chinese miners remaining in the Snake River Canyon in 1880.

Complete and accurate official documents recording population figures for Chinese in south-central Idaho during the mining period have not, so far, been found. Many popular local stories generally exaggerate the Chinese population claiming, for example, that as many as 2,000 lived in Springtown. Lucy Stricker's recollection of 600 Chinese is fairly realistic, though Chinese in those numbers probably lasted only a season or two. The recorded observations of mining sites made by visitors to the canyon during the 1900s when cultural remains were abundant and historic surveys conducted in 1990 support a population of 500-600 for a brief period and then a reduction to 100-200 for the rest of the time that Chinese miners worked in the canyon over a span of about 50 miles, from the present Milner Dam east to the vicinity of Hagerman. (*Statesman* 28 January 1871; Strahorn 1881: 54; Stricker 1942; Bennett 1990; James 1991)

## THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON CHINESE AND THE CENSUS

The Chinese are conspicuously absent from news accounts of the period. Articles describing the activities of Chinese in the Snake River Canyon mines are virtually nonexistent despite the fact that hundreds of miners, principally Chinese, continued to work claims and find gold. Unless the subjects were Chinese immigration, anti-Chinese agitation, or sordid tales of crime and vice in Chinatown, the press paid little attention to the Chinese living side by side with many Euroamericans in the West.

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The Chinese in the Snake River Canyon are nearly invisible in the federal census of 1880. The census of 1870 was over by the time Euroamerican miners allowed the Chinese to enter the Snake River mines in early 1871. By 1880, the mining camps in the canyon had peaked and declined. The tent towns of Drytown and Shoshone sprang to life and declined between the census of 1870 and 1880. The 1880 census listed 44 individuals, all white, living in the vicinity of Rock Creek Valley in Cassia County. That area would have included the Rock Creek settlement of Stricker's Trading Post and Stage Stop. Nineteen Chinese men were listed in Cassia County's 14th District. Sixteen of the 19 Chinese were listed as miners, one as a grocer, one as a cook, and one as a servant. Only 22 Chinese were counted in all of Cassia County which included present day Twin Falls County in 1880. (*Tenth Census 1880*) It has been surmised from the incomplete census data that the miners living in the remote and inaccessible depths of the canyon were not counted. Many mining settlements, particularly those situated in remote locations, often did not appear in the federal census. A collection of several mining camps were frequently grouped together and listed as a single entity or ignored altogether. (Hardesty 1988: 9, 99)

Idaho's Chinese population declined steadily from a peak of 4,274 in 1870 to 3,379 in 1880. After 1880, the Chinese left Idaho in even greater numbers, so that by 1890, only 2,007 remained. The pattern of Chinese emigration from Idaho would be consistent for years to come — by 1910 there would be only 859 Chinese left in the entire state. (*Fourteenth Census: 426*)

## CONCLUSION

The presence of the Chinese in the Snake River Canyon and their substantial role in settling the frontier of southern Idaho were never clearly assessed. By the 1900s, the mining era was a distant memory; Springtown was referred to as an "ancient city" by a writer in 1914 (*See Idaho First 1914:22-23*) The Chinese became elusive and enigmatic figures shrouded in the mists of history. Though a span of only 15 or 20 years separates the mining period from the advent of agricultural settlements, a seemingly interminable gulf divides the Chinese miners from the 20th century inhabitants of the Snake River Plain.

The contributions of the Chinese to the history of south-central Idaho, though obscure and unheralded, are worthy of recognition. In the Snake River Canyon region, the Chinese played a significant role in stabilizing the region's population and economy. By entering mining districts that Euroamericans were abandoning, Chinese placer miners helped to slow declines

The focus in the early years of the 1980s was on the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy. The Chinese economy was seen as a major force in the world economy, and the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy was a major theme of the early years of the 1980s. The Chinese economy was seen as a major force in the world economy, and the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy was a major theme of the early years of the 1980s.

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy. The Chinese economy has been a major force in the world economy, and the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy is a major theme of the early years of the 1980s. The Chinese economy has been a major force in the world economy, and the role of the Chinese economy in the development of the world economy is a major theme of the early years of the 1980s.

in population. And by re-working placer claims that would otherwise have been left idle, the Chinese maintained at least some level of gold production that benefited the territory's developing economy. The Chinese also contributed taxes to public coffers, bought supplies from local merchants such as Herman Stricker, and paid to ride in Ben Halliday's stagecoaches. The Snake River gold rush, though limited in scale and brief in duration, resulted in the further exploration and settlement of southern Idaho. The mining frontier paved the way for agriculture and ranching settlements that established an economic infrastructure which enabled the development of the cities and towns found on the Snake River Plain today. The old mining camps of Shoshone, Drytown, and Springtown were part of the transition process that brought regions of the Far West such as the Snake River Plain into the 20th century and Chinese prospectors were among the pioneers who helped found the first modern, nonaboriginal settlements in southern Idaho.

in position. This is a very important point which has been made by the Chinese government in its recent report on the development of the Yangtze River. The Chinese also considered the need to develop the river for navigation and power. The Chinese government has decided to build a dam at the mouth of the river to control the water level and to generate electricity. The dam will be built in a place where the river is wide and the water is deep. This will allow the river to be used for navigation and for the transport of goods. The dam will also generate electricity which will be used for the development of the region. The Chinese government has also decided to build a dam at the mouth of the river to control the water level and to generate electricity. The dam will be built in a place where the river is wide and the water is deep. This will allow the river to be used for navigation and for the transport of goods. The dam will also generate electricity which will be used for the development of the region.

## CHAPTER 2 SITE DESCRIPTION OF 101889, MOU TUNG

**S**ite 101889, Mou Tung, is a small, rectangular, earthen structure, approximately 10 meters long and 5 meters wide. It is situated on a slight rise in the landscape, surrounded by a low wall. The structure is built of mud bricks, with a flat roof. The interior is divided into several rooms by low walls. The site is well-preserved, with the walls still standing to a height of about 2 meters. The surrounding area is a mix of open fields and some trees. The site is located in the Mou Tung area, which is part of the larger archaeological site of 101889. The site is described in detail in the following pages.

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## CHAPTER 2

### SITE DESCRIPTION OF 10JE89, MON-TUNG

**S**ITE 10JE89, CALLED MON-TUNG, is located approximately one-half mile below the cataract of the Twin Falls, on the north side of the Snake River (Figure 2.1).

Originally referred to as "Bloodsaw's Bar" (named for Bledsoe; Walgamott 1926:8) during the 1870s, the site is a rock-walled cabin dug into a dirt ledge along a boulder strewn talus slope overlooking the Snake River. Access to the site is difficult, requiring either a rugged three-mile hike into the vicinity from the north side; a two mile canoe or boat trip upriver, or a hike down the steep, sandy, privately owned road located on the south side and from there by boat across the stream to the north side.

The entire habitation and mining site includes the features and remains of two rock wall structures, mine tailings, shafts and burrows dug into the ledges, as well as extensive mining evidence all along the riverbank for a length of approximately two miles. The rock wall structure of Mon-Tung is situated on a talus slope twenty-five yards above the Snake River. The rock walls were partially dug into a dirt ledge that is surrounded on three sides by large basalt boulders and vegetation, principally sagebrush (Figure 2.2a). A second rock wall structure is twenty-five to thirty yards east of the Mon-Tung living site. This second structure is situated entirely on a level shelf of basalt rock and is assumed to have been primarily a storage cabin (Figure 2.2b). The deed pertaining to Relf Bledsoe's mining claim mentions two cabins as being on his claim. These features are therefore entirely consistent with the description and location of the site as described by Charles S. Walgamott, a former miner who was in the Snake River Canyon during the 1870s. (Walgamott 1926:8)

Three trench-like mining excavations dug into the upper bench and several smaller shafts are in the immediate vicinity of the rock wall structures. These features are evidence of the placer and bench mining which occurred along this section of the Snake River during the 1870s. Typically, the miners used rockers for river sands and gravels but it was also common for the miners to burrow into the upper bench in the area of the riverbank's former channel and talus slope to recover flour gold from deposits located under boulders.

The Mon-Tung site had remained virtually undisturbed between the time of its final abandonment circa 1880 and its discovery during an archaeological field survey in April 1989. The site's four rock walls, constructed of stacked cobbles, were still intact though overgrown by sagebrush



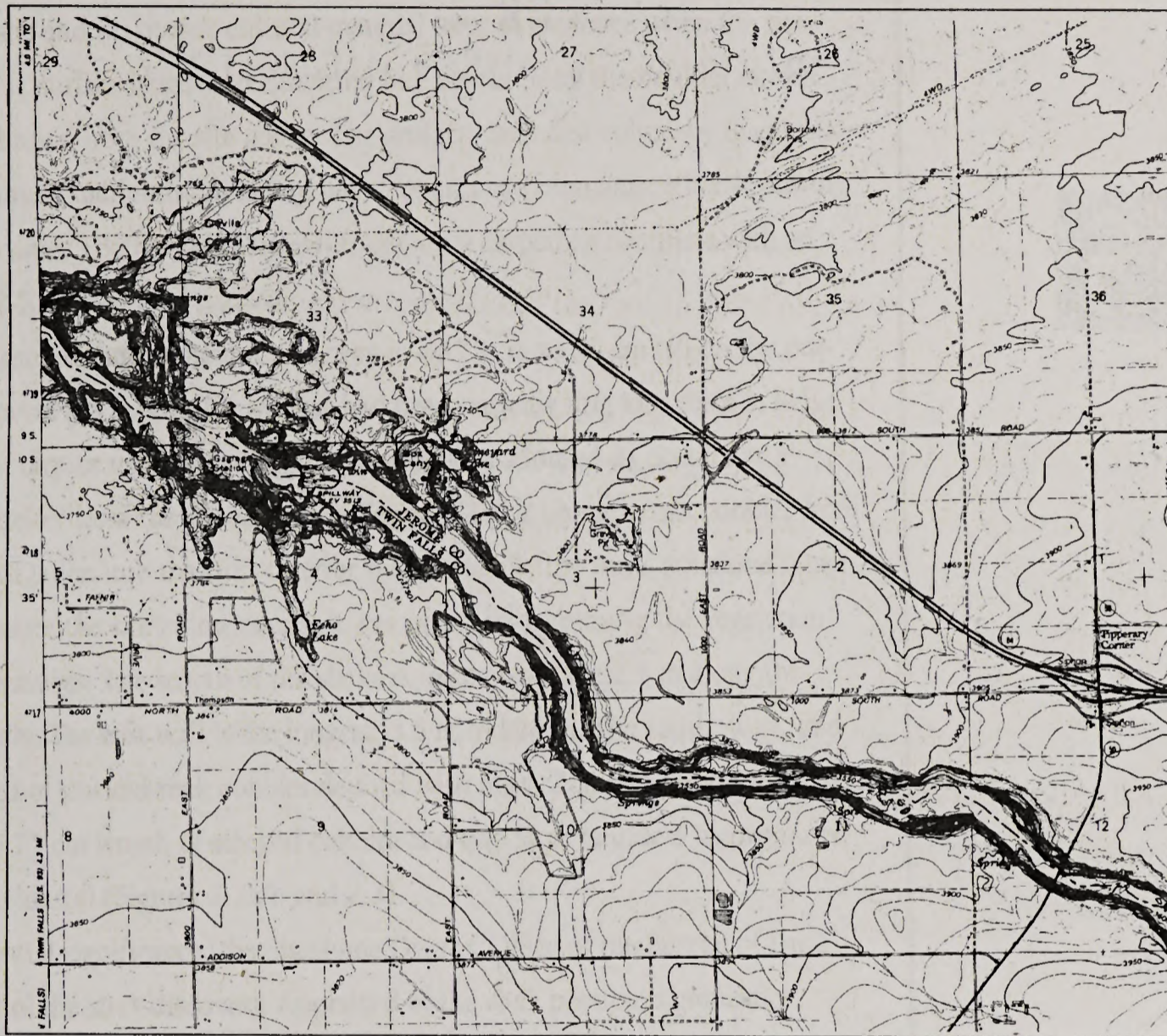


Figure 2.1. Location of Site 10JE89. (Kimberly Quadrangle, USGS 7.5 minute series)

(*Artemisia tridentata*) along the southern perimeter. The interior area was filled with wind blown debris and soil that supported a variety of Intermountain grasses, including Basin Wild Rye (*Elymus cineris*), Idaho Fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), Bluebunch Wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), and Flatpod (*Idahoia scapigera*). (Brown n.d.: 359-367). The remains of the structure's roofing construction materials were not evident; it has to be assumed that the dwelling had a canvas tarp or improvised lumber and driftwood cover. From the architectural remains still in evidence, it obviously was a durable and sturdy habitation structure built from materials that were readily available to the miners. Both Euroamerican and Chinese miners built rock cobble shelters, and tarps and tents were frequently used for roofing. Over time, as the site continued to be occupied, it is likely that, as the need arose, architectural features such as the roof were repaired and replaced with new or refurbished construction materials.



The river network shown in the map is a typical example of a drainage basin. The main river is the longest and largest, and it is joined by several smaller tributaries. The map shows the course of the main river and its tributaries, and it also indicates the direction of flow. The map is a plan view, and it shows the river network as it appears on the ground. The map is a useful tool for understanding the drainage basin and the river network. It can be used to study the physical geography of the region, and it can also be used to plan the development of the region. The map is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the study of rivers and drainage basins.

Numerous surface artifacts and diagnostic cultural material were in evidence when the site was first located. Most of the surface items were scattered like debris along the boulder strewn slope as if they had been thrown from the site above. The artifacts included culturally diagnostic ceramic sherds bearing Chinese markings, glass fragments, opium can remnants, a black powder keg lid imprinted with the date "1869," and the metal frame for a carpetbag complete with an 1869 patent date (Figure 2.5a).

The rock walls were measured during the initial survey to be 75 cm to 85 cm tall on the outside and 110 cm to 115 cm on the inside. The shelter had been partially dug into the dirt ledge. Covered with some type of tarp or tent like material, it would have afforded its occupants a warm, though crowded, shelter from the elements (See Figure 1.3a). Although rock cobbles from the walls had collapsed and fallen into the site's interior but essentially the walls remained intact. In order to accurately measure the site's dimensions, it was necessary to remove the vegetation obscuring the structure's features. The length of the shelter's inside walls are 2.7 m along the north, south, and west walls. The east wall is the longest; 3.6 m in length. The south, west, and north walls are constructed of stacked rock cobbles daubed with mud. The corners are squared. The east wall consists of a 75 cm length of stacked cobbles and two large boulders incorporated insitu by the dwelling's builder(s) (Figures 2.2a/b and 2.3).

Realizing the site's potential significance, the Shoshone District Office of the Bureau of Land Management was notified of the site's discovery. Appraised of the site's possible significance, District Archeologist John Lytle arranged a volunteer agreement between the BLM and the principal investigator granting permission for a systematic excavation of the site's interior. Of all the Chinese and mining sites observed during initial field surveys, Mon-Tung was significant in that it was the only one that appeared to be undisturbed. A positive confirmation of the site's dating to the early 1870s would make the rock wall living site one of the oldest surviving frontier structures in southern Idaho; its inventory of artifacts an invaluable source of information and data pertaining to a period of southern Idaho history about which very little is actually known.

The site was thoroughly mapped and photographed prior to the actual excavation. Surface artifacts were collected and inventoried, their location recorded on a grid map of the site and its immediate vicinity. On 25 June 1989, the excavation phase was ready to begin. The excavation phase was then ready to begin with the anticipated result being that of uncovering a modest sample of artifacts and diagnostic materials pertaining to the 1870s mining period, including evidence of a Chinese occupation.

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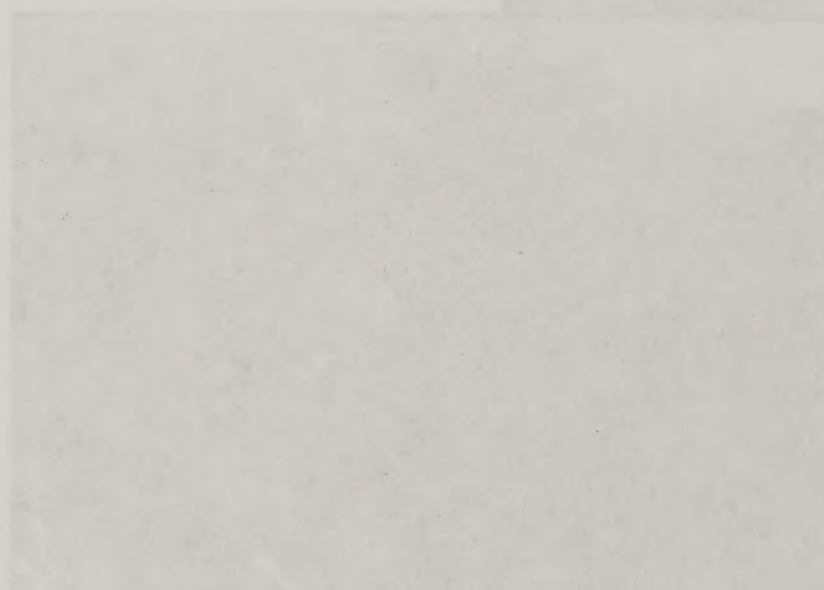
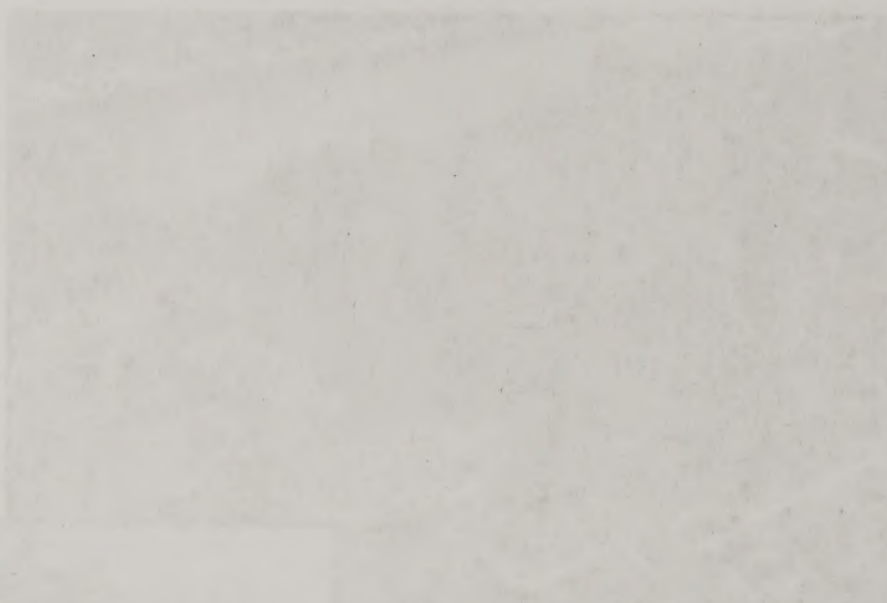


Figure 2.2a. (top) and 2.2b. (bottom). Site 10JE89 and secondary rock wall structure.

The interior areas of the rock wall shelter was the focus of the excavation project (Figure 2.4). Digging the site was made less complicated because the stratigraphy within the site was determined

to consist of a single cultural layer with a 6 cm to 15 cm layer of overfill which had formed since the site's abandonment. Below the overfill rested the accumulated artifacts in a layer of ash, charcoal, burnt lumber, and rusted metal fragments that was consistent throughout the interior; indicative of a devastating fire that had consumed the structure, its furnishings, and contents. The northwest corner contained artifacts at the 10 cm level that included an intact opium can with lid, a tobacco pipe mouth stem, one small winter-green Celadon cup, a Hong Kong coin dated 1863, burnt fabrics, a variety of Euroamerican and Chinese style buttons and clasps and a glass opium lamp base, door hinges, a round, flat piece resembling a poker chip, and most intriguing of all; small bits and pieces of tin foil decorated with blue stripes and attached to small American-like eagles (Figure 2.5b). The foil like material was found only in this part of the site.

The continuous and ubiquitous layer of burnt ash and charcoal was the most obvious indication that the structure had previously been destroyed by an intense fire. The layer of ash and burnt material, found throughout the site's interior, contained the carbonized remains of perishable artifacts. The fire blackened remains of milled lumber boards; 7 cm wide, and 0.5 to 1.5 cm



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thick, some still holding square nails were found along the inside walls (Figure 2.5c). The burnt lumber fragments are too damaged and fragmentary to determine their original dimensions but they can be positively identified as cut, milled boards brought in from the outside transit points such as Boise or Corinne. Evidence of vertical posts was found in the corners and intermediate positions located against the rock wall, along with scores of metal fasteners such as nails and tacks used in the structure's construction. Also, large amounts of a burnt, coarse weaved fabric were found spread throughout the interior of the site; suggesting the possibility that the shelter once had a canvas tarp roof, a common feature in frontier dwellings.

Midway along the north wall, pockets of broken glass were found to be imbedded in the lower portions of the rock wall as well as scattered along the floor surface. Thick glass fragments were recovered and the pieces represent what were once three or four glass vessels. Some of the glass fragments were found to be from a bottle that had been cut off at the neck and base in order to build an improvised cover for an opium lamp. Glass fragments from an Ayer's Sarsaparilla bottle were also found along the north wall (Figure 3.4a). Flat glass with square corner, 0.08 of an inch thick was found midway along the north wall. The thickness of the glass fragments is consistent with that of window pane glass manufactured between 1850 and 1880 (Roenke 1978). However, when reassembled the dimensions of the flat glass fragments resembled a mirror more than a window.

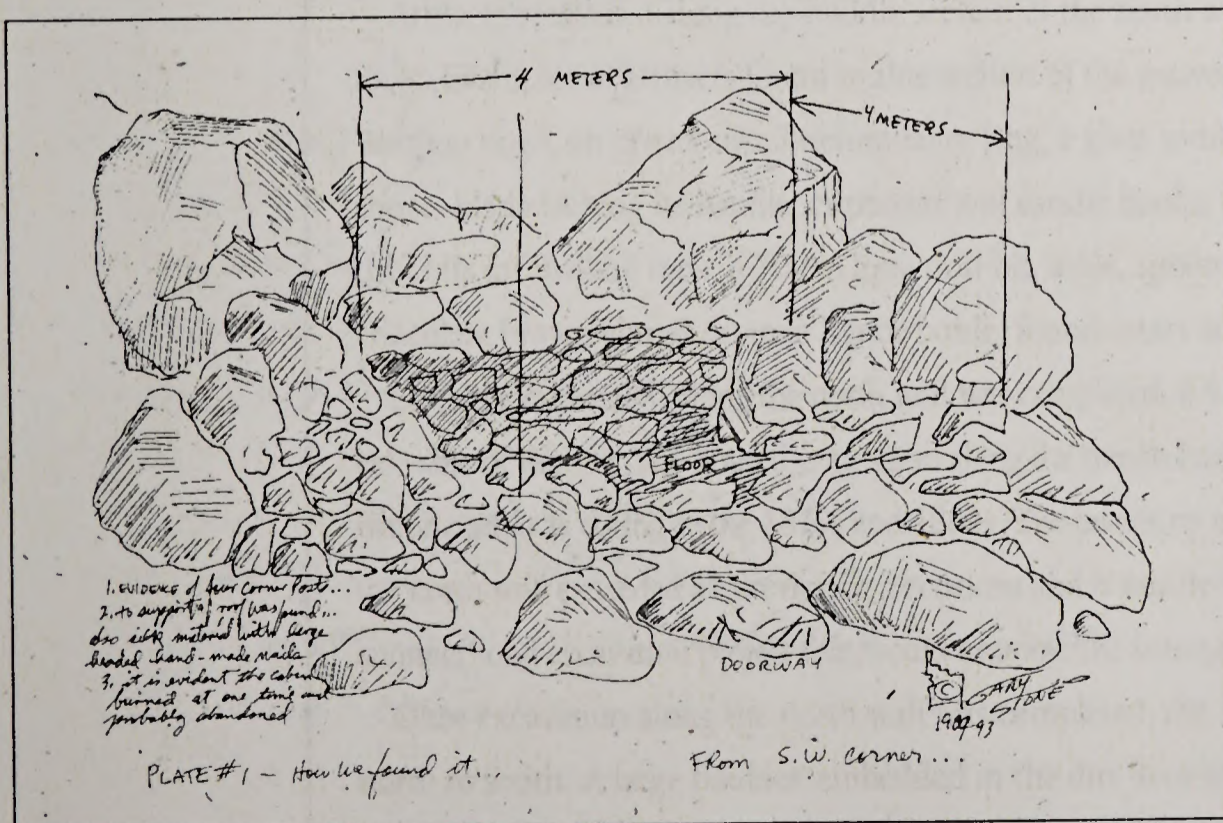


Figure 2.3a. Profile sketch of Site 10JE89. (Illustration by Gary Stone)



Many of the glass fragments showed evidence of having been subjected to intense heat. The flat glass was blackened and several of the vessel fragments were curled and warped from the fire; it was as if they had been liquified by the flames and heat. The glass recovered was broken and had been subjected to such intense heat that it is difficult to determine the original form and function with any certainty.

