BUILT FOR FOOD:

THE RESISTANCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS FROM SERVICE TO OWNERSHIP, 1880-1960

by

Hongyan Yang

A Dissertation Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Architecture

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2021

ABSTRACT

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2021
Under the Supervision of Professors Jasmine Benyamin and Anna Andrzejewski

This dissertation explores the resistant voices of Chinese immigrants embedded in their food and food spatial practices in California from 1880 to 1960. While restrictive immigration laws in the United States generally prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the country, a sizable number of Chinese laborers navigated a culinary path to America through cooking, farming, and operating Chinese restaurants; some gradually achieved upward mobility. Although these activities have been noted broadly in Chinese food and immigration histories, few scholars have explored their spatial and material impacts. There is, however, a rich transnational history behind the everyday spaces that Chinese immigrants occupied and owned. They actively engaged in spatial practices around food preparation, service, and consumption to negotiate their power and identities. These practices have shaped both the physicality and experience of the built environment and influenced Chinese American food history.

Engaging with interdisciplinary and transnational approaches to architecture, food, and identity, I follow a common culinary trajectory of Chinese immigrants from service to ownership, exploring their everyday practices in middle- and upper-class white American homes (historic house museums today) in San Francisco and Oakland, Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown, and a Chinese-American ranch in Los Angeles. Using a series of case

studies, I unearth new oral histories, examine spatial ethnographies in both Chinese and English language sources, and investigate artifactual evidence to reveal the deliberate and strategic choices Chinese immigrants made about the built environment and culinary artifacts. I argue that their everyday practices simultaneously conformed to and challenged the uses prescribed by original designs. Chinese immigrants harbored complex and layered identities, performing a delicate dance between their desires and societal expectations through their tangible and intangible architectural and culinary practices.

In the three settings, Chinese immigrants adopted different *tactics* to negotiate for survivance and power. As domestic servants who lived in white American homes, they contested the prescribed uses of the homes, such as redefining service quarters as liminal spaces of liberation. As restaurant owners, they capitalized on cultural stereotypes in the design of the building exteriors while retaining a more regional identity in the interiors through imported Chinese embellishments, family-style dining, and Taishanese food. As ranch owners, the family in my case study resisted racial exclusion by consciously establishing a home with an American exterior in a predominately white emerging suburb while modifying the interiors to accommodate their transcultural lifestyle. Increased upward mobility allowed Chinese restaurant owners and homeowners to assert cultural agency in more material ways compared to Chinese domestic servants. However, all three roles profoundly communicated the agency of Chinese immigrants as seen in their choices, negotiations, intentionality, and creativity conveyed through everyday immaterial practices.

To

my parents,

Esther Kwan,

and especially Soo-Yin Jue

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My journey to completing a Ph.D. degree is so long. It might have wearied me out if I had not received a countless amount of support along the way. The people I met, including those who shared their fascinating family histories with me, made this a truly incredible journey. Members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, as well as mentors and scholars in allied fields, have taught me that academic research does not end with a degree, but will continue on through my work in the AAPI communities.

I want to begin by thanking my dissertation committee co-chairs. First, I am extremely grateful for my major advisor, Dr. Jasmine Benyamin, who has supported me both intellectually and emotionally. Her rousing pep talks about both my dissertation and my career choice in academia have provided much-needed empathy and affirmation. Her patient line-by-line editorial comments were important for sharpening my writing. I also would like to thank Professor Anna Andrzejewski at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, who guided me through the intellectual door of American vernacular architectural history during my first year of doctoral studies. Her mentorship was instrumental to the discovery of my passion for researching the built environment. She always responds to my work as honestly as possible but without being discouraging, guiding me to delve deeper into relevant scholarship. She taught me how to write with precision and articulate my ideas carefully. Her encouragement, benevolent pressure, and constructive feedback were critical to the constant improvement of this dissertation.

I am also very fortunate to have had two other supportive committee members who mentored me on ethnic foodways and ethnographic research. Professor William Warner Wood created the syllabus “Readings in Materiality and Critical Food Studies,” which guided me through the foundational scholarship of food studies in anthropology and beyond. He is also the

co-principal investigator of my IRB application, without which I would not have been able to collect and use oral histories in my research. His detailed editorial feedback, including his suggestion to include background information on Chinese immigration history in my dissertation, was crucial to making my writing more accessible to readers from various disciplines. I will remember this feedback as I continue to navigate my identity as an interdisciplinary scholar in the coming years. In addition, my dissertation has received generous support from Professor Yong Chen at the University of California, Irvine, who made me want to write and whose work I most love to read. His book, *Chop Suey, USA: The Story of Chinese Food in America* published by Columbia University Press in 2014, was a significant inspiration for this dissertation. He cares passionately about students and junior scholars, as well as Asian American communities, and always has something important and constructive to say. He motivates me to do the very best work I am capable of and taught me to be more confident as an emerging scholar in the field of Asian American Studies. The grant he provided through the University of California, Irvine was critical to funding my dissertation writing and helping me discover new research interests.

My dissertation has also received substantial support from other faculty mentors. Professor Arijit Sen, leader of the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures field school at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (UWM), was fundamental to my intellectual growth. Professor Sen has taught me two important lessons. First, humanities scholarship is nuanced and requires careful wording and observation; second, never forget the value of hard work. I will keep these lessons in mind as I continue with my scholarly pursuits. In addition, Professor Emeritus Thomas Hubka at UWM has provided extensive mentorship over the last few years, from my seminar project on the American Foursquare to my dissertation research on the Jue Joe Ranch. He taught

me the importance of giving names to houses that do not yet have names, which signifies proper architectural definitions and also pushes architectural scholarship to be more inclusive of the multifaceted experiences of ethnic communities. Similarly, Professor Emeritus Elizabeth Cromley at Northeastern University helped sharpen my research into food spaces. Her generous comments on my research of Hmong domestic kitchens, Chinese domestic servants, and many other subjects have been truly helpful. Furthermore, Dr. Lynne Horiuchi has provided constructive feedback on how to expand my dissertation into a book project. She relentlessly pushes architectural education to include the experiences of the AAPI communities through her scholarship and service with the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH). I have been very fortunate to connect with her, and I look forward to working with her and other scholars in the SAH's Asian American & Diasporic Architectural History Affiliate Group to advance knowledge about Asian American communities in the discipline of Architectural History. Additionally, Professor Emeritus Dell Upon at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Professor Emeritus Kingston Heath at the University of Oregon were both very supportive during the development of my dissertation proposal. Their scholarship was foundational to the field of American Vernacular Architecture and significantly informed my interpretations of the spaces built and occupied by early Chinese immigrants. Finally, many other scholars have also supported me in various ways, including Processor Emeritus Christopher Yip at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Professor Kirk Harris, Professor Jennifer Jordan, Professor Whitney Moon, and Jonathan Bruce at UWM, as well as many others.

I would also like to thank the Department of Architecture, the Historic Preservation Institute at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, the Graduate School, and the Center for International Education at UWM for providing crucial funding for this dissertation. Professor

Matthew Jarosz was specifically helpful in allowing me to fulfill my desire to work in historic preservation. Through my work for the Historic Preservation Institute and the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, I have made many valuable connections in the field. Many other faculty administrators also supported me in crucial ways, including Professor Mo Zell, Professor Nancy Frank, Professor Kyle Reynolds, and Professor Karl Wallick. Additionally, Sue McDonald offered significant support, processing my scholarships and grants promptly by navigating through various unfamiliar processes, including transferring a grant from the University of California, Irvine. I am very grateful for her help. Furthermore, the late Katherine Bowes, a librarian at UWM's Golda Meir Library, was extremely supportive throughout my dissertation research. Katherine always had confidence in me and never expressed doubt when finding primary materials became challenging. She was so resourceful and often went out of her way to help me find valuable research materials. It is my deepest regret that I was not able to share my full dissertation with her. She guided students in architectural research until the final days of her life. For that reason, this dissertation is a tribute to Katherine and her unrelenting support of research in the field of architectural history.

Most importantly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the generous support I received from the AAPI communities in California. In particular, Chinese American leader and community activist David Lei helped me connect with many Chinese businesses and community members in San Francisco, allowing me to conduct crucial dissertation fieldwork. I had tried for over two years to make contact with the Chinese American community in San Francisco, but as a community outsider, interviewing restaurant owners and researching San Francisco's Chinatown was impossible until David introduced me. I am very thankful for David's help in gaining the community's trust, which then enabled other possibilities for me to

conduct community-centered work. In addition, numerous community members, such as Brian Choy, Bruce Quan, Jr., Jeanie Low, Herbert Chu, Andrea Yee, Glenn Lym, Sylvia Tsang, Victor Lim, Jimmy Quan, Brandon Jew, Bill Lee, Nicole Jung-Alexander, and many others have provided extensive oral histories, making the dissertation rich with community voices. Maggie Pence, a former staff member at the Chinese Historical Society of America in San Francisco, kindly put my research call in the society's newsletter, which led to contact with other community members such as Brian Choy and Esther Kwan. Esther has been my godmother, my cheerleader, and my strongest advocate since the day she offered to host me, a stranger at the time, in her house while I was conducting fieldwork in San Francisco during the pandemic. She tirelessly drove me around the Bay Area so I could interview community members and allowed me to consult her amazing collection of books on Chinese American history, many of which are out of print today. Her kindness towards me and her passion for Chinese American history were some of the most important motivators for me to reach the finish line of this dissertation. Encounters like this one made research a fulfilling and worthwhile experience.

Furthermore, my research on the Jue Joe Ranch received an enormous amount of support from the Jue family. The Loon family, a branch of the Jue family, provided accommodations for me during my three research trips to Los Angeles. Their support made my research financially feasible. In addition, Dr. Jack Jue, Jr. and Soo-Yin Jue both provided extensive research materials and oral histories, which are crucial for describing everyday life on the ranch. Jack and Auntie Soo-Yin have been very encouraging of my academic pursuits; I am grateful for the special friendship, and even kinship in a sense, that has grown between us over the years. Other family members, including Kaiming Loon, Betty Loon, and Soo-Jan Wong, were also supportive along the way. This dissertation is a gift to the Jue family and I am glad that my writing

resonates with them. Other community members in the San Fernando Valley, such as David Zoraster and Franky Ortega, also provided crucial insights into local contexts, which helped complete my research on the Jue Joe Ranch.