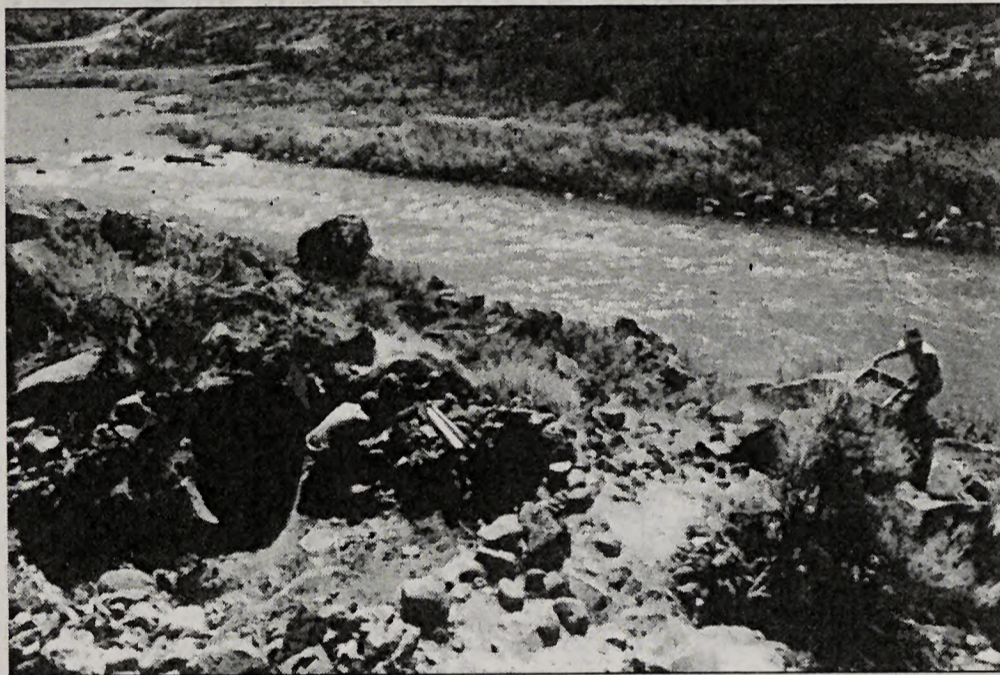


Figure 2.3b. Site 10JE89 excavation in progress.

Artifacts recovered along the middle section of the north wall tended to be household items or tools. Examples of artifacts found in this section of the excavation included: one intact blue Bamboo bowl, an ornate metal opium lamp ring, a glass tumbler, a rusted coffee pot, a rusted shovel blade lacking its handle, cupboard and candle hooks, a pair of scissors, two chisels or drill bits for drilling rock, a 70 cm long drill bit, a file, spoons, a metal butter knife, and a chocolate brown glazed ceramic liquor bottle; found intact and in excellent condition.

Once the excavation along the north wall was completed, it was possible to assess the archaeological value of the site. The limited excavation along the trench had yielded a variety of cultural and historic artifacts dating to the 1870s and 1880s. The inventory of artifacts found in the trench along the north wall exceeded all previous expectations and it was decided to proceed with a complete, summer long excavation project that would examine the structure's entire interior area.

Once excavation along the north wall was completed, the west wall was excavated from north to south. A large boulder, embedded in the dirt floor midway along the west wall was uncovered. Apparently the rock had been incorporated into the dwelling's floor. The soil in



the immediate area of the boulder is a hard packed clay and this soil context proved difficult to work in. The hard packed clay area is less than 1 m in length; softer and ashier soil characterizes the adjacent areas. The layer of ash and charcoal was quite deep along the west wall, typically to a depth of 6 cm to 8 cm.

Evidence of vertical posts was found along the wall and on the floor surface in addition to a multitude of ferrous metal fragments. The volume of burnt fabric increased along the west wall, one piece still had a button attached to it. Many of the artifacts found in this area were being retrieved at a distance of 20 cm to 30 cm from the wall. When a broken ironstone plate with the "Thomas Hughes" trademark was found 30 cm away from the wall, it was assumed that a

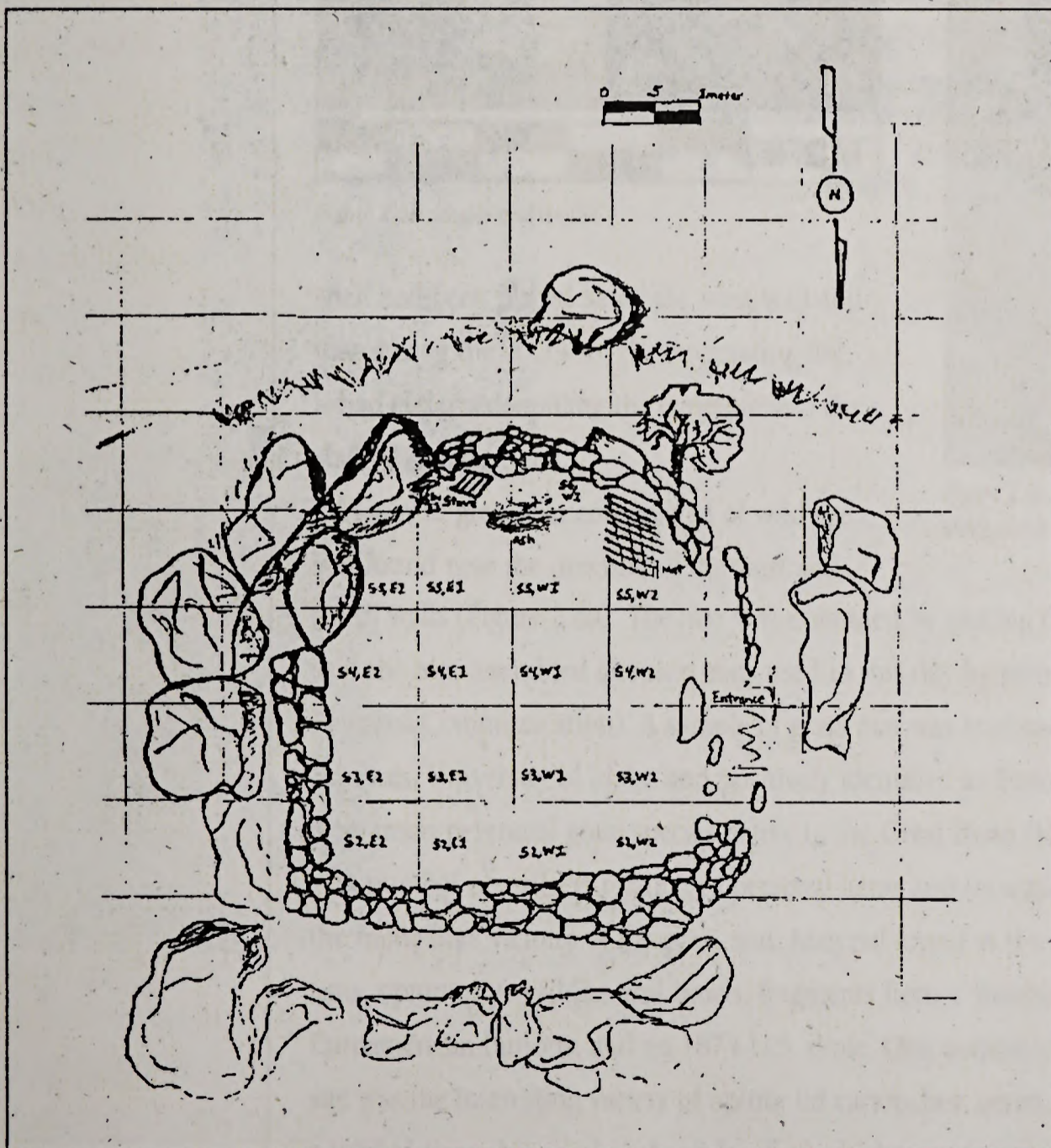


Figure 2.4. Site map. The Mon-Tung living site.

The weathered top of the building is a flat, light-colored surface, but the wall corners show slight  
work. The hard packed clay soil is brownish, and when wet, it is dark brown and sticky.  
The adjacent area is a layer of red sandstone, and some deep water in the wall, especially in  
a depth of 5 cm to 10 cm.

Excavation of the wall was done along the wall and on the base surface, according to a  
number of layers of the wall. The surface of the wall is not perfectly flat, but the wall  
over there will have a certain amount of a slope. The surface of the wall is not perfectly  
smooth, and a distance of 50 cm to 100 cm from the wall, there is a certain amount of  
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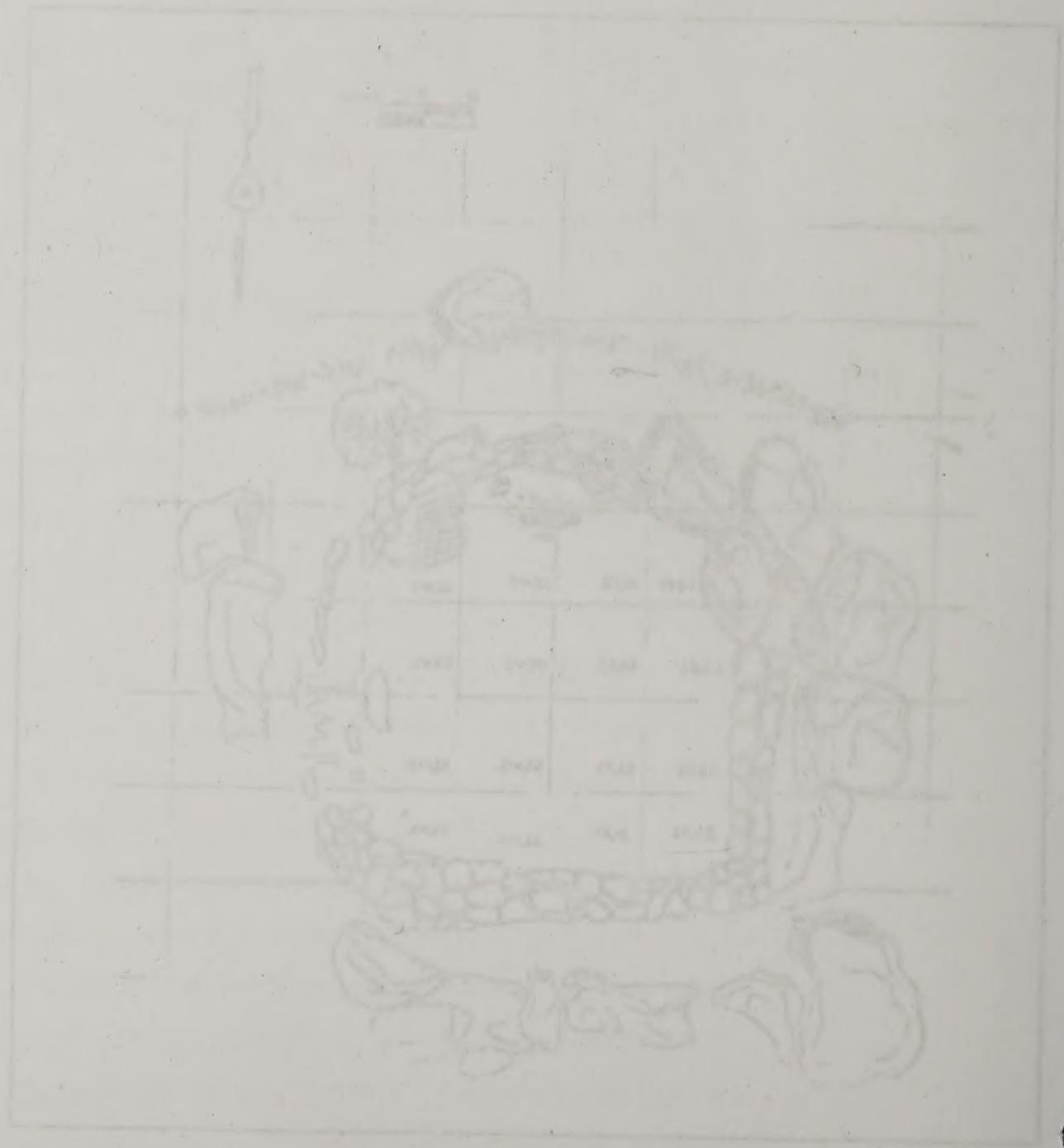


Figure 2. Site map. The site map is a hand-drawn plan of the excavation site, showing the layout of the wall and other features. The grid is 10x10 units, and the wall is drawn with a thick line. A north arrow is located at the top left of the grid.



Figure 2.5a. Miscellaneous surface artifacts. Left to right: black powder keg lid with lead spout, iron chain, metal cans, and strips cut from opium cans.



Figure 2.5b. Eagles and tin foil.



Figure 2.5c. Burnt lumber along north wall.

shelf had been placed along the west wall and that during the course of the devastating fire, it had collapsed, spilling the contents into the shelter's interior.

A woven grass mat constructed of wild rye was found near the juncture of the west and south walls (Figure 2.6a). The mat was examined by visiting Chinese historian Li-hua Yu who said the mat resembled sleeping mats used to this day by peasants in southern China (Yu 1989: Personal Communication). A sample of grass mat was analyzed by the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Idaho and positively identified as Basin Wild Rye (*Elymus cinereus*), a common perennial grass species native to the Great Basin (Henderson 1989).

A number of artifacts relating to personal items and recreational purposes were uncovered in the immediate vicinity of the grass mat. Material found in the southwest corner included opium cans, opium pipe saddles and bowls, fragments from a 'Bamboo' pattern rice bowl, Chinese and Euroamerican buttons, and an 1874 U.S. dime. One notable characteristic of this section of the site was the interesting variety of opium lid cartouches; seven different enstampments in all, and a total of seven cans and twelve lids, all of which were found within a confined space just inches from the mat.

The following table shows the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the study of the effect of the concentration of the solution on the rate of the reaction.



The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the study of the effect of the concentration of the solution on the rate of the reaction are shown in the following table.

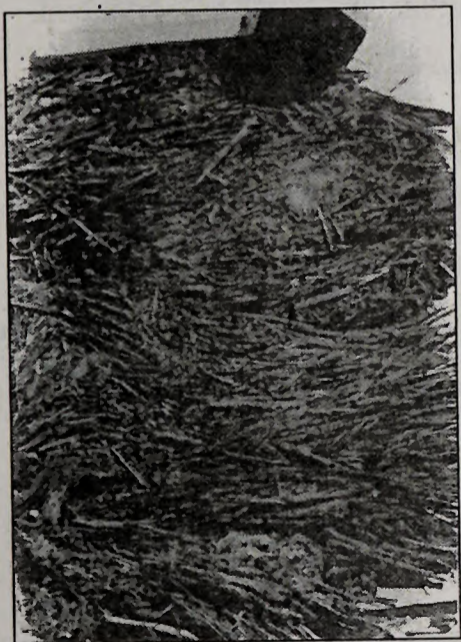
The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the study of the effect of the concentration of the solution on the rate of the reaction are shown in the following table.

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The remaining interior areas of the site were excavated in August and several important elements relating to the shelter's construction and floor plan were uncovered. The east wall yielded primarily mining and construction tools; a combination claw hammer and axe head, part of a mercury retort, and a shovel blade, as well as a metal pan from a sliding rule scale used to weigh flour, nails, and possibly gold, three .20 gauge shotgun shell casings, and five .32 caliber bullet casings indicated that the Chinese had at least two firearms for hunting and self defense (See Figures 3.1a, 3.3a, and 4.4c). The .32 caliber casings would most likely have been for a small, easily concealed hand gun that would have been useful for defensive purposes but not very effective for hunting. In the southeast corner, an area that originally was believed to include the shelter's entryway, the remains of a small cast-iron wood-burning stove, consisting of the door and two sides, were uncovered along with a great quantity of unidentified ferrous metal fragments (Figure 2.6b-c). Once this corner was completely excavated, it became more apparent that a small wood burning stove, had occupied the corner for a considerable period of time.

The location of the site's entrance, assumed to have been on the south wall, was found during excavation to be midway along the west wall. The large in situ boulder imbedded in the shelter's interior was perhaps used as a stepping stone. The access provided by the entry on the west wall is more convenient, with the doorway facing the most open expanse available.



The west wall was constructed of stacked cobbles and soil mounded to form an embankment. A still perceptible trail leads along the west wall and allows access between the shelter's interior, the south slope of the talus bench, and to areas west of the site where evidence of mining is abundant. The presence of hard packed clay along the midpoint of the west wall is now taken to be indicative of the constant and sustained foot traffic that occurred in that portion of the site.

From the pattern and spatial arrangement of artifacts in the southwest corner of the site, it is possible to infer some of the incidental behavior that transpired over the course of

the site's occupation. The close proximity of the grass mat to other features such as the wood stove placed along the south wall and the ash pit containing bones (identified as possibly belonging to galliform birds; domestic chickens, native grouse, sage hens, and quail), various opium paraphernalia, a ceramic bowl, fabrics, a coin, and the burnt paper denote the context of



a close, personal living space. This is perhaps the specific interior area of the living site where the individual miner prepared and ate his meals, and lay on the mat to sleep or occasionally relax by smoking and possibly reading.

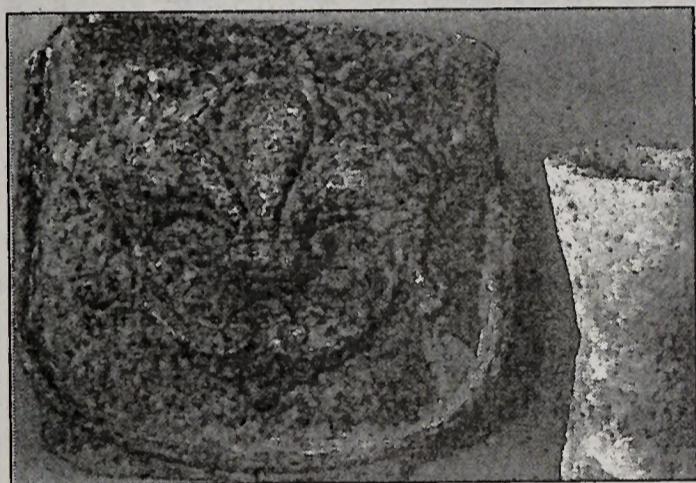
The age of the artifacts and structural materials recovered from site 10JE89 indicates a single time period for occupancy; circa 1870 through 1880. The recovered artifacts are all consistent with the time period of the Snake River Canyon gold rush documented by Bledsoe's deed, accounts in news journals, and other primary source accounts such as Charles Walgamott's writings. The shelter was constructed of the materials that were readily available in the remote canyon interior which consisted, for the most part, of the copious rock cobbles and whatever lumber could be obtained. The site, since it was partially dug into the ground and protected from most prevailing winds by the towering canyon walls, provided its inhabitants with protection from the climate's harsh extremes; cool in the summer and warm in winter. Some measure of comfort was afforded by a grass mat cushion and a wood burning stove placed in the southeast corner provided warmth. The site's occupants were primarily Chinese though the site was initially built and owned by the American miner, Relf Bledsoe.

The charred remains and deposition of cultural artifacts at Mon-Tung attest to a fire that was destructive of virtually the entire structure, consuming much of the wood and lumber, paper, cloth, as well as damaging glass and ceramics. While the precise date and cause of the fire will likely never completely be ascertained, the archaeological evidence obtained indicates that not only did a devastating fire sweep through the living site, but that apparently very few, if any, of the remaining stock of material items, such as mining tools, were ever salvaged from the ruins. The artifacts that survived the fire were found in 1989 where they were left when abandoned. The sudden death of a Chinese miner would offer a plausible cause for the fire that destroyed the structure and resulted in the abandonment of valuable tools. Ritchie (1986: 60-79) documented that among the Chinese in New Zealand, the shelters of deceased miners were burned down if they were situated on or near the mining areas. According to Ritchie (1986:79), when a Chinese miner died:

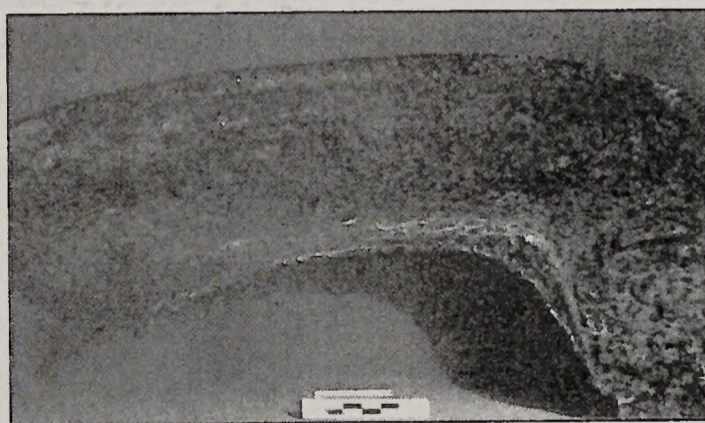
houses and claims were abandoned after a death. Everything in the house left exactly as it was. No one would occupy the abandoned structures in case the owner's spirit (ghost) returned or risk the possibility of incurring the bad luck which surrounded such events.



The Mon-Tung site has the characteristics of such a ritualistic abandonment; many valuable and useful tools and household goods were left at the site in situ. Mrs. Lucy Stricker mentioned in her 1942 interview that the “leader of the Chinese, Mon Chu” was killed in an accident bearing a strong resemblance to Tom Bell’s ferry plunge over Shoshone Falls. Bell was ferrying Chinese and their supplies to the north side when the river swept him and two Chinese miners to their deaths. Assuming that the Ah Mong Mon named in Bledsoe’s deed is the same individual as Mon Chu, then following his untimely death as a result of being swept over the falls in 1880, the site occupied by him would have been abandoned by the Chinese out of a combination of respect for the deceased and the fear that his spirit, without any family to provide offerings of food and clothing, would become a ghost bearing suffering and bad fortune.

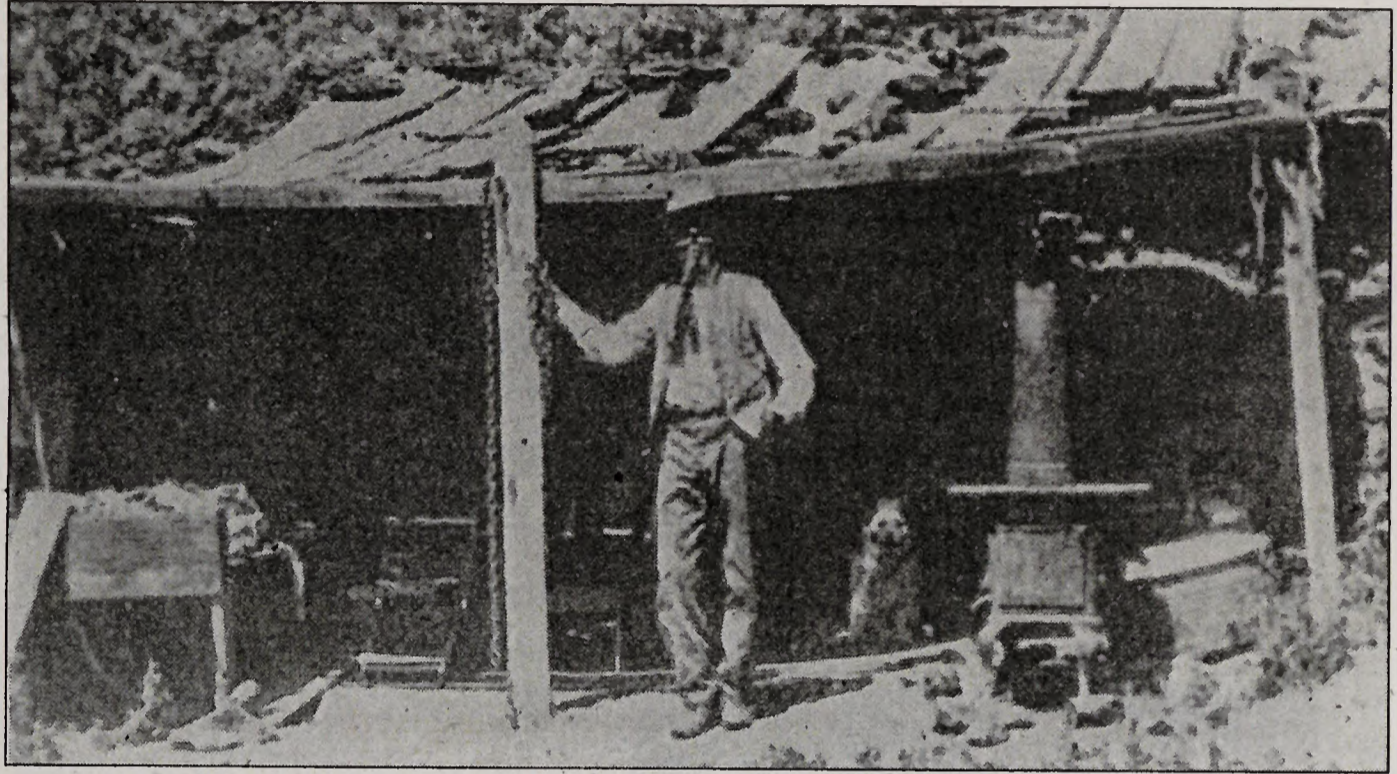


Figures 2.6b.  
and 2.6c.  
Stove parts.



The structure is also unique in that the assemblage can be associated within a twenty-four hour time period rather than a more generalized temporal affiliation of a year or a decade. The site was, in many respects, a time capsule. The undisturbed nature of the site’s features and artifacts enabled the excavation project to have the rare privilege of peering into the past. The artifacts found at Mon-Tung can be viewed as an inventory of material culture from a very specific occupation occurring at a very specific period of time. None of the artifacts recovered at





*Figure 2.6d. Historic photograph of miner's cabin in the Snake River Canyon; identity of man assumed to be Van Vandyvert, Springtown, Idaho. (See Idaho First, 1914 issue)*

the Mon-Tung site contradicts the proposed occupation period of the late 1870s or early 1880s. The site, in addition to containing an inventory of artifacts connected to a very specific time period, had a precise definition as to size and dimensions. The site's boundaries were clearly delineated and the preservation of valuable archaeological data was exceptional. Insights and knowledge concerning the lifestyle and culture of the Snake River Canyon frontier mining period were acquired as a result of Site 10JE89's excavation that would not have been obtainable from the archival sources.





## CHAPTER 3 MINING ASSEMBLAGE AND METHODOLOGY

**M**ANY OF THE CULTURAL ARTIFACTS recovered during the archaeological excavation of site 10JE89 are associated with mining. They are therefore indicative of the essential purpose of the site and the crucial role placer mining occupied in the culture of the formative frontier settlements of the Snake River Plain.

The mining tools and related equipment found provide perspective on the methodology of placer mining in the Snake River Canyon. The assemblage of specialized mining equipment includes the prerequisite gold pan; shovels and pick; a black powder keg lid featuring a lead safety spout and inscribed with a 1869 patent date, indicating the site's miners engaged in blasting benchrock formations; differing sizes of drill bits; illumination devices such as metal spiked candle holders and lamp wicks; metal, possibly copper, gold dust trays; a mercury retort; the fragments of a sarsaparilla bottle; the contents of which may have been used as a medicinal anecdote for mercury poisoning; and one brass-like metal bowl or pan with a 27 cm rim diameter and a height of 6.6 cm that resembles a wok in appearance but may in fact have functioned as a scale pan as a consequence of the two pair of holes on opposite sides of the upper rim which could have been utilized to suspend the pan from a scale in order to weigh flour, nails, and possibly gold dust. A variety of improvised miscellaneous artifacts, including tin cans whose bases had been punctured by square nails and reused as sifters, may have also functioned as mining-related equipment.

The Snake River placers mined by both Euroamericans and Chinese were flood deposits of very fine gold found either along the river bank in the upper few inches of the gravel and at the upstream bars, or along the higher level benches and terraces (Maley 1987: 197-198). These particles of flour or flood gold are so fine that several hundred colors are required to constitute one cent's worth. One miner attempting placer mining in the Snake River Canyon during the autumn of 1870 considered the most serious challenge confronting the miners to be "the difficulty they have experienced . . . in managing the quicksilver and removing boulders" (*Elko Independent* 15 October). Most geologists now accept the theory that the Snake River float gold originated from deposits in the Rocky Mountains near the Yellowstone Park. Over the centuries, the head waters of the Snake River washed over veins of gold, carrying fine particles of the precious metal downstream where the gold was deposited along the stream bed. The float or flour gold differs significantly from gold particles found elsewhere in the West. The fine particles



of Snake River gold demanded a great deal of effort to separate it from river gravels and recover enough gold to return a profit. It has been estimated that over one thousand particles were necessary to equal one cent at a time when gold was valued at \$15 to \$20 (Dee 1987: 148-149). Mining the placer claims along the Snake River demanded skill and proficiency from the prospectors in the use of basic placer mining technology.

The techniques and equipment essential to placer mining were little changed from the simple technology of the sixteenth century when medieval alchemist and scholar Georgius Agricola wrote his definitive treatise on mining, *De Re Metallica*. Agricola's impressive work, still highly regarded today, included 289 woodcuts illustrating mining methodology. Among the scenes depicted in the woodcuts are views of sluicing later played out in the 1849 California gold fields, indicating that the more recent miners did not disparage the time-honored placer methods brought to the Americas by the Spanish (Brerton 1979:286-287). The essential techniques of extracting gold from water and gravel were therefore well known throughout the world. Many of the immigrant groups that came to America in search of gold had a long tradition of mining, including the Spanish, Cornish, and Chinese. The Chinese tradition included placer tin mining in China in which the technique of "ground sluicing" was utilized; and placer gold mining on Borneo during the eighteenth century (Steeves 1984: 19-23).

The "first piece of mining equipment" to appear on the gold fields was the pan which is the most basic, elemental method of recovering placer gold. A single miner could work a claim without partners by panning; but panning is profitable only in those rare areas where the placer gold deposits are richly abundant. The panning process is not effective or even profitable in regions such as the Snake River Canyon where the gold particles were fine and minuscule. As a rule, Snake River miners used panning only to assess prospective mining claims. Nevertheless, the gold pan was a basic part of the miner's inventory of equipment. The historic record provides ample evidence that Chinese miners were proficient with using pans; the rusted fragments of a metal pan, estimated to be 16 in. in diameter and 2 in. to 3 in. deep with sloping sides were found in the Mon-Tung site. The fragments could be the remains of a sheet iron wok but any type of dish or saucer shaped object could have been used for panning gold. But in order for the efficient, cost effective recovery of the fine Snake River float gold to be realized, more efficient mining strategies and elaborate procedures were necessary.

Mining in the Snake River Canyon was, for the most part, labor intensive and required teams or companies of miners using a device known as a rocker or cradle in order to recover profitable amounts of gold (Figure 3.1a). A rocker could be constructed on site; Walgamott reported that rockers could be purchased at the Springtown trading posts. The rocker or cradle, first used in

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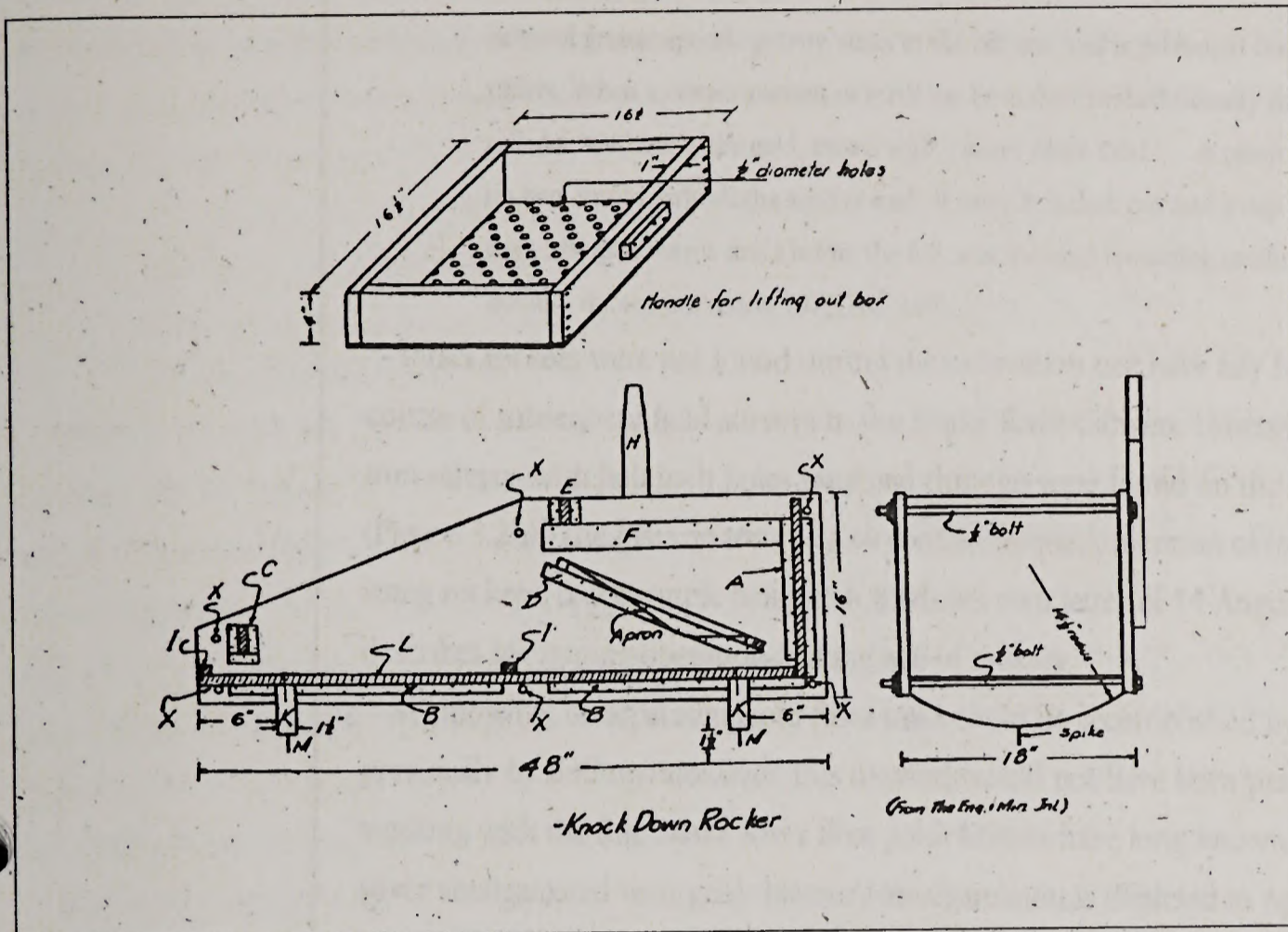


Figure 3.1a. Diagram of rocker. (Illustration from *Methods of Placer Mining*, W.W. Staley, 1944)

the California gold fields, was a dependable and effective device that washed a considerable amount of gravel. Rockers were of light wooden construction and therefore very portable (Figure 3.1b). Quicker and more efficient than the pan, the rocker:

consisted of nothing more than a wooden box or hollowed log, two sides and one end of which are closed while the other end is left open. At the end which is closed and called the "mouth" of the machine, a sieve usually made of a plate of sheet iron, or a piece of rawhide, perforated with holes about a half an inch in diameter, is rested upon the sides. A number of "bars" or "riffles", (sic) which are little pieces of board from one to two inches in height, are nailed to the bottom, and extend laterally across it. Of these, there are three or four in the machine, and one at the "tail" as it is called, i.e. the end where the dirt is washed out. This, with a pair of rockers like those of a child's cradle, and a handle to rock it with, completed the description of the machine, which being placed with the rockers on two logs, and the "mouth" elevated at a slight angle above the tail, is ready for operation. . . . The earth, thrown upon the sieve, is washed through with . . . water, while the stones and gravel are retained and thrown off. The continued motion of the machine, and the constant stream of water pouring through it, washes the earth over the various bar or riffles to the "tail" where it runs out, while the gold,

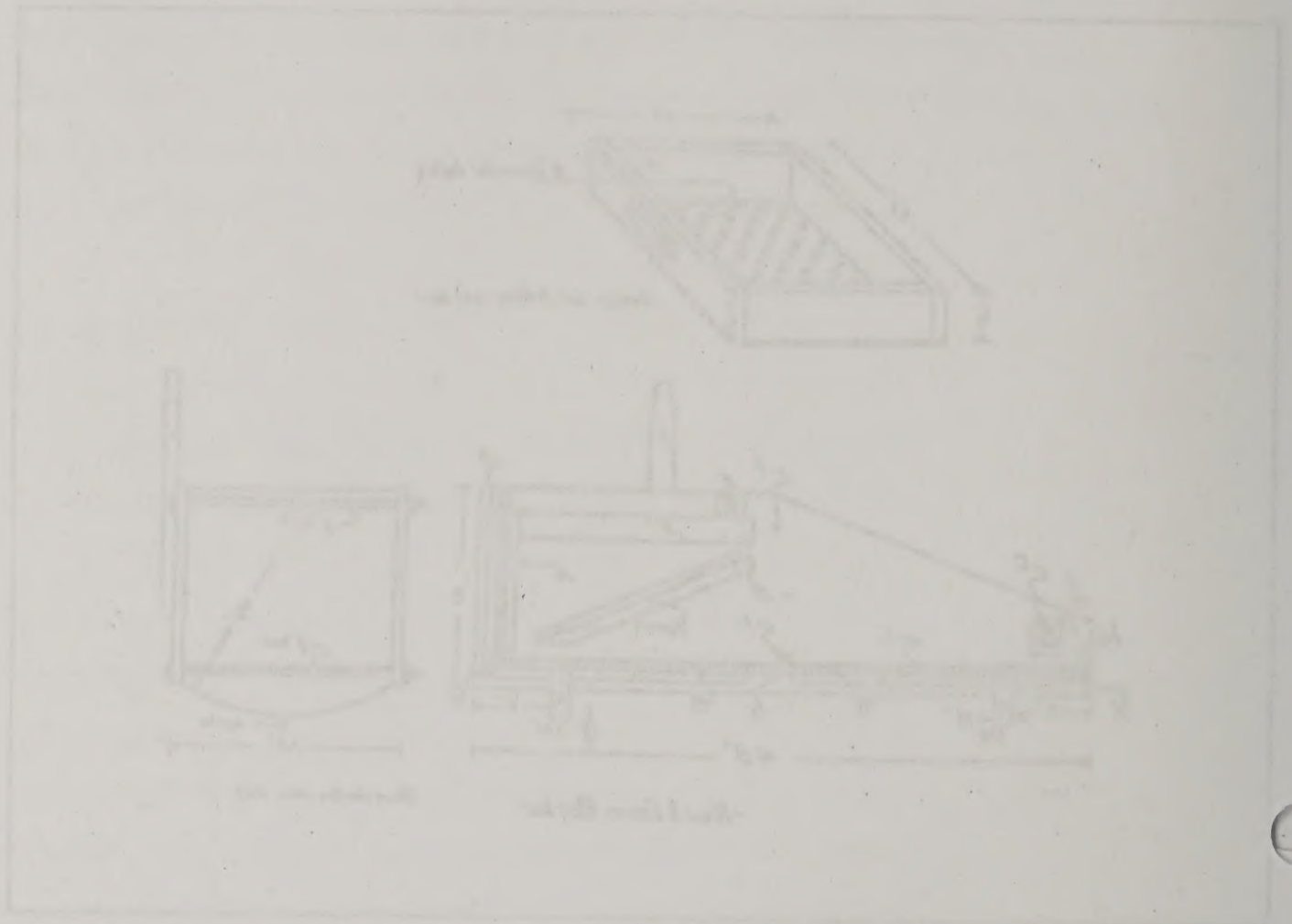


Fig. 1. Diagram of a pump mechanism with a piston and a connecting rod.

The diagram shows a pump mechanism with a piston and a connecting rod. The piston is connected to the connecting rod, which is attached to the crankshaft. The diagram illustrates the various parts of the mechanism, including the cylinder, piston, connecting rod, and crankshaft.

The diagram illustrates the various parts of the mechanism, including the cylinder, piston, connecting rod, and crankshaft. The piston is connected to the connecting rod, which is attached to the crankshaft. The diagram shows the piston in its various positions, illustrating the stroke of the pump. The connecting rod is shown in its various positions, illustrating the motion of the pump. The crankshaft is shown in its various positions, illustrating the rotation of the pump.

being of greater specific gravity, sinks to the bottom, and is prevented from escaping by the riffles. When a certain amount of earth has been thus washed (usually about sixty pans full are called a "washing"), the gold, mixed with a heavy black sand . . . is taken out and washed in a tin pan, until nearly all the sand is washed away. It is then put into a cup or pan, and when the day's labour is over is dried before the fire, and the sand remaining carefully blown out [E. G. Buffum, quoted in Brerton 1976:288-289].

Intact rockers were not found during the excavation nor have any been found during the course of subsequent field surveys in the Snake River Canyon. However, the remains of the flat iron screens with half inch holes punched through were found on the talus slope below the site (Figure 3.2b). The historic records also contain frequent mention of the Snake River miners using rockers, one example being Relf Bledsoe's own letter of 14 August 1870 in which he describes his mining operation making use of rockers.

Winnowing, or separating gold from sand could be accomplished by blowing as described previously by Buffum. However, this method would not have been practical or profitable when working with the fine Snake River float gold. Miners have long known that mercury or quick-silver amalgamated with gold. Mercury amalgamation is depicted in Agricola's medieval treatise on mining, *De Re Metallica*, and dates back to the time of ancient Egypt. Amalgamating gold



Figure 3.1b. Chinese miners using rocker in California. (Illustration from Hutching's California Magazine, 1856.)

During the past century, the ruins of the ancient world have been the subject of a vast amount of archaeological research. The ruins of the ancient world are the remains of a civilization that has long since passed away. The ruins of the ancient world are the remains of a civilization that has long since passed away.

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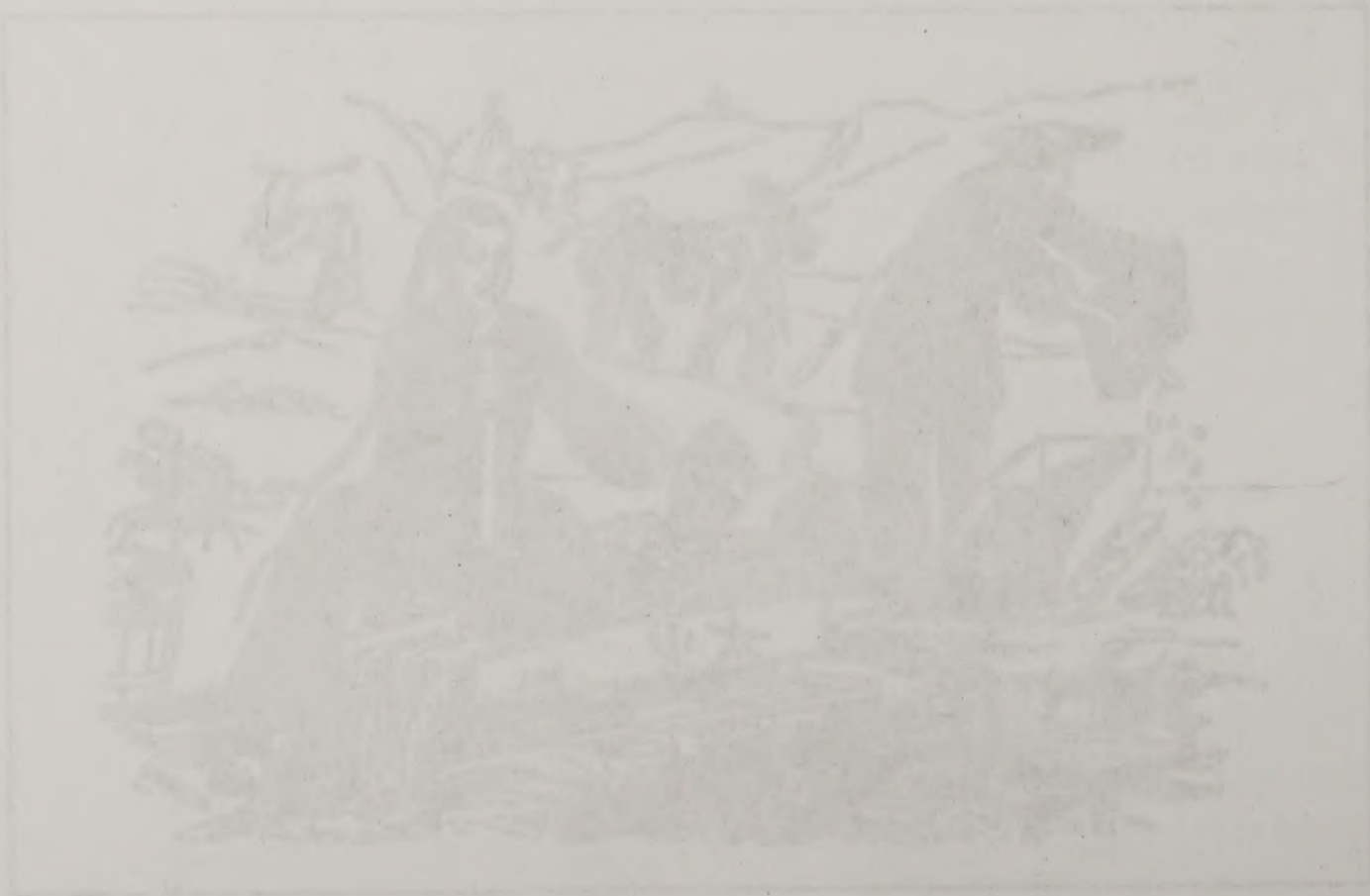


Figure 1. The Queen's tomb at Thebes, Egypt. Photographed by Howard Carter, 1927.



and mercury is a mining technique in which metallic mercury is used to recover precious metals such as gold and silver from base ores. Pliny, in A.D. 79, wrote of the ancient acquaintance with mercury's useful properties:

Mercury is an excellent refiner of gold, it rejects all the impurities that are mixed with it. When once it has expelled these impurities, there is nothing to do but separate it from the gold: to effect which it is poured upon leather, and exudes through it in a sort of perspiration, leaving the pure gold behind [Pliny 1938-1963, Book 32:40].

Perhaps the most notable and celebrated ancient amalgamator was the Golden Fleece sought by Jason and the Argonaut. Colchis, an ancient land located between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, today's Armenia and Georgia, was the traditional home of the Golden Fleece. According to Agricola, the Colchians used animal skins such as sheep fleeces to recover particles of gold from springs. Since the Colchians successfully recovered large amounts of gold in this way, ancient poets created the legend of the Golden Fleece. Jason's epic voyage could have been based on the actual historic endeavors of Hellenistic traders to establish trade contacts with the rich gold producing kingdoms in the Trans-Caucasus.

Use of mercury and retorts was very common in California, Idaho, Nevada, and Montana. Miners used mercury during panning by coating copper plates with mercury. The fine gold particles that might otherwise be lost would disappear into the mercury globule. The mercury continued to amalgamate or combine with the gold until the mercury was no longer fluid but thick and pasty. At this point, the amalgam was approximately one-third gold, one-third black magnetic sands, and one-third mercury (Young 1970:91-98).