I would also like to thank the many archive staff members who supported my dissertation research, including Frances Kaplan at the California Historical Society, Lola Aguilar and Casey Dexter-Lee at the California State Parks Archives, and James Eason and Jianye He at the Bancroft and East Asian Libraries at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition, I have received extensive support from other individuals and institutions in Southern California, including Li Wei Yang at the Huntington Library, Christopher Salvano at California State University, Northridge, as well as Eugene Moy and Linda Bentz at the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Specifically, during the last phase of my research on Chinese domestic servants, I received generous support from the Haas-Lilienthal House, the Pardee Home Museum, and the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House. Ron Bachman, Cherie Donahue, and Karen Silbertsein voted with the board to open the museum collection to me. Patty Donald, a family descendant and the President of the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House, kindly offered a one-hour private virtual tour of the house museum and uncovered many useful documents related to Chinese cook Sam Fong. The graciousness she expressed while learning about the house's diverse history touched me deeply. Furthermore, Carlo Caldanao and Pamela Larson from San Francisco Heritage provided additional important information for my research. I am grateful for all of these archives' willingness to allow partial or full access to their collections during the pandemic.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many individuals who were not directly engaged in my dissertation research but have helped me more than they could ever know. First, my

heartfelt gratitude goes to my parents, who tolerated my willful decision to embark on a long journey to studying overseas. Their love and belief in me made this unusual journey possible and they supported me, both emotionally and financially, to the best of their ability. I am very thankful for the accommodation and understanding of landlords in California, Robert and Roberta Gannon, as well as Helen Lee, who kindly subsidized my rent when my unit was burglarized and I had to end my lease. In Milwaukee, my friends Celine Wong and Patricia Adams are lighthouses in my life, opening up new horizons for me to learn from every day. Additionally, I received an enormous amount of support from my colleagues and friends, including Sarah Fayen Scarlett, Laura Ng, Shuayee Ly, Teresa Kulick, Zoya Brumberg, Chuo Li, Windy Zhao, Lisa Davidson, Ted Gong, Ian Tan, Laura Grotjan, Erin Dorbin, and many others. All of us were connected by a shared interest in researching the built environment or Chinese American history. I was extremely fortunate to work alongside these supportive, like-minded people. Lastly, I am very blessed to have my partner Andrew Eng. He taught me many things about America and truly expanded my understanding of ethnic food and Chinese American experiences. His inspirations will be present in the many years to come.

Introduction

On May 10, 1969, Chinese American communities gathered at the Promontory Summit in Utah, awaiting final recognition for the thousands of Chinese workers who helped build the nation's first Transcontinental Railroad. Philip Choy, architect, Chinese American historian and the executive director of the Chinese Historical Society of America at the time, was invited to speak at this centennial celebration ceremony of the railroad's completion. However, Choy was struck from the speakers' list at the last minute. Conversely, the highlight of the ceremony became Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe's keynote speech. Addressing the crowd, he proclaimed, "Who else but *Americans* could drill 10 tunnels in mountains 30 feet deep in snow?" without any acknowledgement of those Chinese railroad workers.

This event encapsulated a nationwide reckoning among Chinese American communities, whose voices were silenced at this particular event, and whose stories had not been told, and therefore were unknown in this country by the late 1960s. Asian American activists came forth to start a movement known as the "Asian American Movement," led by students at the San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley, to speak up about the unified struggles Asian Americans faced regarding racial equality and social justice. This was also a moment of awakening for the academic world, when scholars like Philip Choy and Him Mark Lai began to ask serious questions related to the contributions that Chinese immigrants have made to America. In the preface of *Outlines: History of the Chinese in America*, which was written for the first Chinese American History course in the United States in 1971, they state:

> For many years in the past and to a large degree today, history as taught in schools in this country had meant the history of the white majority only. Mention of other ethnic minorities was limited in the main to the role they played in relation to the white majority, interpreted from the viewpoint of that majority. By and large, however, it was rare to find the positive achievements of non-white groups in this country discussed at all. These acts of omission have acted to deprive the ethnic minorities of part of their heritage

> and surely, for any ethnic community to exist as a healthy entity, it must have self-respect and pride, part of which is necessarily based on their cultural and historical heritage.[1]

Much of what they wrote still resonates today. In a sense of self-critique, scholars in Asian American Studies or Ethnic Studies broadly call for writing histories that speak to the experiences of Asian Americans. Historian Roger Daniels argues, "Asians have been more celebrated for what happened to them than for what they have accomplished," which he defines as "negative history."[2] Similarly, historian Mae Ngai alerts scholars to what she calls an "orientalist blind spot," where a greater emphasis is placed on "what whites thought about Chinese labor than about Chinese labor itself." Along the same lines, scholars have been more interested in exploring the racial politics surrounding Chinese labor rather than the "conditions and experience of Chinese labor."[3] In many aspects, the past and current stages of Asian American Studies have reflected the Asian American Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, during which people fought for civil rights and inevitably needed to stress the oppression that they faced to demand for social justice. Still not fully uncovered are the accomplishments that Asian Americans have made in this nation.

This dissertation answers in part Daniels and Ngai's calls, and more importantly the desire of millions of Asian Americans, who want their experiences to be written and understood, especially at this dark and wounded moment amid the rise of anti-Asian aggression during the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus, which was alleged to have originated in a seafood market in

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[1] Him Mark Lai and Philip Choy, *Outlines: History of the Chinese in America* (San Francisco: H.M. Lai & P.P. Choy, 1971), iv. Extend my gratitude to Brian Choy, Philip Choy's son, who generously shared with me one of the original copies of the book.
[2] Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 4.
[3] Mae Ngai, "Chinese Gold Miners and the 'Chinese Question' in Nineteenth-Century California and Victoria," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 4 (2015): 1083–1084.

Wuhan, China, revived the century-old trope about Chinese food with poor hygiene, therefore Chinese immigrants were racial threats to America's public health.[4] In 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years. The law was subsequently extended until it was repealed in 1943. In agriculture, Chinese and other undesirable immigrants were also subject to discriminatory measures. In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, "Alien Land Laws" were enacted in western states, which barred these who were ineligible for citizenship from owning properties and leasing land longer than three years, targeting primarily Chinese and Japanese immigrants.[5] Despite its associated racial stigma and discrimination laws, food has also been an important entryway for Chinese immigrants to establish a life in America. Around the mid-nineteenth century, sizable numbers of male Chinese laborers navigated a culinary path to America. Significant numbers of them worked as cooks in private homes, company kitchens and on trans-oceanic ships.[6] After accumulating enough capital, they continued their culinary journeys by operating restaurants, farms, and other food-related businesses, and eventually built their own homes. The growing body of work in Chinese culinary history focuses mainly on Chinese restaurants, where most analyses center on the food itself.[7] Very few studies draw attention to the built environment and

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[4] For a discussion about how Chinese immigrants were considered as threats to America's public health before World War II, see Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[5] Keith Aoki, "No Right to Own?: The Early Twentieth-Century 'Alien Land Laws' as a Prelude to Internment," *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 19, no.1 (September 1998): 37–38.

[6] Yong Chen, *Chop Suey, USA: the Story of Chinese Food in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 45; Andrew Urban, "An Intimate World: Race, Migration, and Chinese and Irish Domestic Servants in the United States, 1850-1920" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2009), 285.

[7] The rising interests in studying food to understand Chinese immigration history in the United States have produced a large body of research by historians and anthropologists. Focusing mainly on Chinese restaurants, these studies consider Chinese identities and interracial relationships in relation to the production and consumption of Chinese food. Some prominent

decorative details of Chinese food spaces.[8] This scholarly gap drove me to focus on spaces that bear traces of Chinese food and food spatial practices. I interrogate the roles of the built environment, culinary material culture, and related practices played in uncovering the narrative of agency of Chinese immigrants from 1880 to 1960.[9] This historical period overlaps with the Chinese Exclusion Era (1882-1943), which makes the study of agency particularly important as most existing studies of the era predominantly depict histories of racial oppression among Chinese immigrants.[10]

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work include: Yong Chen, "Food, Race and Ethnicity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed. Jeffrey M Pilcher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 428–43; Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*; Haiming Liu, "Chop Suey as Imagined Authentic Chinese Food: the Culinary Identity of Chinese Restaurants in the United States," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1–24; Shun Lu and Gary Alan Fine, "The Presentation of Ethnic Authenticity: Chinese Food as a Social Accomplishment," *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1995): 535–53; Li Li, "Cultural and Intercultural Function of Chinese Restaurants in the Mountain West: 'An Insider's Perspective'," *Western Folklore* 61, no. 3 (2002): 329–46; Liora Gvion and Naomi Trostler, "From Spaghetti and Meatballs Through Hawaiian Pizza to Sushi: the Changing Nature of Ethnicity in American Restaurants," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 41, no. 6 (2008): 950–74; Franklin Ng, "Food and Culture: Chinese Restaurants in Hawai'i," *Chinese America History and Perspectives* (2010): 113–22.

[8] A few exceptions include: Tonia Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture: San Francisco Chinese Restaurants as Cultural Intersections, 1849-1984" (PhD diss., University of California-Berkeley, 1985); Hongyan Yang, "Toy's Chinese Restaurants: Exploring Chinese Immigration History through the Built Environment," in *American Chinese Restaurants: Society, Culture and Consumption*, ed. Jenny Banh and Haiming Liu (New York: Routledge, 2020), 285–300; Sheng-mei Ma, "Yeast: Cannibalizing the Orient in American Culture," in *Studies in the Symbolic Interaction, Volume 33,* ed. Norman K. Denzin (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Ltd, 2009), 149–163.

[9] Hongyan Yang, "Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen," in *Routledge Handbook of Food in Asia*, ed. Cecilia Leong-Salobir (New York: Routledge, 2019), 89–105; Yang, "Toy's Chinese Restaurants: Exploring Chinese Immigration History through the Built Environment," 285–300.

[10] Some notable studies include: Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Erika Lee, *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2019); Jean Pfaelzer, *Drive Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007); Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate : Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

To expand knowledge about Chinese experiences, I consider the question of "human agency." Sociologists Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische define human agency as "the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations."[11] According to this definition, people's past, future and present experiences all contribute to their responses to emerging situations. While the responses may be only temporary, people who occupied a lower status in the social and racial hierarchies, such as Chinese people during the Exclusion Era, could nonetheless demonstrate resistance and exert influence.[12] This study expands on this concept by considering the material and spatial dimensions of agency among Chinese immigrants. I examine their choices, negotiations, intentions, and creativity around the built environment and culinary artifacts through studying the daily practices of Chinese immigrants. The following theories and studies are informative as I explore the agency of Chinese immigrants through their food and food spatial practices.

Practices and Embodied Experiences in the Built Environment

To uncover the agency of Chinese immigrants, this dissertation first and foremost draws on phenomenology and practice theories to focus on embodied experiences situated in the built

[11] Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, "What is Agency?" *American Journal of Sociology* 103 no. 4 (January 1998): 970.
[12] A number of studies help shed light on the resistance of Chinese immigrants during the Exclusion Era. To name a few: Andrew Urban, *Brokering Servitude: Migration and the Politics of Domestic Labor during the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Yang, "Toy's Chinese Restaurants: Exploring Chinese Immigration History through the Built Environment," 285–300; Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

environment. Phenomenologists stress that the world is experienced and foreground their studies of social phenomena in the subjective experiences of people. Maurice Merleau Ponty emphasizes the importance of habitation. As he puts it, "to look at an object is to inhabit it, and from this habitation to grasp all things in terms of the aspect which they present to it."[13] Similarly, James Mensch considers embodiment as a necessary condition of perception. He notes the importance of bodily movement for experiencing physical objects.[14] These studies are foundational to my interpretation of the built environment based on how it is experienced by people rather than a static object.

In addition, embodied experiences also play an important role in preserving memories of the past and claiming resistance to the dominant culture. British anthropologist Paul Connerton terms this as "habitual memory," where repetitive bodily actions help form habits and retain memories. He also emphasizes the exclusiveness of embodied experiences, which can only be retrieved by people who share certain memories. In particular, he addresses table manners as one of the bodily properties that link human bodies to their history as well as broader institutional control.[15] Connerton's study is critical to understanding how Chinese immigrants retained traditional culture through bodily practices. Similarly, French theorist Michel de Certeau terms the everyday bodily practices that individuals used to transform the world as *tactics,* which are often informal and act as a form of resistance to the master narratives created by people in power.[16] These foundational theories, in one way or another, highlight that bodily practices are

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[13] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1962), 79.
[14] James Mensch, *Embodiment: From the Body to the Body Politic* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009).
[15] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72–104.
[16] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

integral parts of the everyday experience, which further provide an opportunity to explore the cultural resistance and agency of Chinese immigrants.

Many architectural historians have recognized the importance of studying the human experience embedded in the built environment and provided suggestions on how to document these experiences. For instance, folklorist and anthropologist Michael Ann Williams notes, "We know that they [old houses] represent many uses and many meanings, but these uses and meanings are not fully crystalized in physical forms."[17] For her, oral histories are crucial to the documentation of the intangible aspects of the built environment. Similarly, architectural historian Robin Evans is more concerned with the "occupation" rather than "fabrication" of buildings. He examines how building forms are experienced in everyday life and considers a building as "an activity, not a place."[18] In addition, scholars such as Dell Upton and Arijit Sen emphasize the importance of the human body and its movement in revealing multi-layered meanings of the built environment and cultural landscapes.[19] Drawing on embodiment, these studies help uncover the diverse experiences underlying the physical fabrics of buildings and landscapes by focusing on people's habitual practices and movements.

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[17] Michael Ann Williams, *Homeplace: The Social Use and Meaning of the Folk Dwelling in Southwestern North Carolina* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 20.
[18] Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 80.
[19] Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Places* 2, no. 2 (1984): 59–72; Dell Upton, "Architecture in Everyday Life," New Literary History 33, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 707–723; Arijit Sen and Jennifer Johung, "Introduction: Landscapes of Mobility: Culture, Politics, and Placemaking," in *Landscapes of Mobility: Culture, Politics, and Placemaking*, eds. Arijit Sen and Jennifer Johung (London: Routledge, 2013), 1–17; Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman, "Introduction: Embodied Placemaking: An Important Category of Critical Analysis," in *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014), 1–18.

The focus on embodied experiences is critical to the study of ethnic architectural spaces because ethnic groups' imprints on the built environment are often more ephemeral and sometimes intangible. Architectural historian Kingston Heath uses the notion of "cultural weathering" to articulate the cultural imprints that Portuguese immigrants left on the built environment. He stresses that architectural studies should not rely on a sole focus on forms or stylistic features of original designs, and must also consider "the perspective of the interrelated sets of cultural determinants that shape them."[20] Many studies have drawn on oral histories and ethnographic observations to study ethnic spaces, revealing that ethnic groups have their own culturally specific ways of inhabiting vernacular architectural forms and invest new meanings into them.[21] I draw on these studies to uncover Chinese immigrants' subtle interventions in the spaces they occupied, leased, and built. Their everyday practices and movements through spaces constitute opportunities to carry on traditional practices and challenge existing social structures or orders.

Food and Culinary Material Culture

In addition to practices underlying the built environment, culinary artifacts and related practices are also key to my interpretation of the agency of Chinese people. Anthropologists and

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[20] Kingston Wm Heath, *Patina of Place* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 180–181.

[21] Renew Chow, *Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 82–85; Ellen J. Pader, "Spatiality and Social Change: Domestic Space Use in Mexico and the United States," *American Ethnologist* 20, no.1 (February 1993): 114–37; Lara Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, Due Cucine: The Italian Immigrant Home with Two Kitchens," *Gender, Place and Culture* 13, no.6 (December 2006): 685–95; Tasoulla Hadjiyanni and Kristin Helle, "Kitchen as Cultural Mediums: the Food Experiences of Mexican Immigrants in Minnesota," *Housing and Society* 35, no. 2 (2008): 97–116; Thomas C. Hubka and Judith T. Kenny, "The Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community: Housing and the Process of Americanization, 1870-1920," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 8 (2000): 33–52; Yang, "Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen," 89–105.

sociologists have dedicated a considerable amount of work to studying the agentive role of food in embodying culture and memories as well as creating distinction and negotiating power. Anthropologist Roland Barthes explains the semiotic meaning of food as it signifies and carries a "system of communication." By recognizing food as a signifier, this semiotic approach to food links food to the understanding of human experience.[22] Similar to Barthes's point, Claude Levi-Strauss considers the symbolic meaning of raw, cooked and rotten food, viewing the change from one state to the other as natural and cultural transformations.[23] Building on these semiotic readings of food, anthropologist David Sutton argues that food is a compelling medium for evoking memory practices. For him, eating is an embodied practice that helps reconnect with past experiences as well as transmit certain memories and histories. In particular, he comments on the special meaning of food for migrants, stating "food is essential to counter tendencies toward fragmentation of experience."[24] Based on this view, food can provide a restorative experience for immigrants, helping them reconnect or reimagine homelands, thus making it a potent object for embodying cultural resilience.[25]

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[22] Barthes summarizes four semantic features that food can communicate. First, he argues that food can allow a person to commemorate the past and the national culinary experience. Second, he thinks that different kinds of food connote sublimated information such as sexuality. Third, he argues that food signifies immaterial realities based on its materiality. Fourth, he contends that food can serve as a sign for situation. Roland Barthes, "Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" [1961], in *Food and Culture, A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 20–27.

[23] Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle," in *Food and Culture, A Reader*, ed. Carolyn Finney and Penny Van Esterik, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 28–35. Original published as Claude Levi-Strauss, "Le Triangle Culinaire," *LArc* 26 (1965): 19–29.

[24] David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: an Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 77.

[25] Many studies have noted food as a locus for nostalgia recollection or collective memory among immigrant families. To name a few: Ivana Bajic-Hajdukovic, Food, Family, and Memory: Belgrade Mothers and Their Migrant Children, *Food and Foodways* 21, no. 1 (2013): 46–65; Michael A. Di Giovine, "*La Vigilia Italo-Americana*: Revitalizing the Italian-American Family through the Christmas Eve 'Feast of the Seven Fishes,'" *Food and Foodways* 18, no. 4 (2010):

Furthermore, food can also create symbolic boundaries and act as a form of power. Anthropologist Mary Douglas reflects on the role of food in enacting social structures. She argues that the natural world can be categorized into the pure and impure; prohibiting certain foods can create a model for thinking about the purity of the Divine. In the case of Jewish dietary rules, food thus can be interpreted as self-control, distinction, and a sense of belonging.[26] Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu further underlines the role of food for demarcation and classification in his seminal work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. He argues that cultural practices are highly influenced by educational attainment and social class origins. Thus, certain tastes or choices in food consumption can be used to mark distinctions and differentiate cultural competence between different classes.[27] In addition to class, food indexes racial boundaries and hierarchies. As anthropologist Lisa Heldke suggests, eating foreign food is a form of culinary imperialism, where food adventurers seek to dominate another culture by consuming their exotic cuisine.[28] Echoing Heldke, historian Yong Chen articulates how racial hierarchy is embedded in the popularization of Chinese foods in the United States, which he considers as an extension of the historical roles of the Chinese working in service domains. He stresses that it was affordability rather than Chinese cuisine itself that Americans appreciated.[29]

181–208; Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 6; Krishnendu Ray, *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Household* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

[26] Mary Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus," in *Food and Culture, A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2013), 48–58. Original published as Mary Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus," in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 41–57.

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1986), 193.

[28] Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[29] Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*, 42 and 152.

The authenticity of Chinese food is socially constructed, and it is the perceived authenticity rather than traditional taste that attracted American diners.[30] These studies reveal how Chinese food histories in America embody the racial hierarchies between Chinese and whites.

Some other scholars, however, claim that food can also destabilize existing power structures and racial boundaries. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz observes that subordinates can nevertheless assert their agency through food. For example, his work reveals that through participating in food production, slaves and their descendants who served as domestic cooks also succeeded in creating a cuisine for themselves and their masters.[31] Similarly, some scholars have indicated that Chinese food can also provide uplifting experiences for other ethnic minorities, such as Jewish people.[32] Food has increasingly become an arena for transcending racial and ethnic boundaries because it poses little threat to the dominant groups compared to other cultural practices.[33] These studies provide important foundational ideas for examining how Chinese food and culinary practices may also have exerted influence on the dominant social group and contested existing racial boundaries and hierarchies.

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[30] Liu, "Chop Suey as Imagined Authentic Chinese Food," 1–24; Lu and Fine, "The Presentation of Ethnic Authenticity," 535–53; Li, "Cultural and Intercultural Function of Chinese Restaurants in the Mountain West," 329–46.

[31] Sidney Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Food historian Cecilia Leong-Salobir in her study of colonial cuisines in India, Malaysia and Singapore also reveals similar findings. She argues that colonial cuisine emerged as a negotiation between the British colonizers and indigenous Asian servants. Leong- Cecilia Leong-Salobir, "A Taste of Empire. Food, the Colonial Kitchen and the Representation and Role of Servants in India, Malaysia and Singapore, C. 1858-1963" (PhD diss., University of Western Australia, 2009).

[32] Gaye Tuchman and Harry Gene Levine, "New York Jews and Chinese Food: The Social Construction of an Ethnic Pattern," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22, no. 3 (1993): 382–407; Haiming Liu, "Kung Pao Kosher: Jewish Americans and Chinese Restaurants in New York," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6, no. 1 (2010): 80–101.

[33] Samantha Barbas, "'I'll Take Chop Suey': Restaurants as Agents of Culinary and Cultural Change," *Consumption Markets and Culture* 36, no. 4 (2003): 669–86.