Because mercury has a high specific gravity, it was also added to the riffles in sluice boxes. The heavier gold particles amalgamate with the mercury coating the riffles that line the bottom of the sluice. When the mercury is saturated with gold, the amalgam paste is scraped off and retorted.

The recovery at Mon-Tung of a bell-shaped, iron crucible measuring five inches in length and having a diameter of four inches provided further evidence that mercury was commonly used to separate gold particles from sand (Figure 3.3a). Experienced placer miners used a process in which a cast iron crucible or cup, usually five inches tall and with a diameter of four inches, contained the mercury-gold paste or amalgam. A flat iron top was securely fastened to the cup. Because the mercury retort used by miners to amalgamate is so basic and simple in design, their construction and use are essentially unchanged today from the nineteenth century versions (Figure 3.3b). Many contemporary gold miners still make use of mercury retorts little changed from those used during the 1800s. A 1927 version of the pot retort featured a safety yoke

and mercury is a common by-product of gold extraction. It is used in various ways, such as in the production of gold amalgam, and in the treatment of various types of cancer.

Mercury is also used in the production of various types of glass, such as in the production of cathode ray tubes and in the production of various types of optical lenses.

The most common use of mercury is in the production of gold amalgam. This is a mixture of gold and mercury, which is used to extract gold from its ores.

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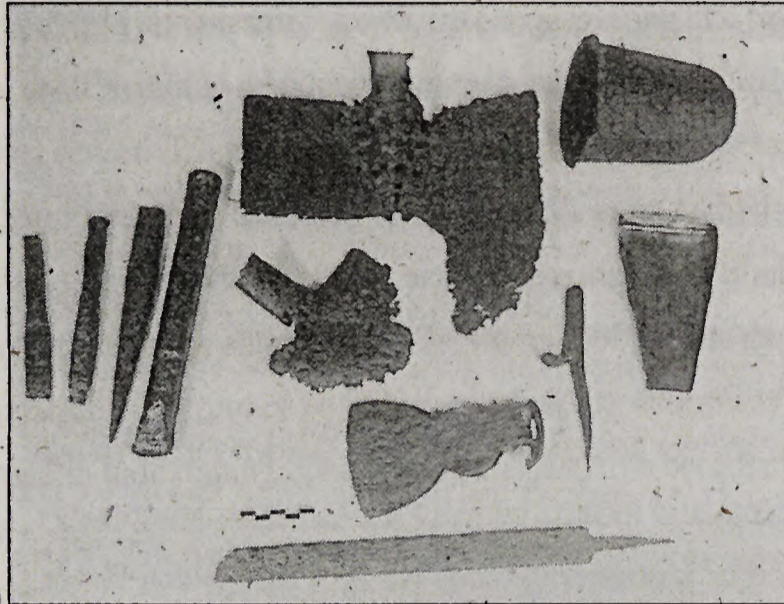
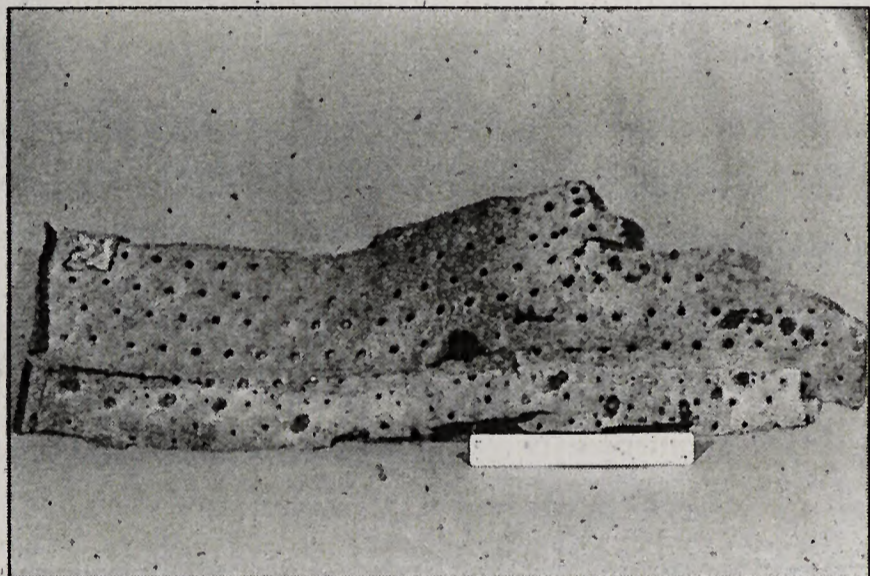


Figure 3.2a. Mining artifacts (left to right): four rock drill bits and chisels, shovel blades, pot retort, funnel tray, candle holder, axe/claw hammer, and file.

Figure 3.2b. Perforated sheet metal from rocker.



held in place by a wrought iron wedge key. A similar yoke may have been part of the complete retort used by the miners at Mon-Tung. The retort found at Mon-Tung was missing the yoke and tubing necessary for operation. A length of condenser tube, usually made from rubber hose, runs from the center of the retort, forming a long neck-like appendage. The condenser is used to retrieve the mercury after it evaporates and re-condenses in water. The retort is slowly heated, and the mercury vaporizes away from the gold particles, passing off through the condenser tube. The retort is brought to a bright red heat to eliminate the last traces of mercury and the vaporized mercury recondenses back into globules once it cools in the tubing and bucket of water. The mercury then can be reused.

The heating process requires skill and experience for the entire procedure is potentially very dangerous. Clogging the retort could result in 'salivating' or mercury poisoning; allowing water to enter through the condenser tube and into the red hot retort could result in an explosion that would

From the beginning  
of the world, the  
earth was dark and  
void, and darkness  
was upon the face  
of the deep.

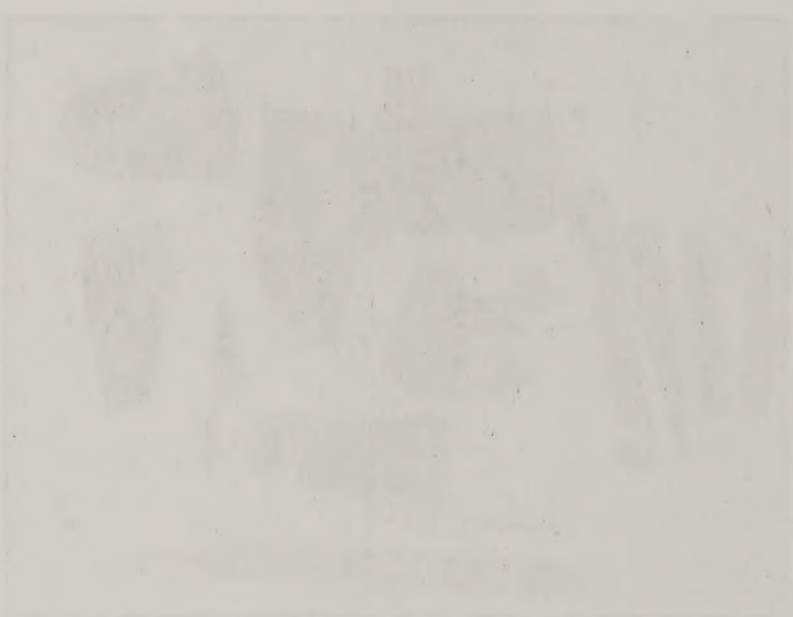


Fig. 1. The  
beginning of the world.



And the Spirit of God  
was hovering over the  
waters. And God said,  
Let there be light: and  
there was light. And  
God saw that the light  
was good: and God  
separated the light  
from the darkness. And  
God called the light  
Day, and the darkness  
Night. And there was  
an evening, and there  
was a morning: that  
was the first day.

release mercury vapors. The distilling of gold and mercury was effective in recovering fine particles of gold and required the miner to be an alchemist in addition to prospector and geologist.

Iron retorts were manufactured by several different companies. The earliest manufacturer located so far, was Justin Caire of San Francisco. According to Oakland Museum archivist Mickey Karpas (1991), Justin Caire manufactured a variety of mining accessories, including retorts, for the California miners beginning sometime in the early 1850s. The number of patents granted in the United States for retorts and amalgamators cannot be fully ascertained because many of the crushers, grinders, and arrastras used in lode mining qualified as amalgamators because they too used mercury in the processing of

ores. One source consulted, *Knight's American Mechanical Dictionary*, Volume 1 (1979), stated that as of 1872, the number of patents for amalgamators was well over 260. The pot retort found at the Mon-Tung site was commonly used in placer gold camps throughout the West. Amalgamating gold and mercury, it should be noted, was a procedure with a Chinese tradition steeped in the antiquity of Taoist metaphysics, thus while the typical mining amalgamation procedure was introduced to the American gold fields by Spanish and Mexican prospectors, the Chinese might also have been familiar with similar techniques utilizing mercury that developed in Asia.

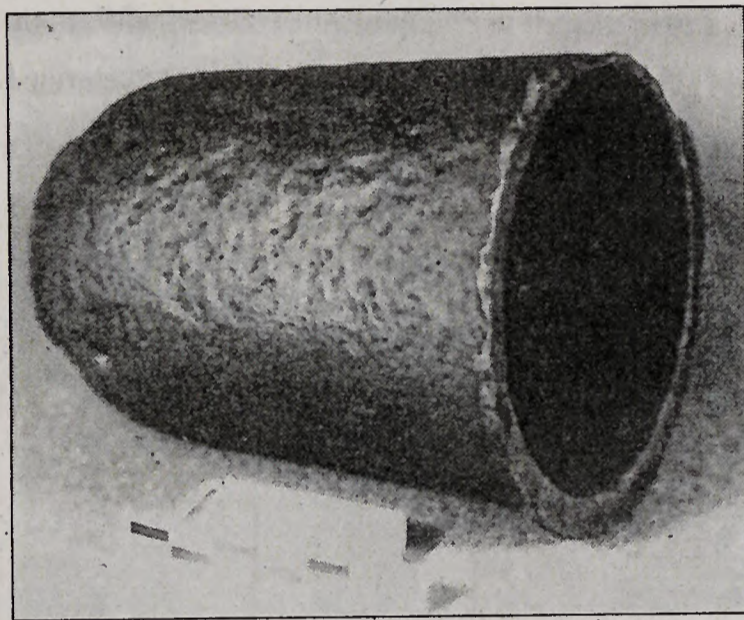


Figure 3.3a. Pot retort recovered at Site 10JE89.

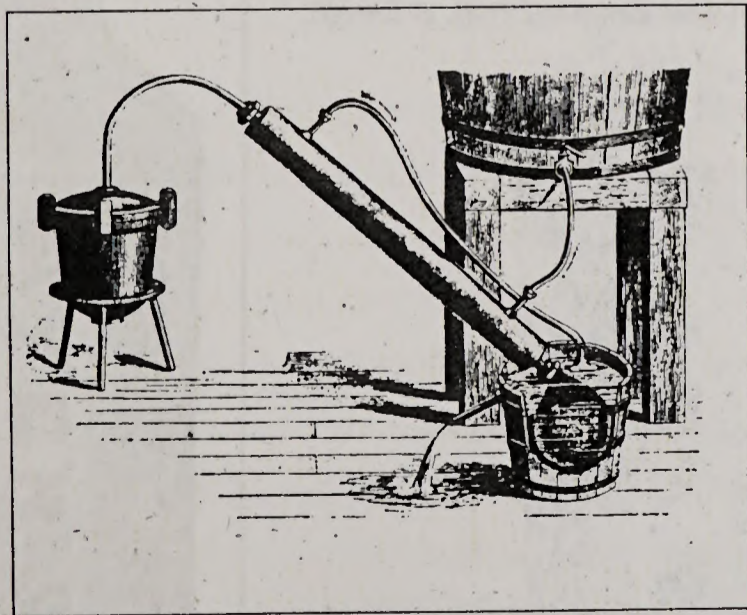


Figure 3.3b. Small iron amalgam retort and condenser. (Illustration from *The Metallurgy of Silver, Gold, and Mercury in the United States*, Thomas Egleston, 1887-90.)

The history of gold mining in California is a long and interesting one. It began in 1848 when James W. Wacker used a primitive method of mining in a stream bed near Colusa, California. This method, known as placer mining, involved the use of a long, shallow wooden box called a sluice box. The box was placed in a stream bed, and the water was allowed to flow over it. The gold particles, which are heavier than the surrounding material, would settle at the bottom of the box. The lighter material would be washed away by the water. This method was used for many years, and it was the primary method of gold mining in California until the mid-19th century. In 1849, James W. Wacker discovered gold in a stream bed near Colusa, California. This discovery led to the California Gold Rush of 1849.

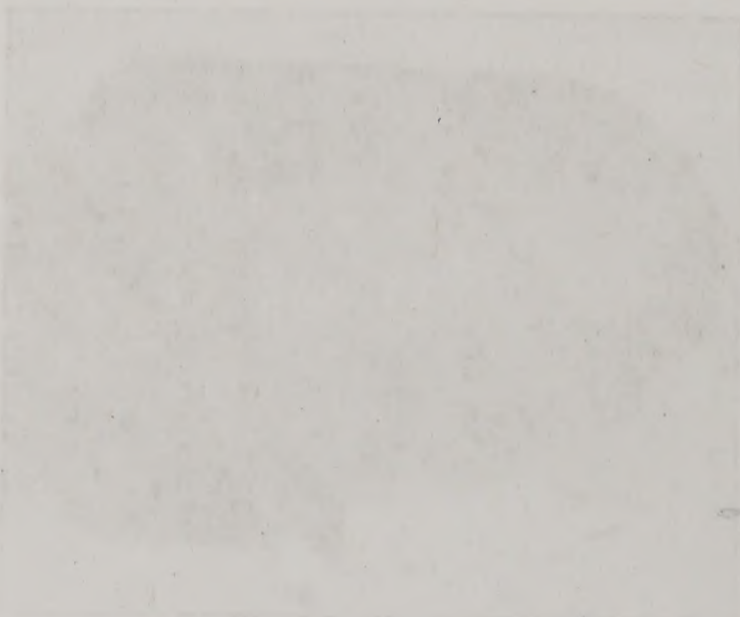


Figure 1: The first gold discovery in 1848 near Colusa.

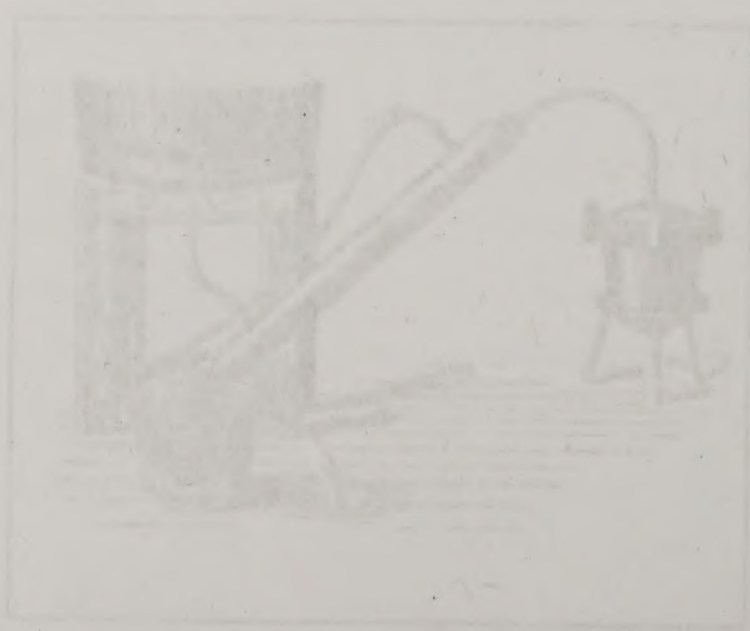


Figure 2: A diagram illustrating the use of a sluice box in gold mining.

The history of gold mining in California is a long and interesting one. It began in 1848 when James W. Wacker used a primitive method of mining in a stream bed near Colusa, California. This method, known as placer mining, involved the use of a long, shallow wooden box called a sluice box. The box was placed in a stream bed, and the water was allowed to flow over it. The gold particles, which are heavier than the surrounding material, would settle at the bottom of the box. The lighter material would be washed away by the water. This method was used for many years, and it was the primary method of gold mining in California until the mid-19th century. In 1849, James W. Wacker discovered gold in a stream bed near Colusa, California. This discovery led to the California Gold Rush of 1849.

Mercury poisoning was a routine occupational hazard for placer miners using retorts. Among the glass fragments recovered during the excavation of the Mon-Tung site were the pieces of an Ayer's Sarsaparilla bottle (Figure 3.4a-b). Sarsaparilla was considered to be a blood purifier and a cure for syphilis during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while throughout the nineteenth century it was touted by druggists as a curative tonic whose uses included "the Cure of . . . all disorders arising from an impure state of the blood, produced either by long residence in a hot and unhealthy climate, the injudicious use of mercury &c." (McKearn and Wilson 1978: 297-298). The Ayer's sarsaparilla bottle was; it should be noted, the only identifiable medicinal container recovered during the Mon-Tung excavation. Whether the Chinese miners at the site were treating themselves with other drugs cannot be determined but with the presence of the sarsaparilla bottle, it is assumed that precautions against mercury poisoning were taken.

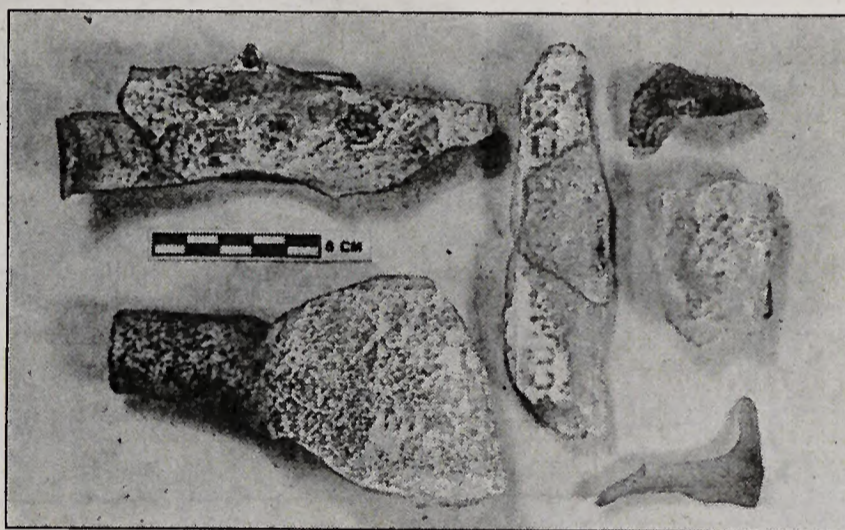


Figure 3.4a. Ayer's Sarsaparilla bottle fragments found at Site 10JE89.

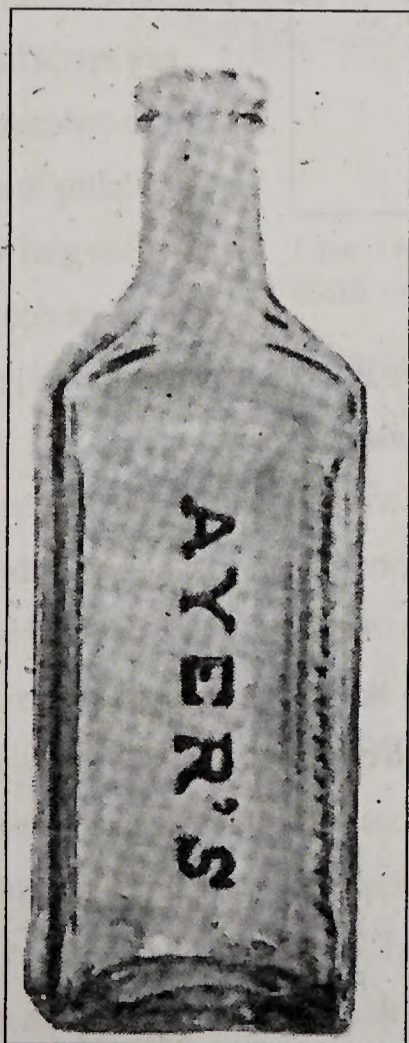


Figure 3.4b. Ayer's bottle.

When a camera was a mere mechanical device for the purpose of recording images, the camera was not considered as an art form. It was only when the camera was used to tell a story that it became an art form. The camera is a tool that can be used in many different ways. It can be used to record a scene, to tell a story, or to create a work of art. The camera is a tool that has changed the way we see the world. It has allowed us to see things that we could not see before. It has allowed us to see the world from a different perspective. It has allowed us to see the world in a way that we could not see before. The camera is a tool that has changed the way we see the world. It has allowed us to see things that we could not see before. It has allowed us to see the world from a different perspective. It has allowed us to see the world in a way that we could not see before.



This is a very faded image, possibly a film still or a photograph, which is difficult to discern.



This is a vertical image of a glass bottle, likely a film canister or a similar container, with a label that is mostly illegible.



The artifacts recovered — notably the pan, perforated iron screens, the retort, and medicine bottle are definitely related to mining. Other artifacts identified with mining included the following: two metal shovel blades, two flat tapering copper trays, a 85 cm long iron hand boring/drill bit, a 9 cm long iron chisel bit, a 10 cm long chisel bit, a 32 cm long iron chisel/drill bit, and a 17 cm long chisel/drill bit to complete the set, one iron axe-claw hammer head, a 19.5 cm metal file, a metal (tin) black powder keg lid with a lead spout bearing the inscription “PATD July 12, 1869,” a metal candle holder designed for miners, and abundant quantities of ferrous metal scraps that were too rusted and fragmentary to identify. This assemblage of artifacts recovered from the Mon-Tung site represents many of the tools and equip-

ment required to pursue placer stream and bedrock mining in the Snake River Canyon during the 1870s and 1880s (Figure 3.2a-c). The assemblage from the Mon-Tung site can be compared with archaeological artifacts recovered from other Western mining sites and provides additional corroboration to the archival records describing the mining endeavors along the Snake River. The presence of the drill bits, chisels, and black powder keg lid affirms the archival documentation and field evidence for long term, labor intensive mining operations that could have employed organized companies of Chinese miners. The collection of mining tools also demonstrates a direct reliance by the canyon miners on the supply lines leading out of Corrine and Boise. Without dependable access to equipment and goods, the mines could not have been operated effectively. The occupation of the Mon-Tung site residents was primarily mining with the Chinese miners making practical and widespread use of the Euroamerican mining technology available to them.



Figure 3.4c. Ayer's Sarsaparilla turn-of-the-century advertisement. (Guide to Old Bottles, Richard E. Fike, 1967)



Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass., U.S.A.

The medicine is a powerful purgative, and its use is recommended in all cases of constipation, biliousness, and all the various ailments of the bowels. It is a most valuable medicine, and its use is recommended in all cases of the above mentioned ailments. It is a most valuable medicine, and its use is recommended in all cases of the above mentioned ailments.

The medicine is a powerful purgative, and its use is recommended in all cases of constipation, biliousness, and all the various ailments of the bowels. It is a most valuable medicine, and its use is recommended in all cases of the above mentioned ailments.

# CHAPTER 4 ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGES AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

The first part of the chapter discusses the concept of artifact assemblages and how they are used to study cultural adaptations. It covers the work of archaeologists like Henry Hensley and the importance of context in interpreting artifacts. The text explains how different types of artifacts found together can indicate a specific cultural group or adaptation to a particular environment.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the relationship between artifact assemblages and cultural change. It discusses how the composition of an assemblage can shift over time, reflecting technological innovations or shifts in social organization. Examples are given of how certain tools or pottery styles might indicate a transition from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle.

The final part of the chapter addresses the challenges of identifying artifact assemblages in the field. It discusses the importance of careful excavation techniques and the use of stratigraphy to determine the relative dates of different layers of artifacts. The text also touches on the role of comparative studies in identifying patterns across different sites and regions.



## CHAPTER 4 ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

**T**HE PRESENCE OF CHINESE MINERS in the Snake River Canyon during the 1870s and 1880s was already established but only generally known. Long-time residents often reported seeing, and on occasion collecting, Chinese artifacts and cultural remains in the canyon. Herrett's Museum at the College of Southern Idaho has a modest but interesting collection of Chinese artifacts; a metal water tobacco pipe, an abacus, opium lids, Qian Long coins, and small, rectangular glass medicine bottles for example; that have been obtained over the years through donations by local residents. Unfortunately, no provenance or definite historical context was provided for the artifacts. All that could be stated with certainty was that they were found "in the canyon."