In addition to food, other related culinary artifacts and food spaces also provide valuable opportunities to investigate the agency of Chinese immigrants. Scholars in material culture studies have examined culinary artifacts such as cooking devices, tableware, and kitchen equipment. When combined with other historical evidence, such as prescriptive literature, magazines and personal accounts, culinary artifacts can be used to study social behavior and communicate household roles and relationships.[34] Among them, Barbara G Carson and Kym S Rice's book *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior, and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* provides crucial ideas for my investigation of domestic culinary activities through tableware. In their study of early nineteenth-century Washingtonians, Carson and Rice note the "mutual dependency" between dining possessions and behavior, meaning some performances were only possible with the acquisition of certain things. For example, the genteel class used tableware with specific designs and adopted manners according to etiquette books to telegraph their status.[35] In other words, preserved tableware and related accounts can be used to explore past culinary practices and associated values. Similarly, architectural historians draw on historical evidence such as prescriptive literature, architectural drawings and historical

[34] Barbara G Carson and Kym S Rice, *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior, and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990); Amy Elizabeth Marks, "Defining Relationships Through Foodways: The Corbit Household of Cantwell's Bridge, Delaware, 1802-1810" (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2000); Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology From the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Margaret Park Johnson, "Gender Dichotomies in the Kitchen: Feminine and Masculine Qualities of Spaces and Artifacts" (Thesis, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012); Sarah Berndt, "'When Science Strikes the Kitchen, It Strikes Home': the Influence of Sarah Tyson Rorer in the Progressive Era Kitchen, 1880-1915" (Thesis, University of Delaware, 2017); Johnson, "Gender Dichotomies in the Kitchens" (Thesis, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012).
[35] Carson and Rice, *Ambitious Appetites*, 56.

photographs to trace the development of food spaces to gain insights into domestic lives.[36] As many studies have pointed out, kitchens before the early twentieth century were historically considered as the backstage of houses that highlighted the meanings of labor and service. Such spaces often occupied the lower part of the spatial hierarchy in domestic spaces and received the least decorative attention. These studies of kitchen history are critical to the formulation of arguments regarding agency as when users break from expected uses and redefine the meanings of such spaces.

Performance and Ethnicity Theories

In addition to the scholarship on the built environment and culinary artifacts, performance and ethnicity theories are fundamental to my rendering of the agency of Chinese immigrants. Sociologist Erving Goffman argues that people tend to behave in ways that affirm their social statuses and meet others' expectations. He alludes to how "setting"—where actions take place—can influence individual behavior and enable the so-called "personal front."[37] Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu uses the concept "habitus" to explain how practices are "regulated

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[36] Ellen M. Plante, *The American Kitchen, 1700 to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 1995); Elizabeth C. Cromley, *The Food Axis* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010); Olive Blair Graffam, "'They Are Very Handy': Kitchen Furnishings, 1875-1920," in *The American Home: Material Culture, Domestic Space and Family Life*, ed. Eleanor McD. Thompson (Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1998), 217–40; Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor, *Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2011); Michelle Mock, "The Modernization of the American Home Kitchen, 1900-1960" (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2011); Toni J Tassell, "The Transformation of the Modern American Kitchen from 1901 through 1964: From Hell on Earth to the Warmest Room in the House" (Thesis, Arizona State University, 2013); Kristen Eileen Schulrud, "American Through the Kitchen Window: Mid-Twentieth Century American Culture Through Kitchen Advertisements, Products and Design" (Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013).

[37] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959), 22–24.

improvisations" that reproduce objective meanings or structures, which are "constantly changing and forming" according to the relationships between individuals and situations.[38] Echoing Bourdieu's emphasis on situations, cultural anthropologist Richard Bauman defines performance as "situated behavior," which was created to take control of a situation. As he puts it, "The structured system stands available to them as a set of conventional expectations and associations, but these expectations and associations are further manipulated in innovative ways, by fashioning novel performances outside the conventional system, or working various transformational adaptations which turn performance into something else."[39] Bauman more directly touches on human agency, indicating that people can manipulate "conventional expectations" to act in ways that can potentially change current social structure and create new ones. Agency thus resides in the situational practices performed by people.

Re-enforcing performance theories, ethnicity theories understand race as a socially constructed phenomenon that varies according to time and place.[40] Stuart Hall is one of the most influential scholars on the politics of identity. He uses the concept of "positioning" to explain his understanding of identity making. As he notes, "Cultural identities are points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning." He does not consider identity as an already accomplished fact. Instead, he thinks of it as always in process and constituted within representation, which implicates the positions we are in.[41] Echoing Hall, many other scholars

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[38] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 78–79, 109.
[39] Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art As Performance* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1984), 27–44.
[40] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 21.
[41] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 222–37.

note the performativity of ethnic identities during interactions with other ethnic groups. For example, when exploring the inter-ethnic relationship between Lapps and Norwegians in North Norway, Harald Eidheim found that Lapps intentionally abandoned actions that present Lappish identity in public space and chose to act out Norwegian identity based on the definable circumstances or opportunity situations.[42] This study implies that the performative choices of ethnic identities are situational, affected by their associated social meanings. Similarly, Henning Siverts reveals that the unequal power between Ladinos and Indians in southern Mexico affected how Indians performed their ethnic identities. Indians learned Ladinos' ways of life in order to gain access to resources while maintaining their Indianhood.[43] Besides social factors, economic factors also affect the performance of ethnic identities. Gunnar Haaland uncovers that farmers Fur acted like Baggara when they tried to secure cattle capital by practicing cattle husbandry activities that were commonly identified with Baggara.[44] All of these studies stress the contingency of ethnic identities, which were chosen and performed deliberately and tactically according to the situation. Ethnic groups have the agency to manipulate the representation of identities to achieve certain political goals. This dissertation considers food and architecture to be identity categories and explores how Chinese immigrants performed discursive identities through their everyday culinary and spatial practices.

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[42] Harald Eidheim, "When Ethnic Identity Is a Social Stigma," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Long Grove: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 39–57.
[43] Henning Siverts, "Ethnic Stability and Boundary Dynamics in Southern Mexico," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc., 1969), 101–116.
[44] Gunnar Haaland, "Economic Determinants in Ethnic Processes," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc., 1969), 58–73.

Transnational Theories

Lastly and most importantly, my study draws on transnational theories popularized since the 1980s to offer an interconnected understanding of Chinese food and food spatial practices in the United States. The ideas, artifacts, and practices that travelled along with Chinese immigrants to America all contributed to their ability to reimagine and reconceive traditional practices and develop hybrid practices. In his influential book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai states, "the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models."[45] His understanding of locality is relational and contextual, profoundly shaped by factors located beyond geographical boundaries. He redefines the mission of ethnography in terms of incorporating various expressive representations, such as films, novels and travel accounts, in order to illuminate large-scale, imagined possibilities. This echoes the earlier idea of George Marcus, who encouraged ethnographers to consider larger issues of political economy and broader views of representation. He introduces "multi-sited ethnography" to emphasize the simultaneity of action in multiple locales. His detailed discussion of methods includes following and staying with the movement of a particular group of initial subjects, tracing the circulation of material objects across different contexts, following metaphors, plots, stories, allegories, life and biographies.[46] Although this dissertation is mostly concerned with Chinese practices in America, these studies inspire me to take into account the

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[45] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 32.

[46] George Marcus, "Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 175; George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 110.

transnational ties that helped shape Chinese practices in America, such as through business connections and cultural memories. For example, historian Yong Chen notes the importance of Chinese people's pre-migration life and their perception of America in their transitional journey. He argues that Chinese Americans understood their experiences within the trans-Pacific context, rather than only in American society.[47]

Transnational theories also add a layer of complexity for thinking about immigrants' multi-layered identities. The edited volume *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* reveals that immigrants could maneuver their identities to either conform to or resist their subordinate position in the global system.[48] Anthropologist Aihwa Ong uses the term "flexible citizenship" to highlight the various strategies wealthy transnational Chinese families used to accumulate capital and power in the changing political-economic conditions.[49] Both studies reveal that transnational theories provide another way to examine the contingency of immigrant identities, the performance of which is situational, based on the contexts in both home and host countries but also through global connections.

Research Questions

Building on the aforementioned frameworks and studies, this dissertation examines the resistant voices of Chinese immigrants embedded in their architectural and culinary practices in California, and how their actions shaped the physicality and experience of the built environment.

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[47] Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*: *A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
[48] Nina Glick Schiller et al., "Transnationalism: a New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration," in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Nina Glick Schiller et al. (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992), 12.
[49] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

I undertake an ethnographic investigation of the everyday life of Chinese immigrants in three settings, following a common culinary trajectory from service to ownership: middle- and upper-class American homes, Chinese restaurants, and a Chinese ranch. These three settings mark Chinese immigrants' increased ownership over the buildings they occupied, from boarding with American employers as domestic servants, to leasing buildings from white property owners as restaurant owners, to finally having their own ranches and homes as property owners. I seek to explore how Chinese immigrants engaged in daily practices around food preparation, service, and consumption to communicate complex identities and claim agency. Because the three settings entail somewhat different experiences of Chinese immigrants, I ask slightly different research questions in each setting.

In the context of middle- and upper-class American homes, I focus on a few historic house museums in the San Francisco Bay Area that once had Chinese servants. In this context, I explore the following questions: What were the spatial and material qualities of the homes? What kind of ideals and daily practices did they imply? Did the everyday practices of Chinese servants follow or challenge the prescribed functions and processional orders of domestic spaces and how? In particular, I examine how they helped redefine the meanings of service quarters. Regarding culinary practices, I explore how they employed food and culinary artifacts to influence the material culture of the homes they worked in and how these practices were similar or different from their familiar culinary practices. Overall, the deliberate decisions that Chinese servants made through their everyday culinary and spatial practices are key to revealing their agency.

In the context of Chinese restaurants, I focus on the architectural and culinary choices of Chinese restaurant owners in San Francisco's Chinatown. After the 1906 earthquake and fire,

Chinese businessowners played a formative role in shaping the design of Chinatown's buildings. Building on existing studies of Chinatown architecture, I focus on an exterior and interior comparison of the built environment, exploring the complex identities restaurant owners attempted to communicate and the factors that influenced their deliberate architectural and decorative choices.[50] With respect to culinary choices, I am interested in exploring: What kind of food was served in Chinese restaurants? How were the restaurant menus designed to accommodate the needs of different diners? Through bodily practices, how was the food served and according to what cultural dining rituals or customs? The tangible expressions through architecture, food and menus as well as the intangible practices they implied together constitute my interpretation of the agency of Chinese restaurant owners.

In the context of Chinese homes, I delve into the homemaking practices of the Jue family from the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles from 1919 to 1960. Compared with the two other settings, the Jue family's property ownership allows me to investigate the family's intentions underlying the built environment and surrounding landscapes. I explore the following questions: What factors affected the design decisions of the family? How were the spaces used in relation to the built forms? How did culinary practices and other cultural customs shape the physicality and experiences of the homes? Both the design intentions expressed through the physical spaces and

[50] Notable studies on Chinatown architecture include: Christopher L. Salter, *San Francisco's Chinatown: How Chinese a Town?* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1978); Christopher Lee Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985); Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985); Chuo Li, "The Politics and Heritage of Race and Space in San Francisco's Chinatown," in *On Location: Heritage Cities and Sites*, ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles (New York: Springer, 2012), 43–45; Chuo Li, "Commercialism and Identity Politics in New York's Chinatown," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 6 (2016): 1118–34.

the intangible bodily practices underlying the spaces are important to my rendering of the family's agency in making home in America and communicating their hybrid identities.

Research Methods and Sources

Drawing on the "archi-textual" framework developed by architectural historian Mirjana Lozanovska, this dissertation conducts close readings of artifactual evidence as well as oral histories and personal accounts to explore the agency of Chinese immigrants. Lozanovska describes the "archi-textual" framework as "a dialectic between the architectural frontier-plans, sections, maps, graphic overlays and photographs against the stories, narratives, interviewees' words, observed use and programme—in other words, the textual narrative and coding of space."[51] I assert that the agency of Chinese immigrants was expressed in how their tangible and intangible daily practices challenged or conformed to the prescribed uses and nominal functions of artifactual evidence.

I rely partially on artifactual evidence to reason prescribed and actual practices of people. As studies in architectural history and material culture studies demonstrate, there is a codependency between human behaviors and artifactual evidence; the latter can be used to investigate the former.[52] When there are limited oral histories and personal accounts of Chinese

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[51] Mirjana Lozanovska. *Migrant Housing: Architecture, Dwelling, Migration* (London: Routledge, 2019), 132.

[52] A few notable studies include: Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (April 1, 1982): 1–19; Thomas J Schlereth, "Material Culture Studies in America, 1876-1976," in *Material Culture Studies in America*, ed. Thomas J Schlereth, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History 1982), 1–78; James Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology—What's the Difference?," in *Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things*, ed. Leland Ferguson (Columbia: The Society for Historical Archaeology, 1977), 10; Melville J. Herskovits, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 119; Henry Glassie, *Material Culture* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999); Thomas Carter, *Invitation to Vernacular*

immigrants, I rely on artifactual evidence to make up for the missing information to reasonably speculate about related practices. I also strategically chose these case studies with extensive architectural documentation, including historic house museums, a building that was included in a Historic American Building Survey (HABS), Chinese restaurants that retained original character-defining features, and a Chinese ranch with architectural drawings by a family descendant. The architectural evidence of these sites is critical to uncovering the everyday experiences of Chinese immigrants.

Building on my extensive dissertation fieldwork in California and networks of families and friends in the San Francisco Bay Area, I have unearthed oral histories and personal accounts that yield new insights into the practices of Chinese immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The challenge of collecting direct accounts of early Chinese American experiences is worth noting, which to a large extent has contributed to the limited research on the subject. Most Chinese laborers, even those who later achieved upward mobility, rarely had the opportunity to document their everyday lives in writing and pass them down to descendants. My research time period (1880-1960) also provides limited opportunities to document relevant oral histories as most of the people who have first-hand experiences are no longer living. To overcome this methodological challenge, I not only uncovered valuable oral histories from Chinese American descendants but also undertook new readings of existing accounts.

In chapter 1, I examine four Chinese domestic servants, including Ah Quin, Tom Wong, Edward Jung, and Sam Fong. They worked at the following homes respectively: an officer's quarters at Camp Reynolds on Angel Island, the Haas-Lilienthal House in San Francisco, and the

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Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), xiv-xxi.

Pardee Home Museum and the Cohen Bray House in Oakland. The officer's quarters in my study was documented in a Historic American Building Survey, which includes architectural drawings and detailed analyses of the historical uses of the rooms. The Angel Island State Park Collection also contains additional field documentation of the officer's quarters at Camp Reynolds. I compare the artifactual evidence with Ah Quin's diaries, in which he documented his everyday life working as a domestic servant at Camp Reynolds. The latter three homes are house museums today, whose collections contain original artifacts, architectural drawings, and personal accounts that include information about Chinese servants. By examining the everyday practices of Chinese servants and the prescribed uses of the houses and home possessions collectively, I explore how Chinese servants challenged or promoted the existing domestic culture to uncover their agency. In addition, whenever possible, I employ prescriptive literature and historical newspapers to provide explanations and reveal broader histories.

In chapter 2, I examine four Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown, including the Far East Cafe, Hang Far Low, Sing Hung Heung, and Woey Sin Low. These restaurants preserved either original interiors or photographs that provide insights into the historical conditions of the exteriors and interiors of the buildings. Specifically, I draw on historical photographs, field documentation, building permits, architectural drawings, historical newspapers and oral histories to explore the design choices of Chinese restaurant owners. In addition, I closely study the design of restaurant menus to further articulate the intentions of the restaurant owners. Looking at architectural evidence in conjunction with culinary evidence, I explain how related practices took place and were used to meticulously communicate selective identities and tactically negotiate for acceptance and power.

In chapter 3, I explore the homemaking practices on the Jue Joe ranch in the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles. I focus on multiple spatial scales, from the community scale to the ranch scale, and then zoom into the individual building scale and the human body scale. I am very fortunate to have connected with Jack Jue, Jr., whose great grandfather Jue Joe arrived in California during the Gold Rush in 1874. Jack Jr. has dedicated over a decade to researching and sharing his family's transpacific stories using his extensive family archives passed down from his ancestors.[53] His aunt Soo-Yin Jue, who grew up on the Jue Joe Ranch, has also shared with me extensive oral histories about the lives on the ranch along with architectural drawings and family photographs. Building on the ethnographic and architectural resources from the Jue family and additional archival materials such as aerial photos, building permits and historical newspapers, I aim to create an accurate account of the architectural and culinary choices of the family and interpret the reasons and motives behind their choices. This further allows me to understand how these complex choices communicated three generations of the family's changing Chinese American identities.

Research Significance

This dissertation offers a fresh examination of Chinese American experiences during the Exclusion Era and beyond by making four interventions. First, it challenges the border of architectural history studies by considering the specific and distinct experiences of Chinese immigrants. Architectural history as a field of study has paid scant attention to Chinese American spaces. The considerable amount of research on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-

[53] Jack Jr. created a blog "Jue Joe Clan History," through which he shared his family histories written by himself and other family members. Jack Jue, Jr., Jue Joe Clan History, accessed November 24, 2021, http://juejoeclan.blogspot.com. It was through this blog that I connected with the Jue family.

century histories of American homes and kitchens also does little to account for the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities such as the Chinese, who shared very different culinary traditions and cultural sensibilities.[54] Architectural historian Thomas Carter calls attention to how varied inhabitants with diverse sensibilities used conventional American house configurations.[55] This dissertation contributes to the small but growing body of literature on Chinese American architectural spaces to address how ethnicity is a significant factor that shapes American vernacular architecture. These existing studies are mostly contemporary, which could be partially attributed to the convenience in accessing ethnographic information.[56] My pre-1960 focus helps add a historical dimension to the existing body of literature. In doing so, it contributes to increasing cultural sensitivity and awareness in architectural history studies.

Second, the dissertation contributes to ongoing discussions of how architecture is redefined through the lens of migration. Architecture is located in place, but its production has been historically and presently affected by the flows of ideas, racial politics, and many other factors created by the condition of transnational migration. Migration challenges fields such as vernacular architecture studies and anthropology, which historically largely consider culture and

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[54] A few exceptions include: Victoria Jane Solan, "'Built for Heath': American Architecture and the Healthy House, 1850-1930" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2004); Kelley Fento Deetz, *Bound to the Fire* (Lexington: The University of Press of Kentucky, 2017); Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion, Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

[55] Carter, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture,* 75.

[56] Some notable studies include: Mirjana Lozanovska, ed., *Ethno-Architecture and the Politics of Migration* (London: Routledge, 2016); Lozanovska, *Migrant Housing*; Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, *Due Cucine*," 685–95; Hadjiyanni and Helle, "Kitchen as Cultural Mediums," 97–116; Arijit Sen, "Transcultural Place-Making: Intertwined Spaces of Sacred and Secular on Devon Avenue, Chicago," in *Transcultural Cities: Border-Crossing and Placemaking*, ed. Jeffrey Hou (New York: Routledge, 2012),19–33; Sarah Lynn Lopez, *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Yang, "Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen," 89–105.

people within secure boundaries. Only a small group of architectural historians have challenged this disciplinary scope by considering the making of ethnic architecture in a transnational context.[57] By examining architecture through the lens of migration, this study expands understanding of how architecture participates in complex social and cultural processes.

Third, this dissertation uncovers the underexplored yet vibrant spatial and material aspects of Chinese culinary and immigration histories. Current studies on Chinese culinary history are predominantly written by historians and anthropologists, who have not addressed the importance of architecture and culinary artifacts (except for food and restaurant menus) in understanding Chinese culinary experiences. This echoes a gap in migration or immigration studies in general, which rarely draw from an architectural perspective.[58] Most existing studies of Chinese culinary history also predominantly focus on restaurants, overlooking Chinese culinary histories beyond these sites.[59] My home disciplines, architectural history and material culture studies, draw on buildings and cultural artifacts to reveal the social mentality and behavior of people. Building on my home disciplines' focus on space and materiality as well as an ethnographic approach, I help shed light on the intentions and uses of the Chinese culinary spaces beyond restaurants, including American and Chinese homes. Thus, my dissertation significantly expands the understanding of the material and spatial aspects of Chinese culinary history.

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[57] To name a few works: Sen, "Transcultural Place-Making,"19–33; Lopez, *The Remittance Landscape*.
[58] Lozanovska, ed., *Ethno-Architecture and the Politics of Migration*, 217.
[59] Some exceptions include studies of Chinese domestic servants: Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*; Andrew Coe, *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Finally, this dissertation enriches understanding of the fluidity and complexity of Chinese American identities and their representations. Critical race scholars have noted the politics and evolutionary features of race, but have not addressed how their theories apply to the case of Chinese immigrants and their spatial and material practices. By reading architecture and culinary artifacts as identity categories, my research renders the making and representations of Chinese American identities as performances carried out through daily architectural and culinary practices. Their expressions of racial and ethnic identities tactically balanced between self-desires and social expectations, which allowed them to assert their agency and successfully navigate the complex social, economic, and racial politics during the Exclusion Era and beyond.

Chapter 1: Living and Working in American Homes

Bonanza, an American Western television series, depicts the lives of the Cartwrights, a white American family living on the Ponderosa Ranch in Nevada in the 1860s. In one episode (figure 1.1), Hoss Cartwright, the second oldest son, is sneakily taking donuts from the kitchen when he was caught by Hop Sing, the family's Chinese cook. Seeing Hop Sing walk in, Hoss quickly hides the donuts behind his back. The cook shrewdly observes the powdered sugar all over Hoss's lips and vest and shouts, "What are you doing in Hop Sing's kitchen?" He waves his finger while scolding Hoss, "Little boy take knife, big boy take a donut, bad boy, very bad boy!" In response, Hoss finds an excuse to leave Hop Sing's territory to avoid trouble. While this is a comedic plotline in a popular television program, this fragment of the show invites us into thinking about the complex relationships Chinese servants had with their white American employers, hinting at a certain degree of autonomy that Chinese servants might have possessed over the service quarters.