Prior to the Mon-Tung excavation in 1989, detailed information pertaining to the extent and course of the history of the Snake River Canyon Chinese and their cultural adaptations to southern Idaho's frontier environment were only hinted at. The Mon-Tung excavation was the first systematic archaeological examination conducted in southern Idaho. The excavation recovered a significant amount of Chinese cultural material dating to the late nineteenth century that can be assessed with information and archaeological returns from other Chinese sites in order to analyze and describe the pattern of cultural adaptation that occurred in Idaho's mining frontiers. The variety and quantity of culturally diagnostic artifacts affirms the Mon-Tung site's value in providing significant archaeological evidence of the importance of the Chinese role in southern Idaho's frontier settlement.

Mining brought some of the earliest non-aboriginal settlers to the Idaho Territory, who established camps and towns where none had previously existed. New West historian Patricia Nelson Limerick (1987: 99-100) stated that "... no industry had a greater impact on Western history than did mining ... mining set a mood that has never disappeared from the West: the attitude of extractive industry: get in, get rich, get out." Limerick also cites a provocative idea from geographer Wilbur Zelinsky that focuses on the primary reason for the study of obscure Chinese mining camps. Zelinsky's "Doctrine of First Effective Settlement" explains that "Whenever an empty territory undergoes settlement, or an earlier population is dislodged by invaders, the specific characteristics of the first group able to effect a viable, self-perpetuating society are of crucial significance for the later social and cultural geography of the area" (Limerick 99-100).

## CHAPTER 4 ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION

In the early 1970s, the concept of artifact assemblage was introduced by the archaeologist James W. Pritchard. He argued that artifacts are not simply objects, but rather they are part of a larger cultural system. This system is composed of various elements, including artifacts, which are arranged in a specific way to create a particular cultural assemblage. This assemblage is then used to identify and understand the culture that produced it.

The concept of artifact assemblage is closely related to the concept of cultural adaptation. Cultural adaptation is the process by which a culture changes in response to its environment. This process can involve the adoption of new technologies, the modification of existing ones, or the creation of entirely new ones. The artifact assemblage is a reflection of these changes, as it shows how the culture has adapted to its environment over time.

One of the key challenges in the study of artifact assemblages is the problem of identification. How can we tell which artifacts belong to a particular culture? This is a difficult question because many cultures have shared similar technologies and materials. However, by looking at the way artifacts are arranged in an assemblage, we can often identify the culture that produced them.

Another challenge is the problem of interpretation. How can we understand the meaning of an artifact assemblage? This is a difficult question because the same assemblage can have different meanings in different contexts. However, by looking at the way artifacts are arranged in an assemblage, we can often identify the culture that produced them.

The study of artifact assemblages and cultural adaptation is an important part of archaeology. It helps us to understand how cultures change over time and how they adapt to their environment. It also helps us to identify and understand the cultures that produced the artifacts we find in the ground.

The Mon-Tung site was an integral part of southern Idaho's first "viable, self-perpetuating (non-aboryal) society," a society based primarily upon mining but also incorporating elements from the fledgling agricultural settlements beginning to develop along the foothills regions to the south in the vicinity of Goose Creek, the transportation infrastructure that developed in order to support the expansion of the Kelton freight road and Halliday's Stage line; and the later construction of the Oregon Short Line Railroad. The inventory of Chinese artifacts recovered at Mon-Tung demonstrates that a fairly wide range of durable, practical Oriental goods were being made available to remotely situated Chinese mining camps by a well developed mercantile network that supported the Snake River Plain's "first effective settlements."

Historian Brigham Madsen (1980) in his study of Corinne, Utah, provides an outline of the Chinese mercantile system that provisioned the Snake River Canyon miners. According to Madsen, most of Corinne's Chinatown was made up of former railroad construction workers who were laid off in 1869 when the transcontinental railroad was completed. Madsen, citing the *Utah Reporter*, estimated Corinne's Chinese population to have been two or three hundred in April 1870. Because Corinne was the staging area for miners embarking upon treks to the Snake River and Montana mines, the Chinese population was in a constant state of flux. Madsen (1980:245-246) writes that:

A few American entrepreneurs entered into the business of shipping Chinese workers to the northern mines, but eventually promoters from among the Chinese themselves settled in Corinne to care for the needs of their countrymen, at a good profit, as these neophyte miners prepared to travel from the railhead to the north. Ong Wah sent off two wagonloads of workers in July 1871.

Madsen lists several Chinese merchants who imported foodstuffs and personal items from China and served as provisioners to miners in Idaho and Montana; among them Ah Tim; Yee Wah, Young Hing, and Qui Tong Kee & Company. Madsen also found that Corinne's Chinese population increased steadily between 1871 and 1875. For a time, Corinne had two Chinatowns until a devastating fire resulted in a consolidation in 1871.

It is known from primary and archival sources that southern Idaho Euroamerican merchants such as Herman Stricker received regular shipments of supplies and merchandise of every description from Corinne and Kelton. The assemblage of Chinese materials at Mon-Tung indicates that some of the inventory stocked at Stricker's Trading Post included imports from Asia for sale to the Chinese miners who made up a large portion of the local business constituency.





The examples of Chinese cultural artifacts found at Mon-Tung included common domestic wares related to the storage and consumption of food. The Asian ceramics found were the typical, ubiquitous utilitarian wares commonly associated with Western sites occupied by Chinese during the latter nineteenth century. Ceramic wares such as the blue "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls and brown glazed container vessels, were durable yet relatively inexpensive and as such well suited for the Chinese miners occupying sites in rugged and remote locations such as the Snake River Canyon. The Mon-Tung site's inventory of Chinese artifacts included one intact blue glazed "Bamboo" pattern rice bowl, the fragments of at least two more "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls, one blue and the other having a green cast instead of blue; an intact mint green celadon cup; one intact vase shaped, ceramic Ng Ka Py liquor vessel that is dark brown, almost black in color; the basal portion of a brown ceramic food jar that had apparently been reused as a bowl; a metal pan from a rule scale; coins; opium paraphernalia; and a variety of personal items that included a pair of scissors, a razor, burnt fabrics with Chinese-style fasteners still attached, and charred paper perhaps from a book, bearing discernible Chinese characters.

## CHINESE CERAMICS

Large quantities of Chinese manufactured ceramic wares were exported from southern China during the nineteenth century to foreign destinations. San Francisco was the primary port of entry for Chinese imports being received in America. The completion of the transcontinental railroad allowed direct trade routes between the West Coast and remote interior regions to be developed. As the numbers of Chinese living in the Intermountain West increased, so did the complexity of their trade network (Olsen 1978:46-47). The types of Chinese ceramic wares found at Chinese sites throughout the West are remarkably similar and uniform (Olsen 1978; Wylie 1980; Wegars 1991).

The Mon-Tung assemblage of Chinese ceramics consists of two categories, table ceramics and utilitarian ware, which are typical of Chinese sites in the West. The ceramic items found at Mon-Tung included: "Bamboo" porcelain, celadon, vase-shaped liquor vessel, and brown-glazed stoneware (Figure 4.1a). The porcelain tableware commonly referred to as "Bamboo" usually featuring a blue on white dragonfly motif and floral patterns is common to almost every Chinese site that has been examined. Mon-Tung was no exception. The intact "Bamboo" rice bowl that was recovered has a diameter of 14 cm and features the distinguishing floral patterns typical of the "Bamboo" form. The fragments of two other "Bamboo" bowls were also found within the site.



One of these bowls is noteworthy for having a green rather than blue cast. Both of the broken bowls have been partially reassembled and would have been virtually identical in form and size to the intact bowl. The "Bamboo" bowl pattern has been found at sites dating after 1870 and may have a terminal date of manufacture of 1890, which would make this ceramic pattern useful in determining dates of occupation (Wegars 1991: 505). The presently accepted dates of 1870-1890 for the manufacture and distribution of "Bamboo" ware is entirely consistent with the estimated period of occupation for the Chinese sites in the Snake River Canyon.

One intact celadon cup with a winter-green translucent glaze and bearing a cobalt blue base mark was found in close proximity to the "Bamboo" bowl along the site's north wall. Two small fragments from a second celadon cup were also found. Mint or pale green celadon cups of this type are commonly found at Chinese sites throughout America.

One dark brown glazed stoneware liquor vessel, with a vase-like shape and flared lip was found along the north wall. This vessel measures 17 cm tall and has a base diameter of 8 cm. The original function of these commonly found vessels was containing an Chinese alcoholic beverage. Similar type containers are still being produced to this day (Sprague 1987; Wegars 1991: 470).

The fragmentary sherds of at least one shouldered food jar were recovered, including one intact unglazed earthenware lid (Figure 4.1b). The saucer shaped lid has a diameter measuring 8 cm. The base of a brown soy sauce pot or food jar, 4.5 cm tall with a 14 cm diameter was found within the site along the north wall. The jar base appears to have been deliberately shaped into a bowl, a prime example of artifact reuse. Two large brown stoneware sherds matching the base were found under boulders on the slope below the site. Numerous smaller fragments of brown stoneware are also likely to be part of what was once a shouldered food jar or a similar type vessel possessing curved sides and an approximate base diameter of 14 cm. The estimated height of the jar is 15 cm.

## OPIMUM PARAPHERNALIA

The widespread smoking of opium was intrinsically woven into the cultural fabric of the American West during the late nineteenth century. While the use of medical opiates, such as morphine and laudanum, was prevalent throughout the United States during the nineteenth century, smoking opium was a practice that was well established in the West before it spread to the East coast. Opium smoking was largely a cultural attribute of the Chinese; recreational use

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### OPIMUM PARAFORMALIA

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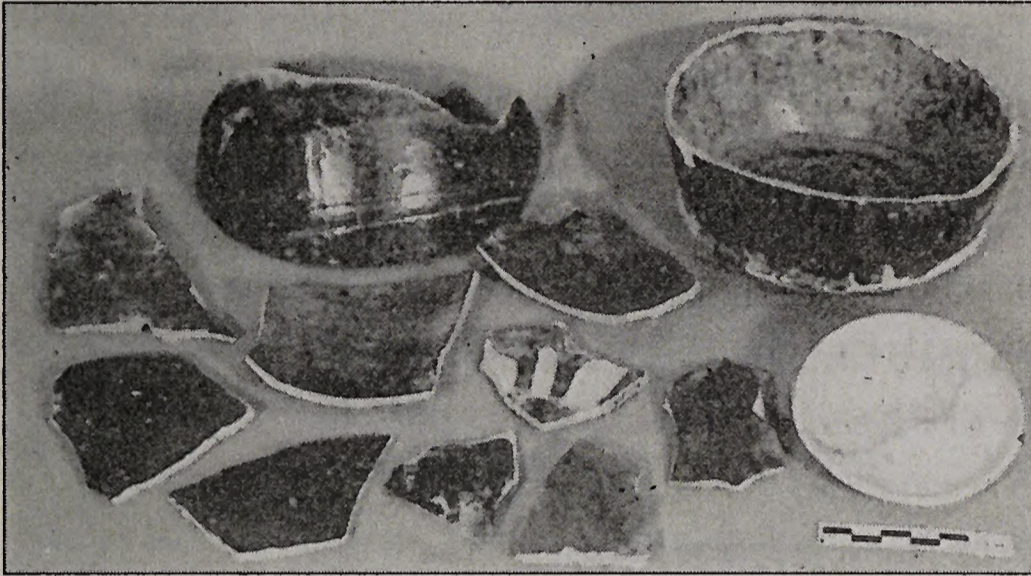


Figure 4.1a. Fragments of brown utilitarian ceramic wares, base reused as bowl (top right), unglazed lid (bottom right).

Figure 4.1b. Bamboo bowl (far right), and shards, vase-like Ng Ka Py bottle (center) and celadon cup.

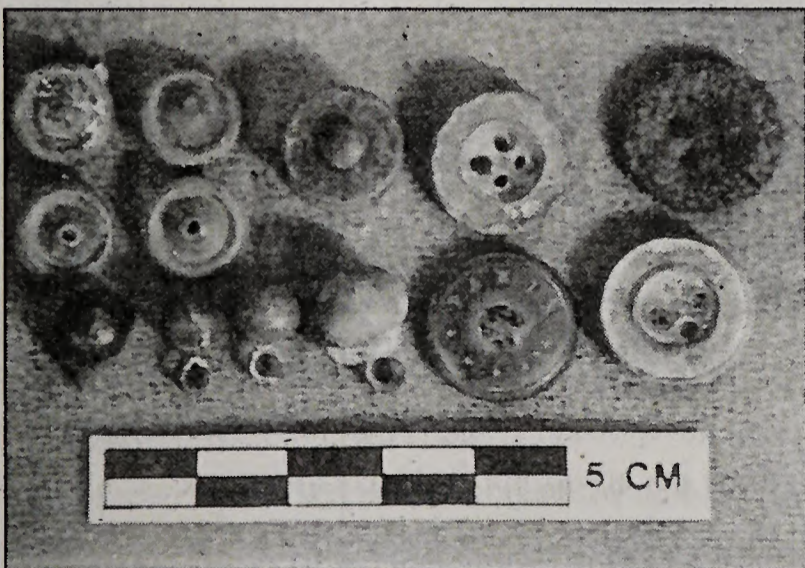
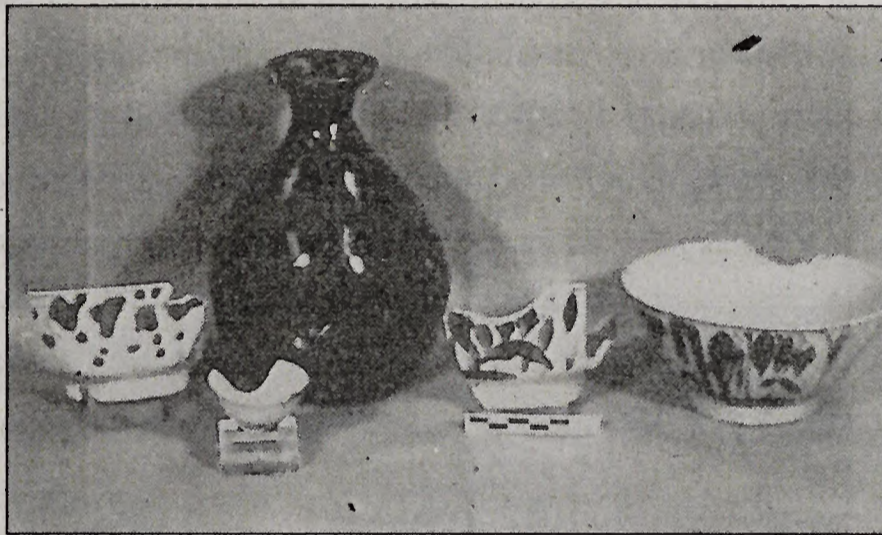
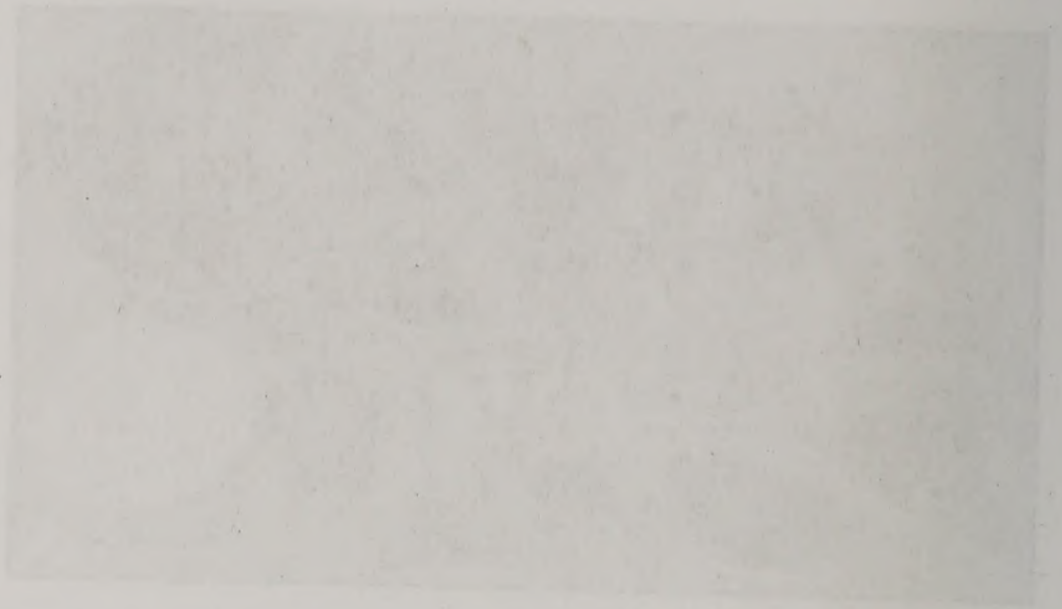


Figure 4.1c. Buttons and clothing fasteners.

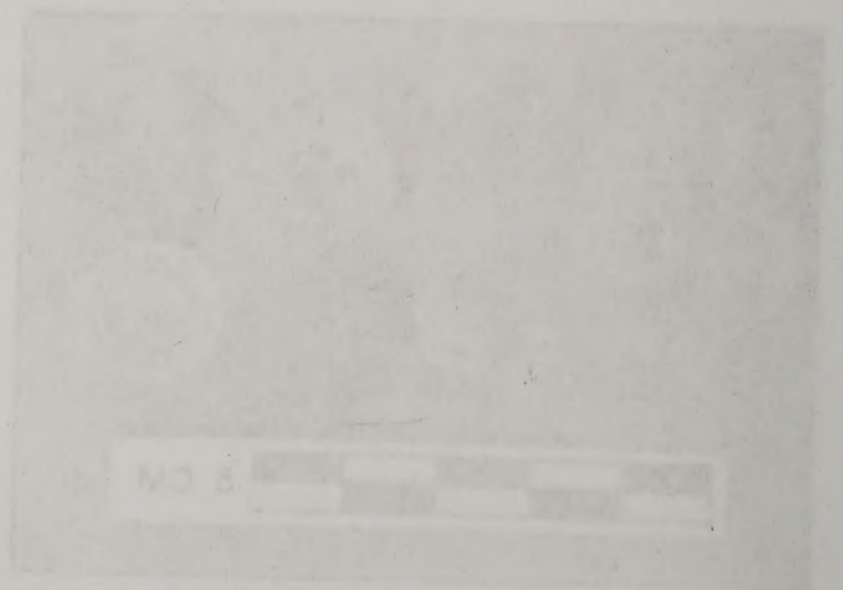


Figure 4.1d. Burnt paper.

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of the drug was commonplace and quite acceptable in southern China and legal in the United States until 1909, although local anti-opium ordinances had been passed as early as the 1870s in California (Nudelman 1993: 41). Opium smoking was for the most part, an occasional social activity for the majority of those choosing to indulge, not everyone smoked opium and of those who did, most did not use it to excess. British explorer Captain Richard Burton, himself a knowledgeable user of opium and cannabis while stationed in India during the 1840s, remarked that "Opium taken in moderation is not a whit more injurious to a man than alcohol and brandied wine" (Rice 1990:125). A turn-of-the-century medical reference entitled *Library of Health* summarized opium's then accepted medical uses: "Opium . . . is given in various forms and quantities to relieve pain and irritation, to relax spasms, to produce sleep; to check secretions, and to influence nutrition" (Scholl 1925:1420).

The British East India Company initially produced the lion's share of opium available to the Chinese but during the 1870s, cultivation of the opium poppy became widespread in China. Opium was legally exported from China to the United States during the 1870s and 1880s.

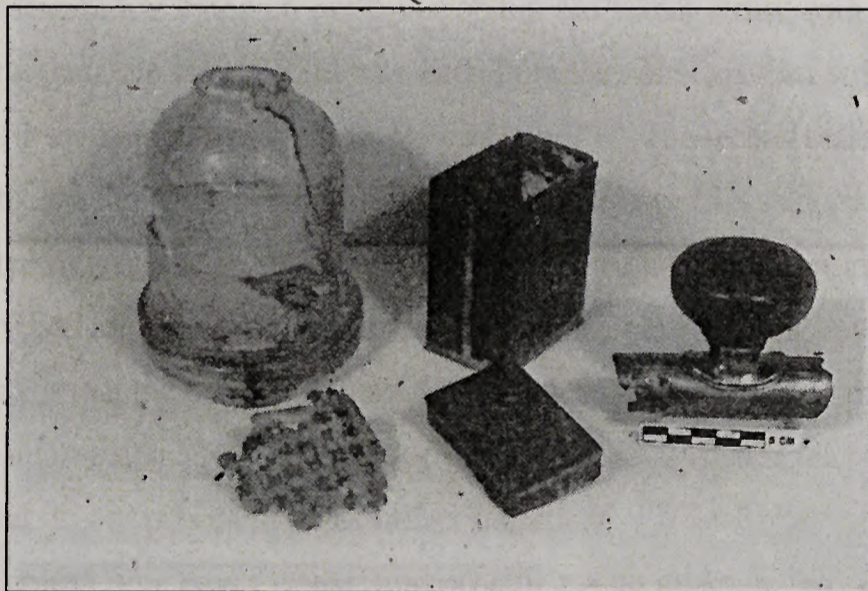


Figure 4.2a. Opium artifacts: lamp with glass base and chimney made from reused bottle, paper label, opium can and lid, opium pipe bowl and fittings.

Chinese immigrants made extensive use of opium, thus opium paraphernalia is frequently found at sites having had a Chinese occupation. The opium came packaged in distinctive rectangular brass-like metal cans featuring standardized dimensions of about 6.5 cm wide by 10 cm tall. Each can contained approximately 6.67 oz. of

opium (Courtwright 1982:29). Most opium can lids are stamped with coffin-shaped cartouches containing Chinese characters. They are believed to be the brand name or manufacturer. Rectangular cartouches occasionally found on the bottom of the can as well; whether the characters written on them are the name of the manufacturer of the opium or the container is not known (Wylie and Fike 1993).

A large number of opium cans and strips cut from opium cans were found at the Mon-Tung site. The remains of sixteen opium cans were recovered during the site's excavation.

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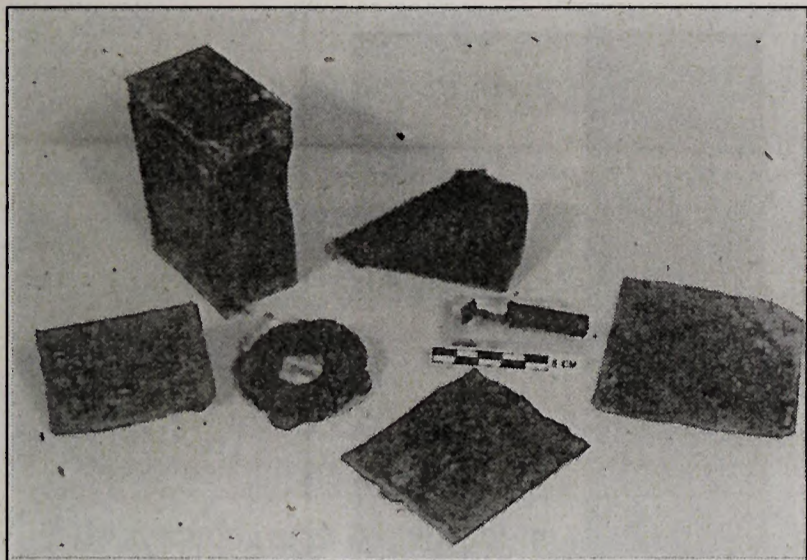


Figure 4.2a. Opium artifacts: examples of artifact reuse from opium cans, including can with perforated lid (left).

Of those cans found, only one was undamaged and intact, including the lid and base; the rest of the opium containers having been dented, cut up, or otherwise reused (Figure 4.2a). None of the cans appear to have been actually discarded. One recovered can was intact but the lid had been perforated with holes made by a square nail for reuse as a shaker or sifter (Figure 4.2b). Only one can was

found with paper attached. The paper label is orange colored and has a series of rows of black Chinese characters which were water smudged and are now illegible. Evidence of cross-hatching used to cancel duty stamps was not found on any of the can lids recovered at Mon-Tung.