This chapter dives deeper into the historical narrative of Chinese domestic servants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It reveals that Chinese domestic servants in this era possessed a certain degree of agency in pursuing their traditional social and cultural practices, and played a major role in shaping American domestic culture, despite the legal marginalization and racial discrimination inherent to working in a subservient position. The architectural and culinary boundaries that divided families from their servants, white Americans from Chinese immigrants, could collapse in light of a mutual connection. Their affection towards one another, as well as the possibilities of servants' resistance underlying architecture and food, allowed Chinese servants to undertake practices that were not only self-expressive but also impactful on American domestic culture. Although my research did not indicate that Chinese servants made

decisions regarding the construction of the physical spaces, it suggests that they employed various *tactics* to influence American domestic culture, including their creative uses of the service quarters, their movements through the spaces, and the food material culture they brought to the spaces. These everyday practices helped reconceive the meanings of service quarters, and contested the architectural hierarchy of domestic spaces, and in some cases contributed to enhancing American middle-class gentility and expanding cross-cultural exchange. By centralizing Chinese experiences, this study highlights the agency among Chinese domestic servants.

Chinese Servants and American Domestic Culture

In the mid-nineteenth century, the "servant question" was raised to a greater importance as Victorian American families began to pursue a more genteel way of living. To meet the increased demands for domestic work and higher living standards, their problem was to find reliable and efficient domestic servants. This problem intensified in the 1880s when the crucial need for reliable servants collided with widespread labor shortages. This was common outside the American South as industrialization opened up more job opportunities for European immigrant girls to move away from service positions to work in factories and other occupations instead.[60] However, faced with challenges such as racial exclusion and language barriers, Chinese laborers were unable to seek similar opportunities. As a result, Chinese laborers were limited to occupations that were undesirable to the whites. They filled the severe shortage in domestic service, joining those fellow Chinese who had worked in the occupation since the

[60] Harvey A Levenstein, "The 'Servant Problem' and Middle-Class Cookery," in *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 60–62.

1850s.[61] This corresponded with the growing anti-Chinese sentiment starting in the 1870s, which made the Chinese servant question a hotly debated issue among Victorian American families.[62] The conflict was that white employers who opposed Chinese immigration simultaneously relied on Chinese immigrants serving in the domestic workforce. A *New York Times* article reflects on this dilemma that female homemakers faced during this era, noting that some expressed confusion over the legislation that kept out "these willing people [Chinese servants] that seem to be much needed here." In this dire situation, many American female housekeepers considered Chinese servants to be the "only hope" for resolving the servant question.[63] To balance the needs of domestic service and to leverage power, middle class whites created racial stereotypes to subjugate the racial others in service positions, and this included the Chinese laborers.[64]

In the American West, Chinese servants became integral to domestic life.[65] In fact, housekeepers in other parts of the nation were envious of the supply of Chinese servants on the West Coast.[66] Despite their indispensable role in assisting with the smooth running of households, their everyday lives and influence on American domestic culture still remain largely unknown. Such a study has been a difficult undertaking from a methodological perspective.

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[61] For an analysis on Chinese laborers' shift to the more service-based occupations in the 1880s and the reasons, see Christopher William Merritt, *The Coming Man from Canton : Chinese Experience in Montana, 1862–1943* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 160.
[62] John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 275.
[63] E.W., "Chinese The Only Hope.: A Discouraged Housekeeper's Solution of The Servant Question," *New York Times*, May 16, 1906, 8.
[64] Urban, *Brokering Servitude*; Hsin-yun Ou, "Ethnic Presentations and Cultural Constructs: the Chinese/Irish Servant in *Patsy O'Wang*," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 43, no. 3 (2013): 480–501.
[65] Terry Abraham, "Stepping Stones to Empowerment: Chinese Servants in the American West," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian American Studies, Seattle, Washington, April 19, 1997.
[66] David M. Katzman, *Seven Days A Week* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 257.

Their daily lives usually were not the main focuses of American writers, and most Chinese servants were unable to document their own experiences in either English or Chinese, resulting in limited first-person accounts. Still, some scholars have utilized these limited sources, supplemented by accounts of American employers, to provide a glimpse into the lives of Chinese servants. For example, through studying how Chinese servants were trained by their American female householders, historian Terry Abraham reminds us that a mutual feeling of friendship could evolve through these intimate culinary interactions.[67] Historian Yong Chen expands this narrative by centering the voices of the Chinese servants. By examining first-hand accounts and oral histories, as well as prescriptive literature and other sources, Chen reveals that Chinese domestic cooks conducted mostly western cooking and had complex relationships with their patrons, which he views as largely unequal although often accompanied by a sense of attachment.[68] Both Abraham and Chen's work provides valuable insights into the experiences of Chinese domestic servants, but do not fully uncover their agency in shaping American domestic culture.

In response to this previously unanswered question, this chapter focuses on Chinese servants' impacts on two aspects of American domestic culture: the built environment and food material culture. To center Chinese experiences in my study, I closely examine first-person accounts of Chinese servants and their descendants in both Chinese and English language sources, some of which have been previously studied by other scholars, with an aim to provide a

[67] Terry Abraham, "Class, Gender, and Race: Chinese Servants in the North American West," paper presented at the Joint Regional Conference Hawai'i/Pacific and Pacific Northwest Association for Asian American Studies, Honolulu, March 26, 1996; Terry Abraham ed., *Chinese Servants in the West: Florence Baillie-Grohman's "The Yellow and White Agony."* (Moscow: Asian American Comparative Collection Research Report, No. 2, 2007).
[68] Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*, 44–70.

more diverse interpretation of these sources. In particular, I uncover information related to the built environment, culinary artifacts, and related practices. I examine how Chinese servants' daily activities helped redefine the intended uses of the two subjects. Additionally, I conduct case studies of several Chinese domestic servants, namely Ah Quin, Tom Wong, Edward Jung, and Sam Fong, whose everyday practices were documented or traceable to some degree, such as through personal accounts and oral histories. The homes they once worked at, including an officer's quarters in Camp Reynolds, the Haas-Lilienthal House in San Francisco, and the Pardee Home Museum and Cohen Bray House in Oakland, also hold related architectural archives and documentation regarding the servants, which I draw on for a comparative analysis with their practices. When possible, I also employ other historical evidence such as Chinese-English prescriptive literature, women's magazines, and newspaper articles to connect these stories to the broader history of Chinese laborers in domestic service.

The Unintended Vulnerability of Middle-Class American Houses

As many scholars in architectural history have articulated, middle-class American houses built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries underlined a common zonal organization.[69] The formal family spaces used for entertaining typically occupied the primary locations of a house, usually at the front, playing a performative role in showcasing the status of a family. In contrast, the working and living spaces occupied by domestic servants often remained hidden from the public gaze, in the rear sections, basements, or attics. A few

[69] Anna Vemer Andrzejewski, "Hierarchy," in *Building Power* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 91–134; Clifford E Clark, *The American Family Home: 1800–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 42–43; Kenneth L. Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 13.

architectural studies have accounted for this kind of hierarchical organization of domestic spaces based on the presence of house servants. For example, back staircases were prevalent before 1910 when live-in household servants were more common. The purpose of having a back staircase was to create a separate path for servants to move through homes, reducing their chances of intruding on the main family spaces.[70] Furthermore, my previous case studies in Milwaukee draw attention to interior layouts, revealing that houses of various sizes employed different spatial strategies to make the architecture of service as invisible as possible. While grander homes arranged their servants in a separate wing, using a horizontal strategy, smaller homes placed service quarters in attics and basements, using a vertical strategy.[71] These, and other studies along the same lines, reveal that buildings were designed to intentionally codify social relationships, and the presence of live-in servants contributed to a zonal organization of interior spaces.

Though studies of domestic layouts are useful in illuminating the prescribed uses of the spaces, looking at buildings alone does not provide a holistic understanding of the social activities that actually took place inside them. Occupants' everyday activities could either conform to or challenge the buildings' intended uses. A few architectural historians reflect on the limitations of focusing solely on the built environment in depicting full domestic histories; some pay particular attention to house servants. In her examination of house-planning guides, pattern books, and didactic fiction, Anna Andrzejewski describes that employers' surveillance of their

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[70] Clark, *The American Family Home: 1800–1960*, 167.
[71] Hongyan Yang, "2118 Kenilworth Place," Picturing Milwaukee: The 2013 BLC Field School, accessed August 16, 2021, http://blcfieldschool.weebly.com/kenilworth-place.html; Hongyan Yang, "Ferneding House," Picturing Milwaukee: The 2013 BLC Field School, accessed August 16, 2021, http://blcfieldschool.weebly.com/ferneding-house.html; Hongyan Yang, "The Villa Terrace," Picturing Milwaukee: The 2013 BLC Field School, accessed August 16, 2021, http://blcfieldschool.weebly.com/villa-terrace3.html.

servants was never absolute regardless of how carefully arranged. For instance, she cites a cartoon (figure 1.2) from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* that depicts a scene where a mistress catches her servant entertaining a group of their friends in the kitchen. Her study, although mostly concerned with prescriptive literature, helps illuminate the possibility that servants could challenge their mistresses' authority.[72] Similarly, by examining live examples of servants and buildings in his study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century town houses in Charleston, Mid-Atlantic cities, and England, Bernard Herman stresses that employers assumed that they could fully surveil their domestic servants, thereby making them more vulnerable to the servants' transgression. In other words, servants achieved a kind of transparency through the master's assumed complete surveillance.[73] For instance, Clifford Clark notes that servants could enjoy the outdoor spaces over the back porch while remaining unseen.[74] Together, these studies indicate that a more dynamic reading of the built environment focusing on practices can reveal considerably about the agency of domestic servants. My study builds on their framework to account for how Chinese domestic servants also took advantage of the potential for transgression that was built into the houses where they worked. Compared to the other groups of servants that most architectural historians have studied, Chinese servants were subject to the additional challenges of restrictive immigration laws as well as the cultural differences and discrimination faced by other marginalized communities. This widened the gulf that existed between Chinese servants and their American employers makes them a uniquely compelling subject of study. By

[72] Andrzejewski, "Hierarchy," 91–134.
[73] Bernard L Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780–1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 119–154.
[74] Clark, *The American Family Home: 1800–1960*, 43.

examining the everyday practices of Chinese servants, this chapter reveals their agency in navigating and shaping American domestic culture.

Chinese Servants at Camp Reynolds, Angel Island

Ah Quin (figure 1.3), an influential figure that is familiar to many scholars of Chinese American history, left behind ten books of diaries, in which he documented his journey from working as a humble servant to a successful businessman. His life is in no doubt representative of the trajectories of many other Chinese immigrants in several ways. Specifically in diaries 2-4, he describes his experiences working as a house servant in Unga island in Alaska, Camp Reynolds on Angel Island, and Presidio in San Francisco.[75] By carefully studying Ah Quin's accounts, I trace his everyday experiences as well as those of other neighboring Chinese domestic servants who worked at Camp Reynolds, and thus shed light on how their agency is reflected in the built environment.

On February 6, 1879, Ah Quin found his job at Camp Reynolds (figure 1.4) through a friend named Gung Won, and started working for Captains H.B. Dyer and H.G. Otis. Camp Reynolds was established during the Civil War to defend the San Francisco Bay against Confederate forces. In the late nineteenth century, it became a depot for processing recruits assigned to the western forts and a staging area for troops that campaigned against American Indian tribes.[76] Despite its function as a military installation, life at Camp Reynolds was not so

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[75] Special thanks to Dr. Susie Lan Cassel for sharing her insights into Ah Quin's life over an interview based on her diary transcription. Her insights are instrumental to my close examination of the diaries later. I am also grateful for Dr. Yong Chen's help with connecting us. Susie Lan Cassel, interview by Hongyan Yang, May 7, 2021.

[76] "Data Pages," Historic American Building Survey CA1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/, 3; "US Army on the Island," California Department of Parks and Recreation, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1307.

different from civilian communities elsewhere. A 1906 site map (see figure 1.5) depicts the various amenities in place, such as a quartermaster's storehouse, a bakery, a carpenter shop, a blacksmith shop, a paint shop, a hospital, a school, and even a tennis court, some of which Ah Quin frequented to fulfill house maintenance duties.[77] Some enlisted officers had wives and children living with them, and other civilian residents included servants, laundresses, blacksmiths, teachers, doctors, post traders, and even musicians.[78] Many of the servants at Camp Reynolds were Chinese men. According to Ah Quin's account, several of Gung Won's relatives worked at Camp Reynolds as well. On his first day at work, Ah Quin also met Jung Lay, another Chinese servant who also worked for Captain Dyer.[79] As was the case of many other U.S. Army bases, Chinese servants were sought after by many army wives because of their loyalty.[80]

The buildings at Camp Reynolds mirrored the living conditions of late-nineteenth-century California, and those of Victorian America in general.[81] The officers' quarters were constructed according to the same few floor plans.[82] Houses of higher ranked officers and those with wives had servants' quarters, which were usually located behind the main house. Ah Quin recorded his

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[77] Formerly known as Angel Island, in 1900, the War Department officially designated the entire island as Fort McDowell and referred to various installations according to their geographic locations. Camp Reynolds, located on the west side of the island, became known as West Garrison. [A Resource Report on Angel Island State Park, West Garrison (Camp Reynolds) Area], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 38: 4], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California.

[78] [Angel Island State Park West Garrison Adopt-A-Building Program, Interpretive Program, Draft 1984], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 20: 10-11], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California.

[79] "Diary 3, 1878 August 12-1879 August 28," MS 209 Ah Quin Diary Collection, San Diego History Center.

[80] Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 303–305.

[81] Ibid.

[82] The Historic American Building Surveys in 1966 and 2002 documented a handful of floor plans that were repeated. This was also confirmed by State Park Interpreter Casey Dexter-Lee. Casey Dexter-Lee, e-mails to author, May 14, 2021.

routine work in and around the house in his diary. Accounts such as "make dust of the kitchen chimney blowing," "wash the floor of parlor and dine room," "wash the front room and hall," "wash the windows of kitchen and my room," "wash 2 front door windows," and "the water pipe of upstairs is broken" provide crucial insights into the characteristics of the house where he worked. Comparing these architectural details with the small number of possible floor plans, it is evident that Ah Quin worked in a house similar to officer's quarters no. 4 (see figure 1.5 for building numbers). Fortunately, this building was documented in a 2002 Historic American Building Survey (HABS) of Camp Reynolds.[83] Its layout is nearly identical to a few other officers' quarters nearby, including buildings no. 5, no. 8 and no. 9, with only minor differences in certain details.[84] All of these buildings are located along the officers' row on the south side of the parade grounds, not far from the blacksmith shop Ah Quin mentioned in his diary.

The domestic functions of the officer's quarters at Camp Reynolds corresponded to military hierarchy. The aforementioned four buildings (figure 1.6) originally housed relatively high-ranking officers, including the post surgeon and three captains.[85] Compared to the officer's quarters on the north side of the parade grounds, which featured collaborative kitchens and public washrooms, these officer's quarters offered a higher level of privacy. Dating back to 1874-1876, building no. 4 (figure 1.7) resembles a middle-class single-family home from the

[83] Historic American Building Survey CA1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/.
[84] The 1983 west Garrison research notes provide information on the identical layouts of the four buildings and how they were renumbered. The original building no. 4 is now no. 46; the original building no. 5 is now no. 47; the original building no. 8 is now no. 50; the original building no. 9 is now no. 51. [West Garrison Research Notes], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 21: 5], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California.
[85] Historic American Building Survey CA1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/.

second half of the nineteenth century.[86] It is one and half stories, front gabled, and has a one-story kitchen ell in the back (figure 1.8 and figure 1.9). According to a sketched plan of the first floor from a 1893 Surgeon General's special sanitary report (figure 1.10), the first floor displays a clear zonal organization. The main section at the front contains a side entrance hall, a parlor, and a dining room. The service quarters at the rear originally included a closet/hall (pantry), kitchen, bathroom, and water closet.[87]

Based on additional analysis of Ah Quin's diary and a description of the four buildings (no. 4, no. 5, no. 8, no. 9) from 1983, I further determine that Captains Dyer and Otis likely occupied building no. 8.[88] This building, where Ah Quin worked, was nearly identical to building no. 4 in its layout and historical uses, with the exception of the absence of a bathroom and water closet in the back. Captains Dyer and Otis occupied the two large bedrooms on the second floor (figure 1.7), while a boarder, Dr. Hubbard, likely stayed in the smaller bedroom toward the front

[86] The HABS CA1841-C report indicates the construction year as 1874. *A California Chronological History Excerpt from The Evans History of Angel Island* records it as 1876. Both predated Ah Quin's time, which confirms that Ah Quin worked in building no.8. [A California Chronological History Excerpt from The Evans History of Angel Island], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 20: 14], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California.

[87] The report was likely referring to building no. 9, whose first-floor bathroom and water closet were visible in figure 1.6. Historic American Building Survey CA1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/, 3.

[88] This is because the description of the four buildings indicates that building no. 4 and no.5 used the front room on the second floor as a nursery, which was not the case for Ah Quin. According to his diary, he only worked for two male officers and a boarder named Dr. Hubbard. In addition, Ah Quin often took bath in the kitchen, which indicates that the house likely did not have a washroom on the first floor as the case of building no. 9. [West Garrison: Notes/Descriptions of Buildings 43-49 undated], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 29: 14], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California; [West Garrison: Notes/Descriptions of Buildings 50-84 undated], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 30: 1], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California; "Diary 3, 1878 August 12-1879 August 28," MS 209 Ah Quin Diary Collection, San Diego History Center.

of the stair hall.[89] Ah Quin's bedroom was the outbuilding behind the main house, as seen in figure 1.6.[90]

The ornamentation of rooms also corresponded to the front-back domestic spatial hierarchy typically found in middle-class American homes in the late nineteenth century. For example, wallpaper covered all the formal front rooms, including the entry hall, parlor, and dining room. Fancy plaster picture rail moldings were present in all ground- and second-floor rooms except for the kitchen, pantry, and bathroom. Fireplaces with marble mantels were placed between the parlor and dining room on the first floor, as well as between the two larger bedrooms on the second floor, signifying the importance of these four rooms. Additionally, the windows in both the parlor and the dining room featured roller shades to protect the rooms from the strong sunlight coming from the Southwest.[91] These decorative details, as well as the spatial organization of the officer's quarters, reveal the general working and living conditions of the Chinese domestic servants at Camp Reynolds.

The spatial separation between Ah Quin's domains—the kitchen and his bedroom—and the officers' domains did not actually preclude cross-boundary activities. In fact, Ah Quin was often present in all areas of the house while carrying out his duties, such as routine cleaning. For example, on February 16, 1879, he swept the parlor and the dining room after cooking breakfast

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[89] This makes sense because in his diary on July 7, 1879, Ah Quin mentioned that he cooked lunch for Dyer, Otis and Hubbard, indicating that there were three bedrooms in use at the time. Hubbard, being the boarder, likely stayed in the smaller bedroom. "Diary 3, 1878 August 12-1879 August 28," MS 209 Ah Quin Diary Collection, San Diego History Center.

[90] Ah Quin's diary clearly indicates that he had his own bedroom although it did not specify its location. He often slept in Otis's bed upstairs when Otis was not home probably for convenience because his bedroom was in a separate building.

[91] [West Garrison: Notes/Descriptions of Buildings 43-49 undated], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 29: 14], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California; [West Garrison: Notes/Descriptions of Buildings 50-84 undated], Angel Island State Park Collection, CSPA-231: [box 30: 1], California State Parks Archives, McClellan, California.

at 8 am; he also polished two pairs of shoes and made two beds before lunch at 12:30 pm. On July 1, 1879, he cleaned both Otis and Dyer's bedrooms. These details are expected, as all servants must fulfill their job responsibilities, which often require moving through the whole house. However, it is one thing to occupy these personal spaces due to work obligations, and another thing entirely to be in the rooms without an apparent work-related reason. A close reading of his diary reveals that Ah Quin occasionally trespassed into the officers' private spaces during off-duty time. One such instance occurred after Otis left for Oregon on March 11, 1879; Ah Quin often slept and napped in his room during his absence. This also seemed to be permitted by Dyer and Dr. Hubbard, who continued to live in the house while Otis was away. Cross-boundary activities such as this one indicate that, although the zonal organization of the house prescribed a strict social order that separated the servants from the served, actual daily activities could break that order. The agency of the servants was conveyed through these everyday movements.

In addition to his movements through the space, Ah Quin's diary also sheds new light on the kitchen. Up until the 1960s, the kitchen remained a private domain.[92] This was mainly due to the genteel class's intention of separating cooking from other family activities and thus further differentiating the servants from the served. Material culture scholars Barbara Carson and Kym Rice note that when families transitioned from one-room houses to houses with multiple rooms in the early nineteenth century, the first change they made was to separate cooking from other domestic activities. Therefore, the kitchen became the first specialized and functional space in

[92] Architectural historian Elizabeth Cromley notes that since the 1960s, the earlier separation between kitchen and social spaces began to collapse; living, dining, and cooking started to merge. In new open floor plans, kitchen became a social space. Cromley, *The Food Axis,* 185.

many homes.[93] The increased specialization of room use in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also corresponded with the growing preference for a separate kitchen in order to preserve the sanctity of the hearth of the house.[94] Even in one-room dwellings, the kitchen was conceptually separated from the rest of the house.[95] This historical separation of the kitchen from the other family spaces created opportunities for house servants to escape the surveillance of their employers. The kitchen, in some sense, could become a liberated space for servants despite the arduous work they undertook inside the space. This indeed was the case in Ah Quin's experience.