An unusual and unique feature was found on two of the opium can sealing strips. Both strips were found next to each other and therefore presumed to have been from the same can. One strip bears part of circular stamp bearing the numbers and letters "M," "33," and "P." The second sealing strip has a similar circular style stamp containing the letters "ATD." Together, the two strips may read "PAT'D" (Figure 4.3a). One of the stamps is on the outside area of the strip, the other is on the inside. It appears as if the brass sheet used to manufacture the strips was stamped prior to being cut into sealing strips. One possibility is that the opium can manufacturers were utilizing used or recycled metal. Inquiries for further information have not turned up similar type stamps on sealing strips found at other archaeological sites or present in other artifact collections.

Two differing styles of opium pipe bowls were found. The first is an intact, high-quality circular shaped bowl of a hard, fired ceramic material, with a rim diameter of 5.5 cm and 3 cm tall (Figure 4.3b). This dark, cherry brown bowl, intact and undamaged, has three small Chinese characters engraved on one side translated as *Xiang* [fragrance], *You* [have], *Liang* [family name] (Li-hua Yu 1989). The second bowl is of an inferior quality, broken and missing an entire side (Figure 4.3c). The partial bowl is orange in color, has a rim diameter of 6 cm and a height of 3 cm. The brass fittings and saddle attachments were found as well. The wooden stems to which the opium bowl would have been attached and through which the opium smoke inhaled did not survive, in all probability destroyed by the fire which engulfed the structure.



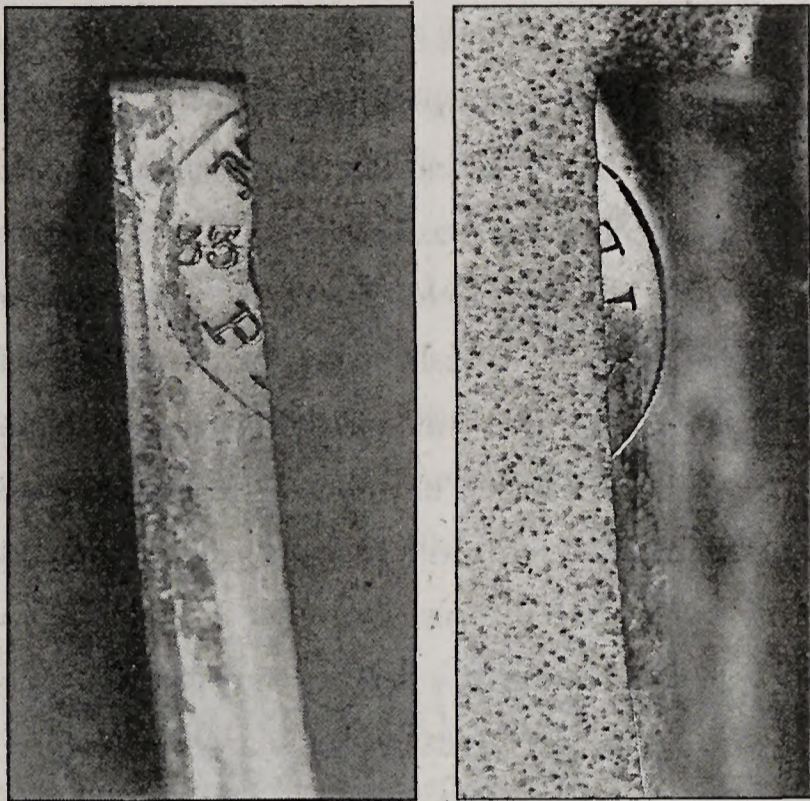


Figure 4.3a. Opium can sealing strip enstampments.

Smoking the gummy opium required constant lighting. As a result, opium lamps are often found in association with other evidence of opium use. A glass circular lamp base featuring lenticular openings to draw air was found as were the broken pieces of improvised lamp chimneys made from cut-down base sections of brandy bottles (Figure 4.2a).

A total of 25 opium can lids/bases bearing the two common rectangular and coffin shaped

cartouches indicating the brand and/or manufacturer, were found at Mon-Tung. All of the stamps were translated and compared to the 25 stamps reported to the Asian-American Comparative Collection at the Laboratory of Anthropology, University of Idaho, as part of an opium can transliteration project. Nine different opium can stamps are represented in the Mon-Tung assemblage. The most common stamp, totaling nine in all, found at Mon-Tung is *Huan*



Figure 4.3b. Opium pipe bowl with Chinese characters.

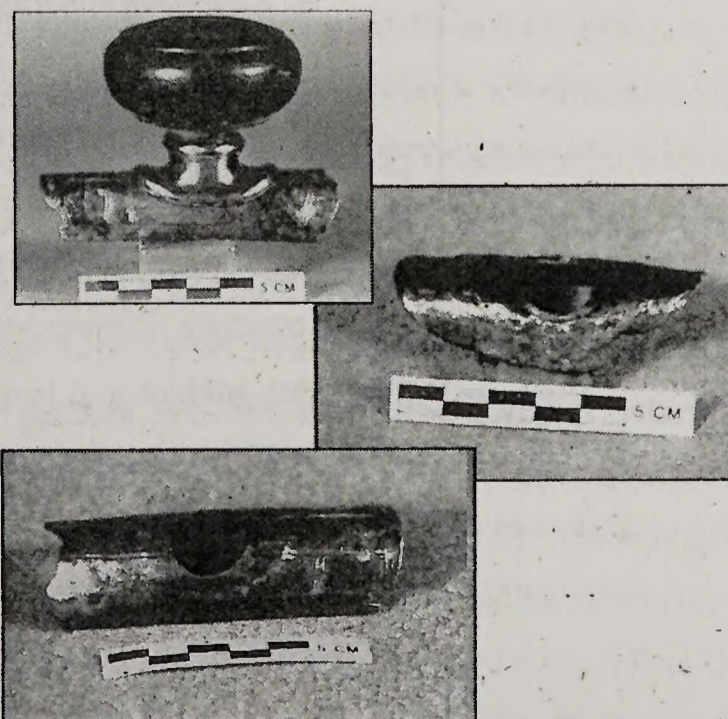


Figure 4.3c. Pipe bowl fragments and brass fittings.

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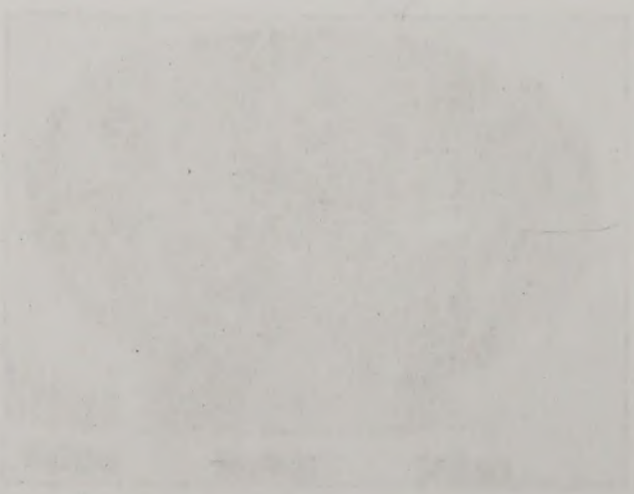
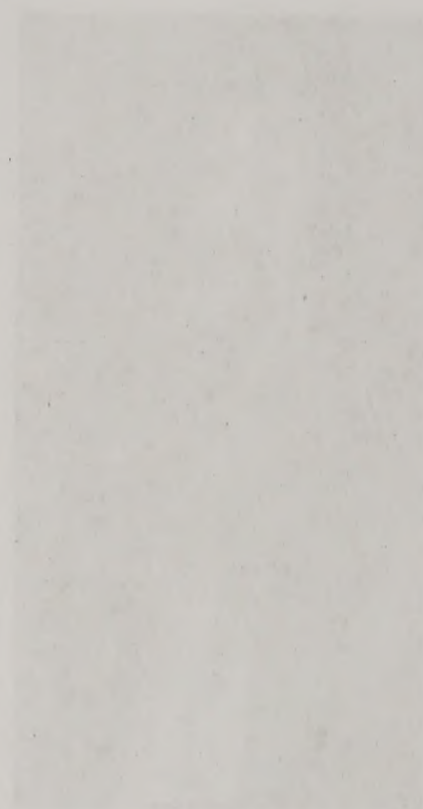


Fig. 1. The ... of ...

Fig. 2. The ... of ...

*Shang Li Yuan*, sometimes referred to in the literature as *Beautiful Origins* or *Source of Beauty* (Sando and Felton 1992:170-171). The remaining stamps were: *Dá Yuán Zào* (4), *Tóng Hēng Zào* (4), *Huán Shàng Fú Lóng* (2), *Gāng Xiāng Hé Lóng* (2), *Fú Dé* (1), *Lì Chāng Zào* (1), *Gāng Xiāng Wàn Hé Fēng* (1), and *Yù Yuán Zào* (1).

From the presence of at least fifteen opium cans and two pipes, it is possible to infer that opium was used regularly and frequently. Historians Dr. Jeffrey Barlow and Li-hua Yu, visiting the site on separate occasions, both inferred the possibility of the site having been a commercial "opium den." Both historians cited the abundance of opium related artifacts as well as the site's secure and centralized location (Yu 1989, Barlow 1990).

### CHINESE COINS

Three coins were found at Mon-Tung; an 1874 United States dime which is useful for dating the site, and two squared holed coins of Asian origin. One of the Asian coins is a small Hong Kong coin dated 1863, while the other is a typical Chinese wen bearing the reign mark of Qian Long (1736-1796) on one side and the mintmark of the Beijing Revenue Board (Yu 1989). Similar coins have been previously found throughout the West, including areas of the Snake River Canyon, in sites occupied by Chinese as well as Native Americans. Several Chinese coins found in the Snake River Canyon have been reported; all coins actually observed have the Qian Long mark. The specific function of Chinese wen in the American West is still not fully known. It is very unlikely, however, that wen had value as currency. Instead, the coins functioned as tailsmen, gaming pieces, decoration, and perhaps as medical accessories (Akin 1992:59-63). Gold dust was the medium of exchange in the Snake River Canyon mining camps and at Stricker's Trading Post; wen would not have been valued as currency by the Euroamerican merchants. One interesting possible function for wen at Mon-Tung concerns the Asian medical practice of coin rubbing. Coin rubbing is a fairly common pain relief treatment in southern China and Southeast Asia. Maxine Hong Kingston describes a variation of coin rubbing used by Chinese laborers in her book, *China Men*: "For heat sickness they scraped necks with the edge of a coin cooled in water, the square hole in the middle of the coin giving a good grip. They slapped the insides of one another's elbows and knees where tiredness collects" (Kingston 1980:99). A medical use of this nature for wen is consistent with the type of hard, manual labor necessary to work the Snake River placers. The hot summer temperatures common in the canyon would have contributed to the discomfort. While no direct evidence for this type of treatment

They are now... (The following text is mirrored and appears to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It is difficult to decipher but seems to contain a list of items or a description of a collection.)

### CHINESE COINS

This coin was found... (The following text is mirrored and appears to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It contains a detailed description of a Chinese coin, including its weight, diameter, and historical context. The text is repeated twice, suggesting it was mirrored on the original page.)

can be presented, it is still a plausible explanation for why the Chinese miners kept small quantities of the otherwise worthless coins. Collectively, the use of opium, sarsaparilla, and medicinal coin rubbing offer theoretical remedies which would have been in character with many traditional aspects of the Chinese perspective towards maintaining health.

### DIET AND FOOD

The Mon-Tung archaeological evidence indicates that the Chinese occupants did make some necessary and probably unavoidable adaptations in their social traditions in terms of diet and food preparation. The archaeological assemblage includes "Bamboo" pattern rice bowls, winter-green celadon cups, and brown glazed ceramic food containers that would be characteristic of traditional Chinese cultural activity. The evidence for cultural adaptation and compromise is also abundant as well. A British made ironstone China plate and saucer fragments, three spoons, a glass tumbler, and metal coffee pot demonstrate the Chinese at Mon-Tung were eclectic as well as practical in fulfilling their cooking and dietary needs (Figure 4.4a).

It is assumed that the miners took advantage, whenever possible, of the canyon's natural food supply. Hunting and fishing opportunities afforded by the riparian habitat of the canyon would have provided fresh supplements of fish, fowl, and wild game. Various species of edible fish, including trout, are native to the middle Snake, and salmon would have been periodically available for harvest below the Shoshone Falls. Big game such as deer and antelope could have been hunted on occasion in addition to galliform birds such as sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). The recovery of three Eley Gastichi .20 gauge shotgun shell primers as well as galliform bird bone fragments from the Mon-Tung site substantiates the inference by providing evidence that the occupants of Mon-Tung possessed a firearm suitable not only for self-defense but hunting grouse as well (Figure 4.4c).

Some areas of the canyon would also have been suitable for small-scale subsistence gardening. It is known from the historic literature and recent archaeological projects that Chinese pioneers were resourceful and inveterate gardeners. For example, the presence of large-scale Chinese terraced gardens elsewhere in the Salmon River Mountains of central Idaho have been previously described and well documented by Jeffrey Fee (1992). Walgamott (1936: 29-30) recorded one instance in which a Chinese miner at Springtown grew fresh bean sprouts. Several long-time Magic Valley residents recall that the remains of terraced gardens attributed to the Chinese at Springtown were quite obvious until the 1930s when Depression era mining destroyed the

can be traced to a... (faded text)

### DIET AND FOOD

The diet... (faded text)

It is... (faded text)

Some... (faded text)



features. No archaeological remains indicating the presence of gardens have been detected at Mon-Tung or any of the other historic Chinese sites surveyed in the Snake River Canyon (James 1990).

The archaeological remains of food containers and vessels along with the collection of bones that were found provides at least an outline sketch of the diet and food preparation methods associated with historic Snake River Canyon placer mining. The presence of metal cans and glass food containers is evidence of the miners' access to and dependence upon goods and services made possible by the expanding transportation and mercantile network that connected far flung mining encampments with commercial settlements such as Corinne.

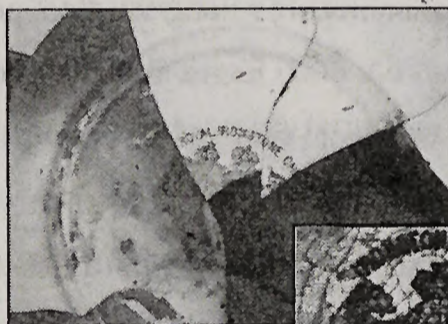


Figure 4.4a. Cutlery and tableware.



Figure 4.4b. .32 cartridge casings and .20 gauge shotgun shell primers.

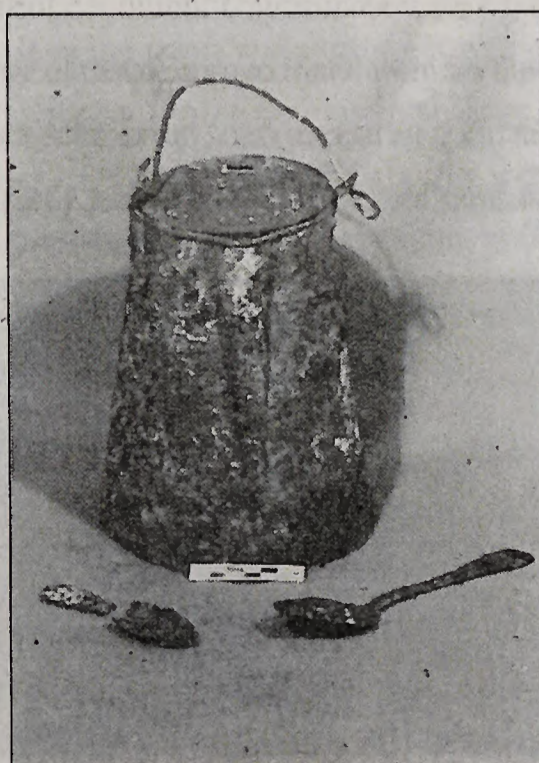
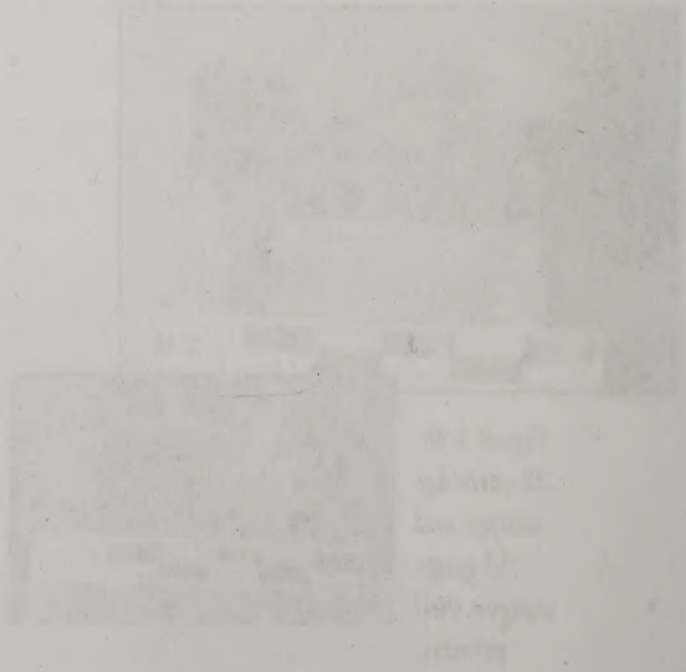


Figure 4.4c. Coffee pot and ladle spoon.

Because the archaeological remains of the ancient city of Mohenjo-daro are located in the lower part of the Indus River valley, the site is now submerged under the water of the Indus River. The archaeological remains of Mohenjo-daro are located in the lower part of the Indus River valley, the site is now submerged under the water of the Indus River. The archaeological remains of Mohenjo-daro are located in the lower part of the Indus River valley, the site is now submerged under the water of the Indus River.



## TIN CANS

Only nine intact and identifiable metal containers came from the Mon-Tung excavation, although the site produced numerous rusted, mostly unidentifiable, ferrous metal fragments. Some of these metal fragments were obviously pieces of a canister's lid/base or body, indicating the presence and sustained use of processed foods and other manufactured products packaged in metal cans that were regularly brought in from outside shipping points. The metal containers that were found at Mon-Tung are of a middle to late nineteenth century date (Figure 4.5a). The widespread on-site deposition of rusted metal canister fragments graphically illustrates the point why it is actually a misrepresentation to refer to metal cans as "tin cans" since many versions of these canisters were made with little or no tin while others were tin plated (Busch 1991:187). Metal canisters, being among the most pervasive of historic artifacts, provide significant cultural information not often found in the archival record.

The intact metal cans and ferrous metal fragments found at Mon-Tung definitely demonstrate the fact that a variety of metals were used to manufacture "tin cans." A large number of the cans originally stocked at the site were apparently made with little or no tin plating. The exposed iron was vulnerable to corrosion in the presence of moisture and oxygen and, as a result, only a handful of intact metal canisters remained in the Mon-Tung site's archaeological record. Of the nine intact cans, eight are corroded by rust but still sturdy. Evidently they once had a tin coating that postponed deterioration. One can was made of a metal resembling brass and is, considering weather and age, in excellent condition. Unfortunately, no paper labels were found.

The complete assemblage of metal cans recovered includes the following artifacts. Two rectangular soldered top cans resembling boxes, each measuring 7 cm tall, 16.5 cm in length and 10 cm in width. Both had their lids partly pried back. Ritchie found similar cans in New Zealand and states that



Figure 4.5a. Metal canisters (left to right): rectangular soldered top box, small can with missing lid, round hole-in-top can, and bucket.

### TIN CLAS

One of the main reasons why the tin industry is so important is that it provides a source of income for many people in the developing world. In fact, tin is one of the most important minerals in the world, and it is used in a wide range of products. The tin industry is also a major source of employment in many countries, and it plays a vital role in the economy of many developing nations.

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Figure 1: A large, empty rectangular box, likely a placeholder for an image or diagram.

these cans may have originally contained either tobacco, tea, or bean paste (Ritchie 1986: 330). Two identical cylindrical cans 15 cm tall and 6.5 cm in diameter, had been opened in the middle of the lid and the edges peeled back from the center. Two other badly rusted cans, each 7.5 cm tall and with a diameter of 6.5 cm were also found. The original contents or function of these cans was not ascertained. The one squat, round hole-in-lid can measuring 6.5 cm tall with a 10 cm diameter and featuring a lead soldered seam visible from top to bottom found on the site is usually associated with red meats (Ritchie 1986: 330). A round can, only 5 cm tall with a diameter of 4 cm had had its missing lid pried off. The last canister to be described is a short, squat can manufactured from a metal similar to brass. The can stands 5.5 cm tall and has a diameter of 7 cm. This canister, still well-preserved though missing its lid, fits the description for sardine cans.

The canned products were obviously shipped to the Snake River Canyon miners from Corinne or Boise. It is likely that many of these goods were maintained by the Trading Post in the canyon and at Rock Creek. The Kelton Road made it possible for miners operating paying placer claims to buy a much wider selection of food as well as other supplies. Despite their remote location in the Snake River Canyon, the Chinese and Euroamerican miners who could afford the cost had regular and frequent access to outside marketplaces.

## GLASS CONTAINERS

Much of the original stock of glass vessels was destroyed by the fire that consumed the site. Scores of glass fragments were found embedded along the north wall during excavation. The intense heat from the fire melted many glass fragments, distorting their original shape into now indistinguishable forms. The remnants of what may have been four brandy bottles were found. Partially reconstructed, these bottles had been cut down for reuse as lamp chimneys (Figures 4.2a and 4.5b). An amber liquor bottle was also reconstructed and is thought to have been either a whiskey or beer bottle. Glass food containers were common during the middle to late nineteenth century and the Mon-Tung site held two interesting specimens. One bottle was found broken into several pieces but later reconstructed; it is a barrel shaped Bordeaux mustard bottle and stands 11.5 cm tall. "Bordeaux" is spelled on the bottom in raised letters. A second reassembled glass vessel or jar whose function was once that of a canning jar, the contents of which may have been either vegetables, fruit or meat. Its measurements are 9 cm tall with a .5 cm thick lip 1.3 cm below the top rim (Figure 4.5b).

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the glass industry in the world. It is a very comprehensive survey of the industry, covering all the major producing countries. The second part of the report deals with the technical developments in the glass industry. It covers the latest advances in glass technology, including the development of new glass compositions and the use of new manufacturing techniques. The third part of the report deals with the economic aspects of the glass industry. It discusses the factors that influence the glass market, such as the price of raw materials and the demand for glass products. The fourth part of the report deals with the environmental aspects of the glass industry. It discusses the impact of the glass industry on the environment and the measures that can be taken to reduce this impact.

### GLASS CONTAINERS

The glass container industry is one of the most important branches of the glass industry. It produces a wide range of glass containers, including bottles, jars, and cans. The glass container industry is a highly competitive industry, with many large manufacturers. The glass container industry is also a very important industry, as it produces containers for a wide range of products, including food, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals. The glass container industry is also a very important industry, as it produces containers for a wide range of products, including food, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals. The glass container industry is also a very important industry, as it produces containers for a wide range of products, including food, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

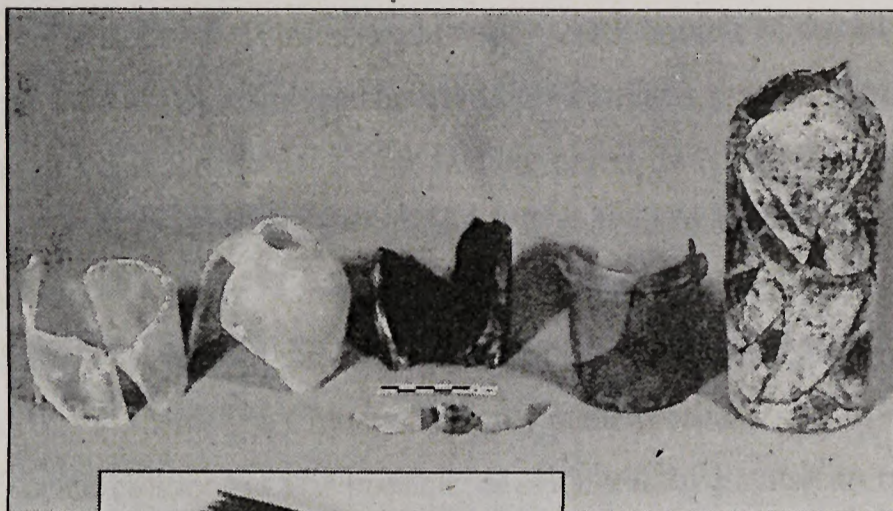


Figure 4.5b. Glass vessels.



Figure 4.5c. Burlap fragments.

The large quantity of glass and metal fragments provides at least some partial evidence to show the dynamics of the economic exchange patterns that once flourished between the Snake River Canyon Chinese and their various points of supply at Boise and Corinne. It is also possible to

detect something of the extent of cultural modifications made by the Chinese in response to their surroundings. Adjustments made in such cultural activities as cooking and diet is apparent in the assemblage of artifacts recovered at Mon-Tung. The archaeological record clearly shows retention of traditional Chinese cultural patterns whenever possible. The Chinese living in the Snake River Canyon had good access to Asian imports and obviously took advantage of it to obtain the familiar "Bamboo" bowls, soy sauce jars, celadon cups, and liquors of home. Only a small remnant of a burlap

sack was found, but it does point out the possibility that rice may have been part of the Chinese diet at Mon-Tung (Figure 4.5c). Fresh green produce could have been available from small, locally grown gardens providing the Chinese with at least an occasional opportunity to dine in a distinctively Cantonese style.

## CONCLUSIONS

The variety of artifacts found at the Mon-Tung site have made it possible to ascertain with greater certainty the dates for the site's occupation. The assemblage also shed light on the role played by the transportation network connecting the remote mining settlements of the Snake River Plain with outside supply centers, how the mining camps fared economically, and some

The large quantity of grain  
and other foodstuffs produced  
in Asia were mainly destined  
to feed the population of the  
continent. However, during the  
past few decades, a large part  
of the food has been used  
for the growing of cash crops  
such as cotton, rubber, and  
sugar. This has led to a  
serious shortage of food for  
the people of the continent.



During the past few decades,  
the Chinese government has  
been making a great effort to  
develop the agriculture of the  
country. It has introduced  
modern agricultural machinery  
and chemical fertilizers. It  
has also introduced the use of  
hybrid rice. These measures  
have led to a great increase  
in the production of food  
grains. However, the Chinese  
government has also been  
encouraging the people to  
grow cash crops. This has  
led to a serious shortage of  
food for the people of the  
country.



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### CONCLUSIONS

The study of the Chinese  
economy has led to the  
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the country.



aspects of the socio-economic structure that influenced the day to day routine of the mining camps. The Chinese miners made use of many familiar, traditional artifacts that continued to be available and served a useful function. When a more familiar object from the traditional Chinese culture could not or would not meet the needs of life in the Snake River Canyon, accommodations were made to the realities of the situation and modifications came about.

The Chinese, like many of the Euroamerican miners as well, made the best possible use of goods and services that were available to them. The Chinese evidently made every reasonable effort to replicate as many familiar social traditions as was possible, as evidenced by the inventory of Asian cultural goods, ceramics, and food containers. In many other instances, however, adaptations were made. The demands of the natural environment as well as a combination of preferences and forced choices were in effect, creating an entirely new cultural milieu. The miners from Guandong brought with them to Gum San customs and traditions firmly rooted in the Chinese experience. They found themselves in a frontier nation that was in the process of inventing itself. The endeavor of mining demanded self-sufficiency, inventiveness, adaptability, and ingenuity in order for any measure of success, let alone survival, to be realized.



## CHAPTER 5

# OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETIVE SPECULATIONS THE MOUNTING SITE'S SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



The mounting site's social organization is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon. It is a product of the interplay between the physical environment and the human community. The site's location, its topography, and its natural resources all play a role in shaping the social structure. The community's organization is also influenced by its history, its culture, and its political system. The mounting site's social organization is a dynamic and evolving entity, shaped by the forces of time and change.

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## CHAPTER 5

### OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETIVE SPECULATIONS: THE MON-TUNG SITE & SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

*Without going outside, you may know the whole world.*

*Without looking through the window,*

*you may see the Ways of Heaven.*

*The farther you go, the less you know.*

— Tao Te Ching

**D**URING THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants came to America. The vast majority were Cantonese speakers from Guangdong Province in southern China. The Cantonese, “who have always been revolutionaries, nonconformists, people with fabulous imaginations” called America the Gold Mountain or Gum San (Kingston 1977: 84). While in Gum San, the Cantonese tunneled through the Sierra Nevadas, building the Union Pacific Railroad; they cleared forests, reclaimed swamps for farmland, and helped to open up vast regions of the Far West for future development. The immigration of Chinese into the West “rearranged the social and physical landscape and altered forever the [West’s] history” (White 1991: 183). The Chinese suffered from the extremes of the West’s climate, were killed and maimed by the thousands in construction and mining mishaps, were persecuted, and were even murdered by a hostile Euroamerican majority that viewed them as drug addicted villains intent on seizing jobs from honest American workingmen (Lee 1978; Wynne 1978; Chen 1980; Tsai 1986).

The Chinese immigration to America that began with the California gold rush in 1850 was actually part of a much larger Chinese migration that affected the entire Pacific Rim. Immense numbers of Chinese left Guangdong Province during the latter half of the nineteenth century in search of better lives and opportunities in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South America, as well as Gum San — the United States (Ritchie 1986: 9-11; Tsai 1986: 2-3).

The compelling reasons for this massive exodus from southern China involved several factors. Guangdong was heavily overpopulated with an overall population density of six hundred persons per square kilometers by the late 1800s (Ritchie 1986: 9). The shortage of living space and inadequate farm land, available only at usurious rates from landlords, made most of the Guangdong peasants desperately poor.

# CHAPTER 5 OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETIVE SPECULATIONS: THE MON-TUNG SITE & SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Without looking through the window  
you can see the light of day  
The further you go the less you know  
— Tao Te Ching

The Chinese migration to America began with the California gold rush in 1849 and  
ended with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The Chinese in America were  
concentrated in California, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area and  
the West Coast. The Chinese in America were mostly men, and they  
worked in menial jobs. The Chinese in America were mostly poor, and  
they lived in tenement houses. The Chinese in America were mostly  
immigrants, and they came to America to work for a better life.  
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came to America to work for a better life.

The lack of land was only one problem confronting the Chinese, however. Famine was a constant reality; banditry and severe social unrest were the consequences. The southern province of Guangdong was also the point of contact between the Chinese Empire and the predatory European imperialists who whittled away at Chinese sovereignty. The Manchu rulers, hated and despised by the Cantonese almost as intensely as the European interlopers, were in decline. The banditry, corruption, and foreign invasions pushed many of the landless, uprooted peasants into rebellion against the ineffectual Manchus. The Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) was fermented in the region of Guangdong Province. "A crazy Cantonese" schoolteacher who heralded himself as Jesus' brother, "led sixteen provinces and the Taiping, the army of the Great Peace, the Long Hairs, in revolt against the emperor and his British and French armies" (Kingston 1977: 89). Before it was crushed, more than 20 million people lost their lives (Schirokauer 1978: 392).

The multitude of man-made disasters was compounded even further by a series of natural calamities. Droughts, floods, typhoons; it seemed heaven itself conspired to make southern China a wasteland; in the words of Maxine Hong Kingston, "The magnetic poles of the world had switched; gravity itself had come loose" (Kingston 1977: 90). In the face of such tragedy and despair, many Cantonese chose to risk the perils of foreign travel in search of a better life.

So it was that under conditions of extreme social and economic turmoil, many small land holders as well as landless peasants were forced to assist their sons, brothers, and fathers in emigrating far from China. It was a solution born of desperation yet it retained an element of hope; the sojourning relatives would return one day with riches from the Gold Mountain and the status of the family would be greatly enhanced. Traditionally, whether rich or poor, Chinese did not leave their homeland for foreign ventures. A Chinese proverb illustrates this strong attachment: "It is easy to stay home for one thousand days; it is hard to stay outside for a short period" (Tsai 1986:1). The decision to send a male relative to Gum San was difficult and often grievous. Wife, children, and parents were left behind in most cases. Cultural anthropologist Francis L. K. Hsu described this traditional Chinese cultural attitude as "situation-centered" (Tsai 1986: 33). The "situation-centered" characteristics of the conservative Chinese culture set it apart from the more self-centered Western cultural orientation and were responsible for at least part of the cultural conflict that strained relations between Chinese and Euroamericans.

The burden placed on the Chinese immigrants was heavy and posed a dilemma as well; how to preserve the essential social pattern along with the rigid expectations of proper behavior while far away from the home country in order to earn money to hopefully improve their families' position. Once arrived in Gum San, the immigrants would be expected to send

The task of this journal is to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and information among researchers and practitioners in the field of international business. The journal is published quarterly and covers a wide range of topics related to international business, including trade, investment, and management. The journal is published by the International Business Research Association (IBRA) and is available in both print and electronic formats. The journal is a key source of information for researchers and practitioners in the field of international business. The journal is published by the International Business Research Association (IBRA) and is available in both print and electronic formats. The journal is a key source of information for researchers and practitioners in the field of international business.



money back home while attempting to adapt to the harsh realities of life in Gum San. The Chinese immigrants maintained strong cultural bonds to their ancestral homeland and were remarkably versatile in adapting to the varied climates and terrains of Gum San. Socio-economic links to the Chinese homeland were important and included the importation of Chinese material culture to the urban as well as rural Chinese settlements in America.

Because the Chinese society in America was predominantly male, it was not possible to re-create or duplicate traditional Chinese society. The majority of Chinese in Gum San were men, primarily young and virtually all transient. The "sojourner's mentality" was deeply rooted in the Chinese psyche. The absence from home and family was intended to be, for most of the Cantonese, only temporary. The skewed sex ratio, extremely unbalanced even for a frontier setting, was approximately 200 males for every one female (16th Census: 19; Lee 1960: 28).

The institutional network that connected the Chinese communities in America with the Chinese homeland was maintained by the *Six Companies*. The Six Companies was a powerful mercantile organization that represented the immigrants from the various districts of Guangdong Province. The nature of the Chinese companies or associations organized by or for the miners has received little documentation. By outlining the type of known organizations established by the Chinese in America, it may be possible to pose some credible assumptions concerning the organizational structure of the Chinese miners who worked the Snake River Canyon placer mines.

The Chinese immigrants entering the West established a complicated, highly effective network of social control that had the ability to grant or withhold assistance in time of need. Since the Chinese in the West were primarily from Guangdong Province in southern China, they were organized into *fongs* — groups with strong ties of kinship and close bonds to clans and villages in southern China; and into *huigans*, which were traditional organizations formed by people from the same province or districts while absent from their cherished homeland. Huigans were, in China, typical of the merchants' organizations and in California became essential connections to China and its culture. The affiliated huigans in California became better known as the Six Companies (a name coined by Euroamericans) which the Chinese called the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The Six Companies established branches in the urban Chinatowns as well as remote frontier communities throughout the West (Chen 1980: 27; White 1991: 301).

The merchant class, not highly esteemed in China during the nineteenth century, assumed a great deal of stature in America. The absence of the ruling gentry and scholar class allowed the merchants to acquire leadership roles denied them at home and the *hui-guan* provided the means by which this new found level of status was attained (Chen 1980: 27; Tsai 1986: 46).

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in 1921 by Chen Duxiu and Li Jishan. It was the first Chinese political party to be modeled on the Soviet Union. The party's early years were marked by a series of failures, including the failure to overthrow the Nationalist Government (KMT) in 1927. However, the party's fortunes improved after the formation of the United Front with the KMT in 1937. The party's military successes during the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) led to its victory over the KMT and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

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Another important element in the organization of Chinese society in America was that of family and clan. The strong bond that existed between clan and region was a foundation of the overall organization of the Chinese socio-economic structure. In the agrarian districts of Guangdong province, the villages were made up of people who traced their descent to a common male ancestor. Descendants of this common paternal kinsman maintained the lineage through the formation of clan associations defined by a surname. The strong bond that existed between the extended family, clan and region was the foundation of the overall organization of the Chinese socio-economic structure in America. Both lineage and clan organizations are vital to the overall social organization in China and were significant in the formation of the Chinese society in America (Chen 1980: 28-29; Ritchie 1986: 7; Tsai 1986: 45-47).

The structure of the Chinese community in the Snake River Canyon can, perhaps, be inferred from the known documentation concerning the larger society as well as data that has been gathered from the rare handful of remote frontier Chinese camps, such as Pierce, where the documentary record was well preserved (Stapp and Longnecker 1984; Stapp 1990). Unfortunately, the documentary records for the Snake River Canyon mining camps are virtually non-existent; particular in reference to the Chinese. The primary sources for both the Chinese and Euroamerican mining periods are the following:

- Contemporary historical accounts, primarily those of Charles S. Walgamott.
- Contemporary newspapers from Corinne, Utah; Boise and Silver City, Idaho; Elko, Nevada; and San Francisco, California.
- Census data.
- A single mining deed documenting a claim transfer between an Euroamerican and Chinese miners.
- Oral history reports.
- Archaeological field surveys and excavation.

Soon after the initial rush into the canyon by Euroamerican miners in the spring of 1870, the Chinese were banned from the river. Later that same year and early in 1871, the ban was rescinded: Chinese miners could then enter the Snake River Canyon mines. The discovery of the Bledsoe deed documents the transfer of one of the most significant Snake River Canyon mining claims from Relf Bledsoe to Ah Mon Mong and the Tung Toek (or possibly Took) Tong



in November of 1871. The document, handwritten on a sheet of lined paper, is now faded with many letters and entire words virtually illegible. As transcribed by Virginia Ricketts in 1986, the deed records the following:

LITTLE FALLS NOV 16TH/71

This is to certify that I have this day bargained and sold to Ah Mon Mong the claim known as the Bledsoe claim together with all tools thereon also (1) blacksmith shop 2 cabbins also (700) feet lumber. Said claim to [illegible] assessor at the Little Falls and [illegible] claim the [illegible] to the claim known as the Long Toek Tong claim.

The above is held by said company for wages due them from R. Bledsoe. The[y] are to have [illegible] to hold all [entire line illegible] is made. The assessment due said company is twelve hundred and forty two and 50/100 (1242.50) dollars.

Witness

G. Ramsey

R. [?]. Bledsoe

Wm R. Barantley

The declining yields from riverbank deposits would have typically caused many Euro-american prospectors to move on to other, more promising claims. At the same time, those miners choosing to remain were mining the upper benches of the river's primordial banks which would have required a greater labor force. Presumably, Chinese mining companies entered the canyon to take advantage of the claims opening up as Euroamericans departed.

Significant economic and social differences prevailed between the Chinese merchants and miners. The historical evidence indicates that the merchants were a distinct class from the miners (Stapp 1992: 25) and that virtually all "stores" and merchants had connections to a huigans affiliated with the Six Companies (Tsai 1986: 46). The Chinese individual named in the Bledsoe deed, Ah Mon Mong was possibly of the merchant class or of some other supervisory role related to mining. The fact that he bought out Bledsoe's highly successful claim strongly suggests the likelihood that he was an individual of more substantial means and influence than the other Chinese who accompanied him. The deed also clearly identifies a Chinese company or *tong*. The amount involved in the transaction is noteworthy as well, the assessed price being well over one thousand dollars, another indicator of economic differentiation delineating Ah Mon Mong from the general population of Chinese miners in the Snake River Canyon. The site was well

to the extent of 1871. The distance between the sites of these papers is now labeled with  
many letters and other words which usually together are represented by various figures in 1900. The  
book contains the following

LITTLE FAIRY (1901)

The first thing that I have to say is that the book is very interesting and well written. It  
is a story of a little girl who lives in a small village and who is very kind and helpful.  
One day she goes to the market and she meets a man who is very old and who has a  
secret. He tells her that there is a treasure hidden in the forest and that she must  
find it before it is too late. She goes to the forest and she finds the treasure.  
The story is told in a simple and easy way and it is very enjoyable to read. The  
book is a good one for children and it is well worth reading. The  
author has done a very good job and the book is a pleasure to read.

THE END

The distance between the sites of these papers is now labeled with  
many letters and other words which usually together are represented by various figures in 1900. The  
book contains the following

situated in several respects; it was located directly across the river from the Shoshone campsite, with access to trails on both sides of the river. The site's proximity to other campsites, nevertheless, did not compromise security. Its strategic placement enabled it to operate as a centralized commercial and social establishment for the Chinese miners scattered along the river; functioning for example as a store, social center, and opium smoking establishment. The prevalence of opium-related artifacts suggests a possibility of such a function. It could be assumed, though no archaeological evidence has been found to corroborate such an assumption, that a ferry linked the north and south shores. The existence of a ferry above the Shoshone Falls is cited by contemporary primary sources, but the specific location of the ferry crossing, including the one operated by the unfortunate Tom Bell, is never described.

The inventory of artifacts found at the Mon-Tung site included an abundance of mining equipment, personal and recreational items, and such cultural materials as British ironstone plates and culinary wares, indicating a relatively high standard of living for such a remote mining site. The site was furnished with a woodstove and contained the remains of burnt paper from a Chinese book, as well as the expensive and non-essential personal and recreational artifacts not commonly found at mining sites operating at subsistence levels.

The wood burning stove is one example of the site's relative affluence. The stove may have been originally brought in by Bledsoe and left with the property when he sold out, nevertheless, its presence indicates a level of prosperity not evident in the other remaining historic mining sites which were documented during subsequent field surveys. While several of the Snake River Canyon historic sites observed during the field surveys which followed the Mon-Tung excavation did have fireplaces adjacent to the entrance; only the Mon-Tung structure possessed a metal stove. The fire-blackened, carbonized paper bearing distinct Chinese characters found in the site is evidence that at least one member of the Canyon's Chinese community was literate. The two Chinese scholars who examined the paper independently of the other were confident in their assessments of the burnt paper having once been a book, possibly a work of fiction, written in the Classical style (Yu 1989; Xu 1991). The pages were too fragmentary for the specific volume or text to be identified with any certainty. Previous examinations of overseas Chinese reading habits indicate that a wide range of reading material was available (Cohen 1976: 419). One contemporary Chinese literary work which, according to the *Overland Monthly* (December 1868: 526) was "frequently seen . . . is a volume entitled the "Mirror of the Mind" . . . This work is made up of selections from a great number of writers; it contains also anonymous sayings and

stated in several reports... (mirrored text)  
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 habit... (mirrored text)  
 contemporary... (mirrored text)  
 1950... (mirrored text)  
 made... (mirrored text)



proverbs . . .” While no information regarding the extent of literacy among the Chinese has been found, the *Overland Monthly* noted that “There are many of the Chinese people who have had some opportunities of learning, but whose education is not equal to an easy and intelligible reading of the classic books for the style of most of these is very “deep,” but they can make their way through the novels . . . this sort of light literature is met . . . in many of the laborers’ camps in the country” (*Overland Monthly* December 1868: 525-526). The ability to read the “classic books” would have been more likely found among the generally well educated merchant class who assumed the positions of leadership within the overseas Chinese communities made up largely of manual laborers.

### PLACING THE MON-TUNG SITE WITHIN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Mon-Tung site and its cultural assemblage represents, not a random assortment of artifacts, but rather, the discernable outlines of day-to-day life in a frontier enclave of Chinese miners. An overall view of the context of the Mon-Tung assemblage, along with the archival information gathered from eyewitness sources such as Walgamott and Lucy Stricker, makes it possible to speculate that the Ah Mon Mong named in the Bledsoe deed was perhaps the same individual Lucy Stricker referred to as “Mon Chu the leader of the Chinese in the area.” According to Mrs. Stricker, “Mon Chū and a white man had gone over the falls in a rowboat while attempting to cross the river. . .” (Stricker 1942). Her story bears a remarkable resemblance to Walgamott’s account of Tom Bell’s tragic mishap in a ferry while transporting two Chinese across the river.

The Mon-Tung site is a microcosm of the larger Chinese cultural organization that was brought to Gum San by the Cantonese miners. An understanding of the essential, fundamental attributes of the Chinese society in Gum San during the latter nineteenth century is necessary in order to gain a meaningful perspective on the Mon-Tung site and its cultural assemblage. The above scenario is an interpretation based on archival research and archaeological field work. Though much of the evidence is admittedly circumstantial, the proposed interpretation suggests that the Mon-Tung site offers information that can be used to assess the characteristics of Chinese community inhabiting the Snake River Canyon during the 1870s as well as the changes that inevitably occurred within their economic and social systems.



The mining activities in the Snake River Canyon during the 1870s led to the development of small, urbanized frontier communities that shared many consistent elements regarding the structure and organizational patterns found in countless other contemporary Western mining settlements (Smith 1967; Rohe 1984). Because the descriptions directly pertaining to the Snake River Canyon Chinese are sparse in both quantity and content, it is necessary to rely on information gleaned from descriptions of the Chinese who resided in those regions of the West where documentation was more thorough. The mining communities that arose during the frontier mining booms were dynamic and constantly undergoing change. The Snake River Canyon mining camps and the Mon-Tung site need to be viewed in a similar light. The Mon-Tung structure was an integral part of the Snake River Canyon's mining settlements, geographically located in the central area of the mining encampment called Shoshone. The hypothesized view that the Mon-Tung site was originally built by a successful and celebrated Idaho pioneer in 1870 near a rich plater deposit, sold in 1871 to a highly placed Chinese miner/merchant who was swept to his death over the Shoshone Falls in a terrible 1880 accident, and subsequently destroyed by ceremonial fire out of respect to the soul of the deceased, represents one version of how the site may have reflected the complex cultural associations and socio-economic organizations intrinsically woven into the Chinese experience in Gum San.

The development of permanent communities in southern Idaho began during the 1870s with the rapid, unplanned appearance of the mining settlements of Shoshone, Drytown, and Springtown in conjunction with the Rock Creek Trading Post. The establishment of a vastly improved and far more extensive transportation network connected the Intermountain West's major population centers; Denver and Salt Lake; via southern Idaho, to Boise, Portland, and California. The completion of both the transcontinental railroad in northern Utah and the Kelton Road in 1869 provided greater access to the then largely unknown Snake River Plain, making the mining camps viable.

Following a short-lived boom period, the early urban frontier settlements in southern Idaho were sustained by a heterogeneous population of miners made up largely of Chinese. The cultural landscape that first was formed by the earliest non-aboriginal residents was multi-cultural in makeup. The population of the Snake River miners was composed entirely of "sojourners" from the United States, Germany, Denmark, the British Isles, and China. Almost immediately upon the heels of the miners appears the earliest farmers and ranchers. Individuals like James Iverson, a Danish immigrant who worked on the construction of the Union Pacific railroad, sought gold in the Snake River Canyon in 1870, and then seeing "the advantage of raising something to feed the

The main source of the River is the... well, situated in the... and organized... statements... first... our... documentation... along... river... structure... located... the... was... steps... showed... for... was... The... with... Sweden... in... major... Cadiz... found... training... Finally... were... indicate... maps... the... part... Danish... the...

miners of the Snake River canyon" began farming on Cottonwood Creek near Oakley, Idaho and I. B. Perrine who found his Utopia in the canyon at Blue Lakes and went on to become head of the Twin Falls irrigation project which in turn led to the creation of southern Idaho's Magic Valley and the city of Twin Falls (Walgamott 1926: 11-12, 112-113; Schwantes 1991: 163-169).

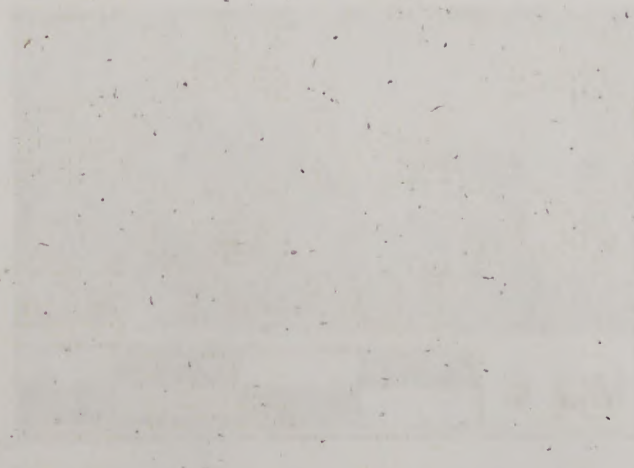
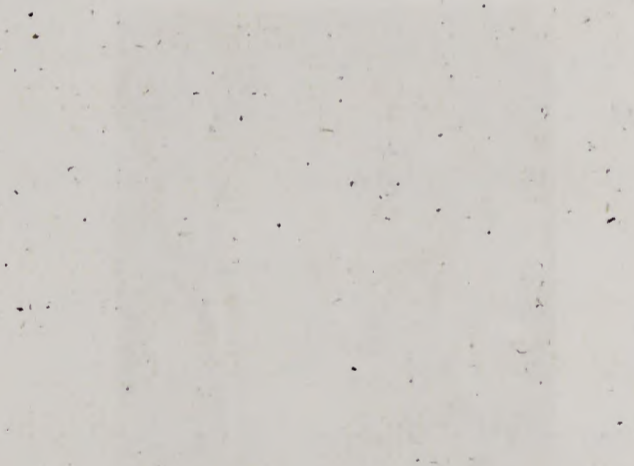
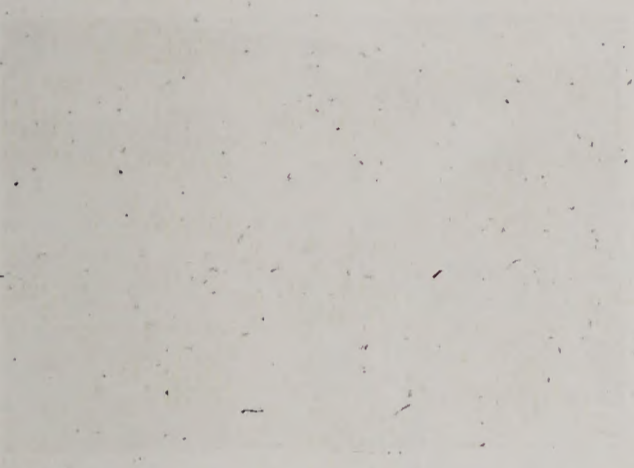
### CONCLUSIONS

The Mon-Tung site is in many respects similar to other documented Chinese sites located in the West. In terms of architectural style and composition, the site is virtually identical to the numerous mining era rock wall shelters found on the Lower Salmon in north-central Idaho (Sisson 1993) and many of the New Zealand sites documented by Ritchie (Ritchie 1986). It is evident from the archaeological data recovered at Mon-Tung that the Chinese miners in the Snake River Canyon attempted to retain as much of their traditional culture as was practical. Concerning their preference for the Chinese worldview and lifestyle, the Snake River Canyon Chinese are far from unique. Similar patterns of cultural retention by the Chinese have been documented by Ritchie (1986) in New Zealand and LaLande (1982) in southeast Oregon. The mining boom camp was a phenomenon peculiar to the history of the West and the Mon-Tung site is inherently distinctive as a consequence of its role in the formation of the cultural milieu that emerged as a result of the search for gold in the Snake River Canyon. One of the most valuable aspects of the site was the well-preserved deposition of artifacts, including the presence of a deed. These attest to the tentative though dynamic and far reaching changes in the economic, social, and development patterns occurring on the southern Idaho frontier during the early formative stages of modern settlement.



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PLATES

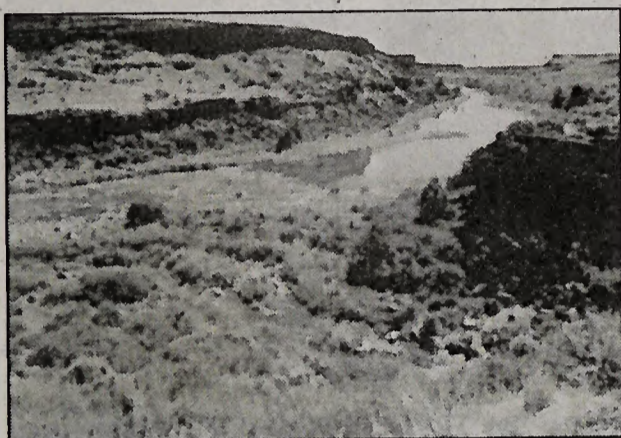


Plate 1. Dry Creek.

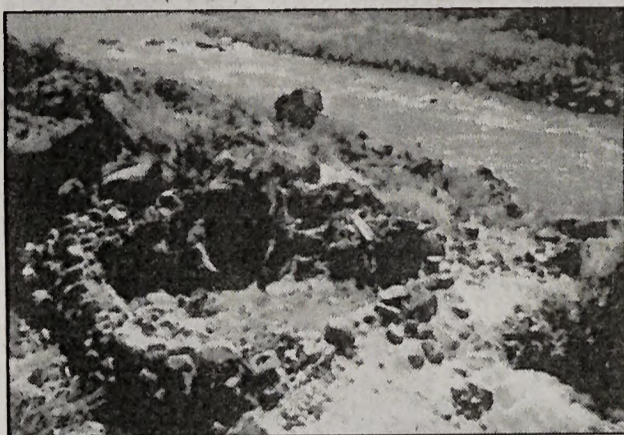


Plate 2. Completed excavation of building foundation.

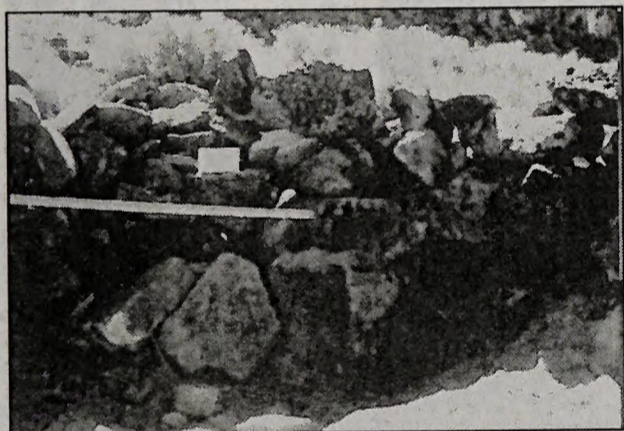


Plate 3. SE corner rock wall where stove stood.



Plate 4. NW corner of structure.

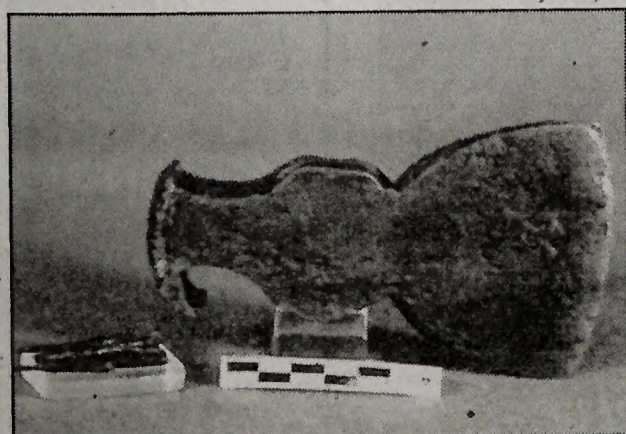


Plate 5. Multi-purpose hammer-axe tool.

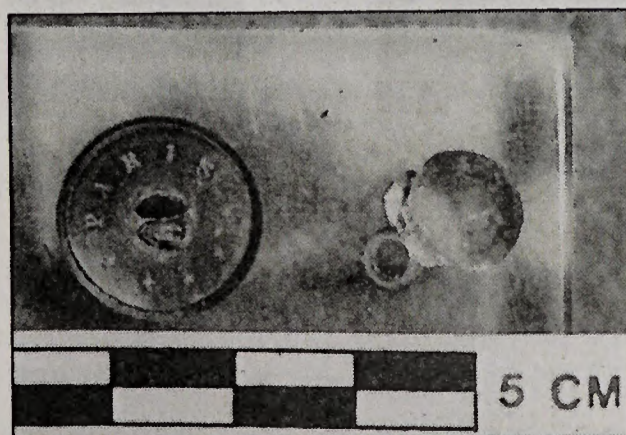


Plate 6. European buttons.

PLATES



Plate 1. [Faint, illegible text]



Plate 2. [Faint, illegible text]



Plate 3. [Faint, illegible text]

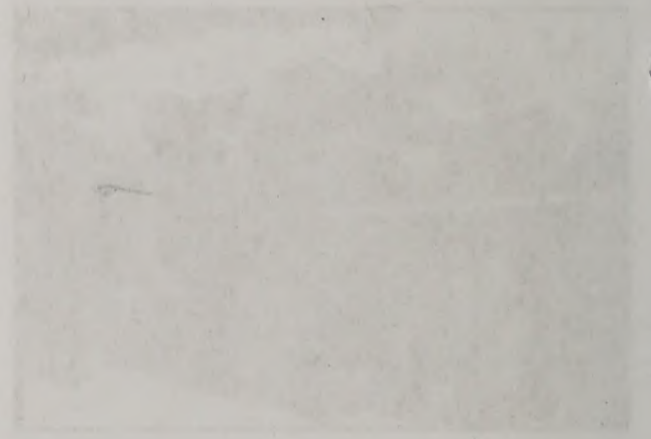


Plate 4. [Faint, illegible text]

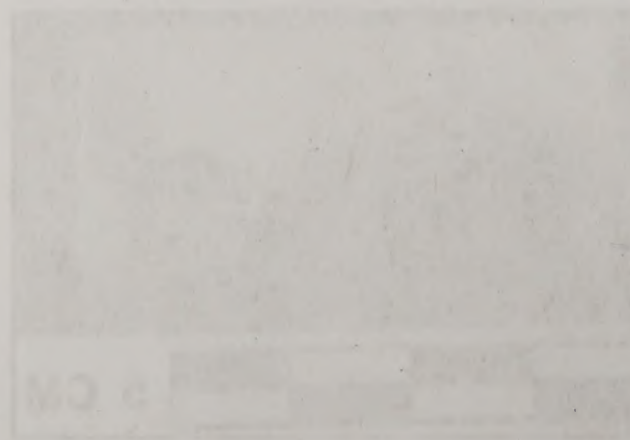


Plate 5. [Faint, illegible text]



Plate 6. [Faint, illegible text]



Plate 7. Bamboo pattern bowl.

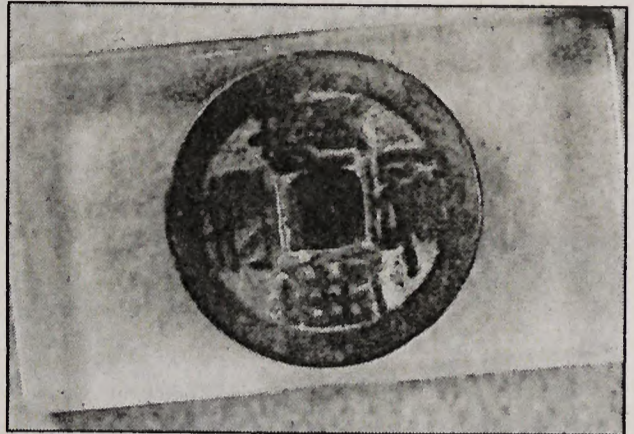


Plate 8. Qian Long coin, c. 1736-1796.

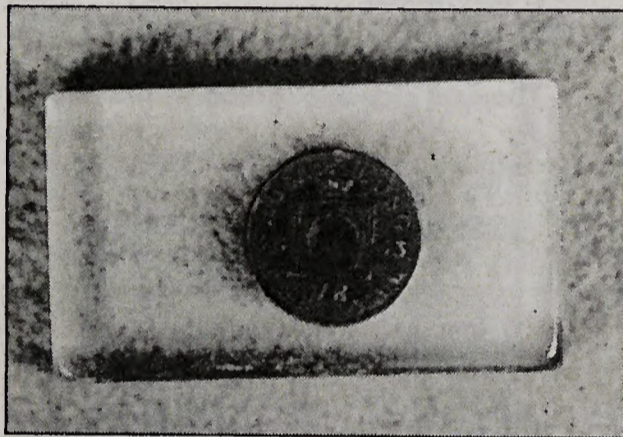


Plate 9. 1863 Hong Kong coin.



Plate 10. 1874 dime.

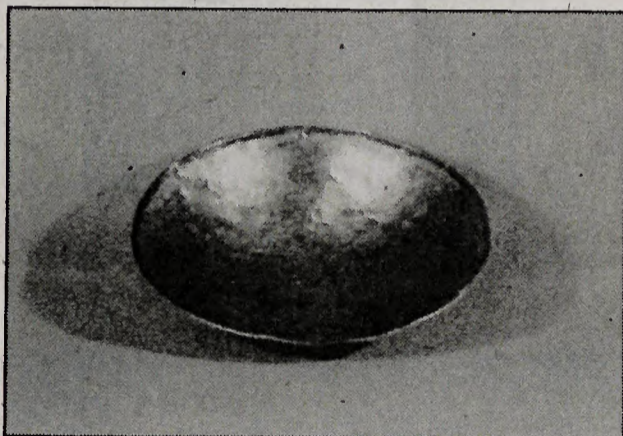


Plate 11. Scale pan.

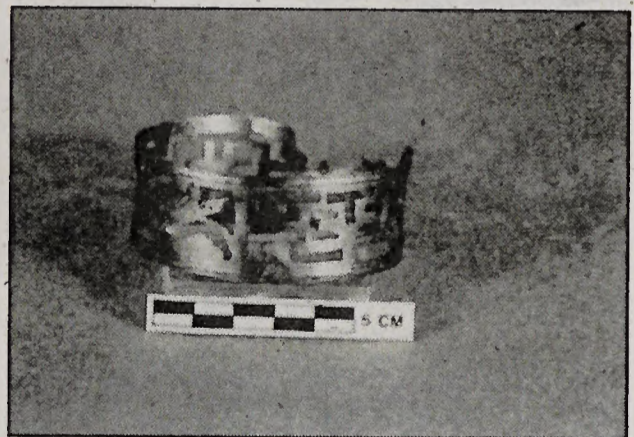


Plate 12. Lamp ring.

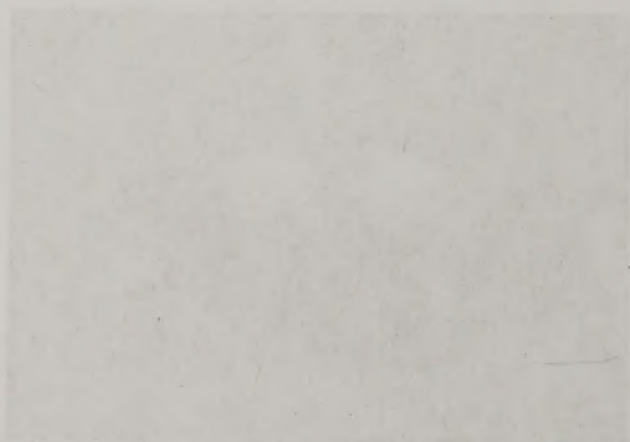
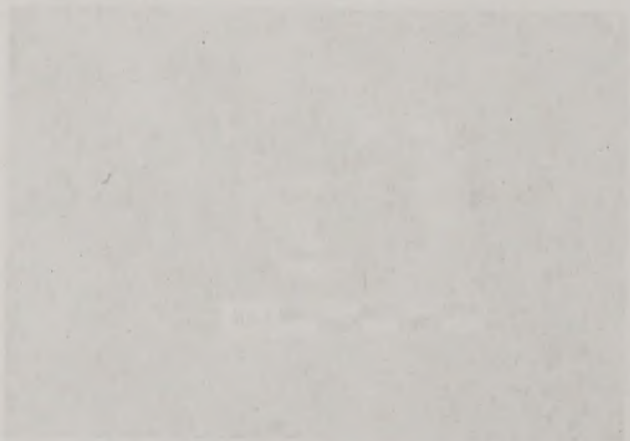
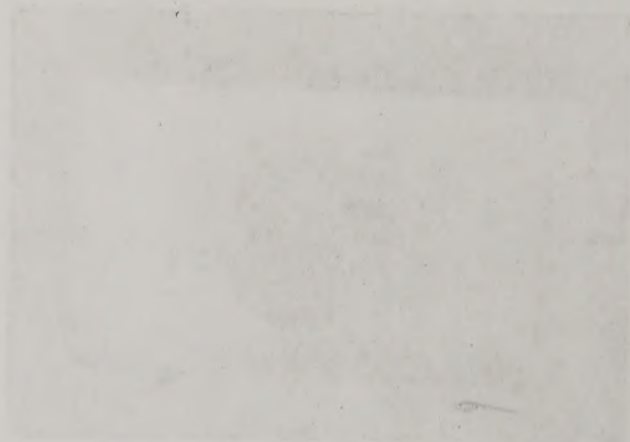
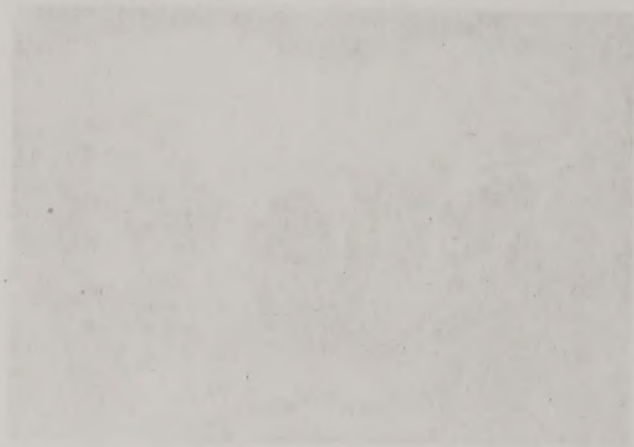




Plate 13. Glass lamp base and reconstructed chimney made from whiskey bottle.



Plate 14. Condiment jar.

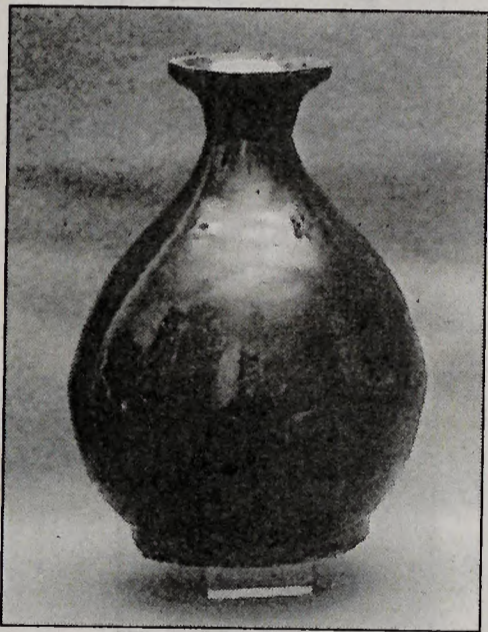


Plate 15. Liquor bottle.



Plate 16. Tax stamp affixed to opium can.



The [illegible]



The [illegible]  
[illegible]



The [illegible]



The [illegible]

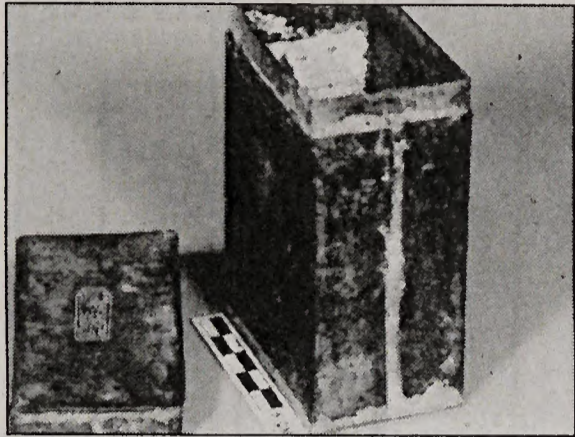


Plate 17. Complete opium can.



Plate 18. Shoe.

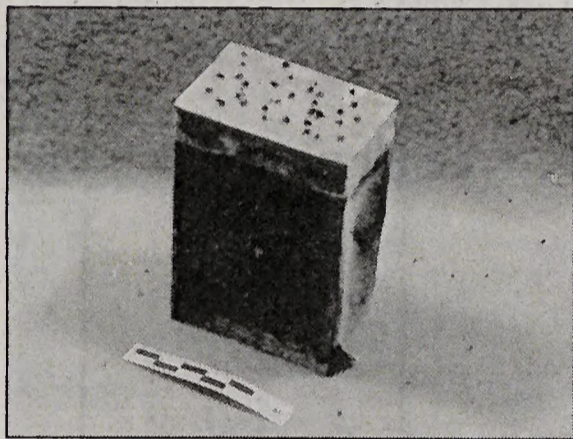


Plate 19. Re-used opium can.

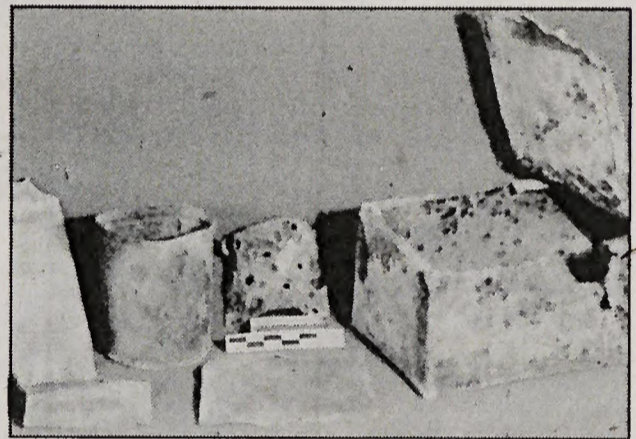


Plate 20. Metal container artifacts.

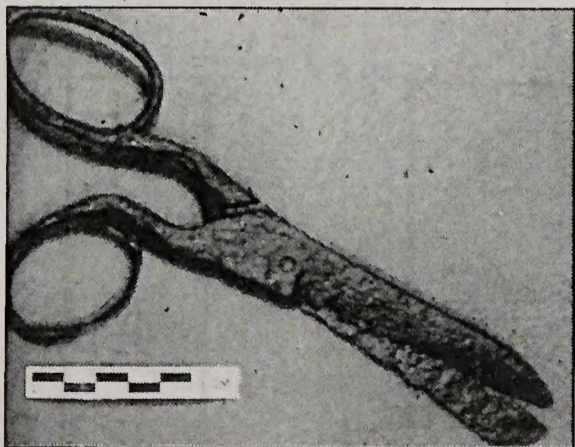


Plate 21. Scissors.

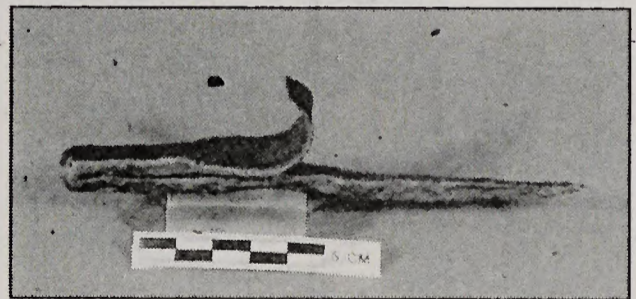


Plate 22. Candle-holder used for mining.





OPIUM CAN STAMPS

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OPIMUM CAN STAMPS



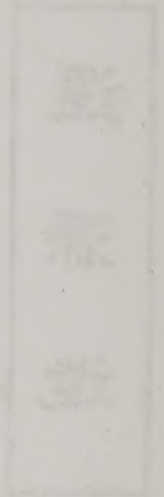
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Guangxi



Guangdong



Guangbei



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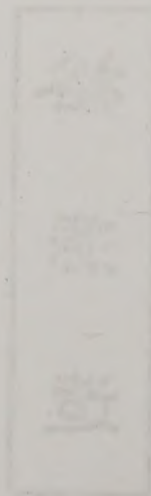
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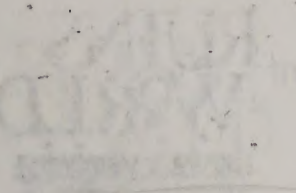
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