In the nineteenth century, the kitchen was considered a service domain. In his diary, Ah Quin frequently referred to the kitchens he worked in as "my kitchen." This wording was not accidental and indeed asserted his ownership over the kitchens where he worked. In addition to routine work, Ah Quin conducted a variety of personal and social activities in his kitchens in Unga island, Camp Reynolds, and the Presidio. In the case of Camp Reynolds, the kitchen was a space of liberation for the Chinese servants. During off-duty time, Ah Quin's kitchen was used as a space for resting, "chitchat," reading the bible, as well as eating Chinese comfort food with Chinese friends, and helping each other with work. These everyday practices communicated the agency of the Chinese servants in redefining the designated uses of the officers' quarters. According to Ah Quin's diary, one of his best neighboring Chinese friends at Camp Reynolds was Gung Hang (Chinese name 龔凍). On March 13, Ah Quin documented that after finishing dinner service at 8 pm, he went to Gung Hang's house and had some Chinese soup, staying there

[93] Carson and Rice, *Ambitious*, 39.
[94] Williams, *Homeplace,* 60–66.
[95] Ibid, 39.

until 9:40 pm. Similarly, on March 15, Gung Hang again invited Ah Quin to his house to share Chinese soup, and Ah Quin rested in his kitchen until 10 pm. Gung Hang also visited Ah Quin in his kitchen. For instance, the March 26 diary entry records, "Gung Hang come in my kitchen rest half hour, then I walk down to his house with him and speak or consultation till at 15 past 10:." In addition to neighboring Chinese servants, Ah Quin was also friends with a Chinese vegetable peddler named Ah Pan, who sold vegetables at Camp Reynolds. When Ah Pan visited, Ah Quin often cooked lunch or had tea with him in the kitchen or rested together in his room.[96] Although the diary did not explicitly mention how the officers felt about the servants visiting each other's quarters, these visits were likely permitted based on common attitudes from the era. For instance, in her article "The Virtues of the Chinese," Jean Faison wrote, "When a 'cousin' drops in for a friendly chat he does not interfere with the routine work in the kitchen."[97] This indicates that Faison was aware that her Chinese servant's friends visited him in the kitchen and that she permitted these visits. This higher level of tolerance diverges from the common understanding that servants only had full control over the time they spent outside of their employer's house.[98] This deviation could be attributed to the popularity of Chinese servants among American employers combined with the severe servant shortage at the time. As Faison put it, "Such [Chinese] servants, alas, are fast becoming too good to be true…With so many virtues to his credit it is no wonder that the California woman regrets to see him growing extinct." In order to keep the few good Chinese servants employed in their homes, compromises apparently were made among American employers. Military historian Edward Coffman describes how such a

[96] "Diary 3, 1878 August 12-1879 August 28," MS 209 Ah Quin Diary Collection, San Diego History Center.
[97] Jean Faison, "The Virtues of the Chinese Servant," *Good Housekeeping* 42, no. 3 (Mar 1906): 279.
[98] Katzman, *Seven Days A* Week, 113.

mindset was common on military bases, stating, "Many army wives thought themselves fortunate to secure a Chinese servant. 'Treasure' was a word they would use to describe these Orientals."[99] Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that socializing among Chinese servants at Camp Reynolds was similarly permitted by the officers.

In addition, it was almost without exception that when the fellow Chinese servants got together, they ate Chinese food. Quite often, Ah Quin and his Chinese friends would take the steamer from Angel Island to San Francisco's Chinatown to visit the Chinese theatres and enjoy a Chinese meal at the restaurants. The comforting Chinese food they chose to consume during their off-duty time—such as rice, fish, and Chinese soup—presented an interesting contrast to the standard American food they prepared for their American employers, which included bread and butter, cookies, ham and eggs, and fruit pies.[100] This demonstrates that these Chinese laborers, with less power and in subservient positions, nevertheless had agency in making certain choices in the domestic space and beyond.

In addition to providing a space for socializing with their Chinese friends, kitchens were also where Chinese servants interacted with their American employers. For example, prior to working at Camp Reynolds, Ah Quin worked for a mining company in Alaska, where his employers frequently visited his kitchen. Notes like "Mr. Thompson made eggnog in my kitchen," "Mr. Gourley chitchat with me in the kitchen," and "Mr. Gourley made some bar in my kitchen today" appear often in the diary. In this case, Ah Quin's close relationship with his employers E.T. Gourley and A.K. Thompson resulted in the kitchen—Ah Quin's domain—becoming a site of frequent interactions with them. The intimacy of their relationship can be

[99] Coffman, *The Old* Army, 304.
[100] Chen, *Chop Suey, USA,* 87.

observed through a few occasions. For example, when Ah Quin had a sore throat, Thompson shared with him a recipe of boiling onions, sugar and vinegar into a soup as a remedy. The three also exchanged gifts during special occasions. On his birthday on December 8, 1877, Ah Quin gifted pictures to both Gourley and Thompson. In reciprocation, Gourley and Thompson also gave presents to Ah Quin. On Chinese Lunar New Year's Day in 1878, Ah Quin wrote,

> Very alonesome and sorry new year day I member [remember] and think how so happy and many America friends visited me at Santa Barbara Cal in our school house last year 1877 Feb 12, we are all school boy made the room so nice and the grand dinner to ready and about five hundred people got in that house day and night but now I no think they have so nice time or not any dine to America friends because I stay here, I am the head one of the school and many instruments belong to me, and about dinner time today, I say the word Mr. E.T. Gourley happy new year and he answer me why don't you burn any firework today, then I laugh and when he have his dinner he give me the picture for the new year present and I say thank you forever that only thing I received for the present this year 1878…[101]

Mr. Gourley's kindness and generosity provided great comfort for Ah Quin, who was lonely without his Chinese friends from the Chinese mission school in Santa Barbara, where he worked before coming to Alaska. The mutual affection that Ah Quin developed with his American employers redefined the meaning of his kitchen, which became a space for socializing with his employers in addition to work. In the following sections, I explore how the daily practices of Chinese servants helped reconceptualize the built environment and culinary material culture of Victorian American homes, focusing on the movement through the houses, the meanings of service quarters, and culinary artifacts in their possession.

[101] "Diary 1, 1877 June 12-1878 February 28," MS 209 Ah Quin Diary Collection, San Diego History Center.

Chinese Servants at Victorian American Homes

Many Chinese servants worked for prominent Victorian American families, who followed a more formal lifestyle compared to the military officers at Camp Reynolds. Scholars of the built environment have revealed that Victorian American houses implemented zonal organization to enforce order and hierarchy. Additionally, to express the families' unique and complex domestic life, the functions of each room was articulated through a distinctive set of cultural artifacts.[102] In addition, Victorian Americans believed that houses were social markers. Therefore, they were vehicles for highlighting material possessions, individual expressions, and genteel lifestyles in general.[103] This also resulted in a heightened spatial hierarchy between different rooms; the family spaces were more lavishly decorated, whereas the service domains remained simple and plain. Corresponding with the luxurious decorations in family spaces, Victorian Americans also were expected to carry out genteel behaviors, such as eating in a formal dining room that was furnished with intricate artifacts.[104] My studies reveal that Chinese servants both challenged and reinforced these Victorian American values.

Edward Jung and the Pardee Home

Edward Jung worked for California Governor George Pardee as a cook, chauffeur, nurse and maid from 1923 to 1943. Governor Pardee's house, built by his father in 1868, originally contained twelves rooms. The main parlor, music parlor, dining room, back parlor, breakfast nook, kitchen and pantry were on the first floor (figure 1.11), and the six bedrooms were on the second floor. While the number of live-in domestic servants substantially decreased after World

[102] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 9.
[103] Clark, *The American Family Home: 1800–1960*, 103–130; Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 113.
[104] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 212.

War I, Edward was one of the exceptions.[105] Around 1910, when the governor's family returned to Oakland from Sacramento, they undertook major improvements to the house, including adding a servant's bedroom and bathroom in the rear of the first floor next to the kitchen. Edward Jung began living in this room in 1923 and his wife Grace Jung joined him in the mid-1930s.[106] The placement of the rooms on the first floor resembles the typical zonal organization of Victorian American houses: the formality of the rooms decreases from the front to the back, with the service quarters located in the backmost corner.

As prescribed by the architectural layout of the first floor, Edward was expected to enter and exit the house through the back porch. However, additional information gathered from oral histories and the Pardee Home Museum provides insights into his actual movements through the house, which were very different from what architecture alone would suggest. Allen Chung, a close friend of Edward's son Melvin Jung, recalled Edward's time at the Pardee home:

> I don't know when he began working for the former governor George Pardee. I was about 5 years old, 1936, when he often took me with him to the Pardee house at the 11th and Castro Streets…I remember the stained glass front door and the cupola well. I was introduced to the two daughters Madeline and Helen. They addressed Edward as Seung. Edward often drove the governor to visit his friends. Edward continued working for the Pardee daughters for two to three years after the death of the governor in September 1941[until his retirement in 1943].

Based on Allen's recollection, Edward's social network overlapped with that of the Pardees. Allen's frequent visits to the Pardee home were not merely allowed, but instead were welcome. For example, Edward and Allen entered through the formal front door—instead of the back service entryway—to greet the governor's daughters. This practice challenged the prescribed direction of movements through the house for domestic servants.

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[105] Katzman, *Seven Days A Week,* 95.
[106] Nicole Jung-Alexander, interviewed by author, June 11, 2021.

By placing the service quarters in the rear of the house, Victorian American families indicated their expectation that servants entered the house through the back door, without intruding into the main family spaces. This question of how servants should enter the house was apparently a common subject discussed among American employers and Chinese servants. The subject was therefore included in Chinese-English didactic literature. For example, the *Chinese and English Cook Book*, published by the Fat Ming Company in 1918, advises on this subject. A simulated conversation between a Chinese servant and an American employer reads:

> Good evening, Mrs. T. Do you want a servant?
> Yes, I wish I could get a good cook.
> Are you a Cook? Yes
> Where was your last situation?
> In a Hotel or Restaurant?
> No, it was in a private family.
> What were you paid per month?
> Twenty-five dollars. This is not enough for me.
> How much do you want?
> Forty-five dollars.
> …
> If you give satisfaction. I will pay you the sum you ask.
> Do you want me to come tomorrow, then?
> Yes, you are to be here by six o'clock tomorrow.
> …
> By which door shall I get in?
> You can enter by the kitchen door.
> The key is left in the lock.[107]

During the conversation, the Chinese servant preemptively inquires about the proper way to enter the house, demonstrating his awareness of the hierarchical order normally enforced in American houses. The employer's response also implies a common practice among American employers to leave a key in the back door's lock to ensure that their servants could conveniently access their

[107] Fat Ming Co., *Fat Ming Zhong Xi Wen Chu Shu Bao Jian / Chinese and English Cook Book* (San Francisco: Fat Ming Co., 1918), 1–3. [00016310, 1918], VAULT 109, California Historical Society.

house from the back. This was very likely the case for many Chinese servants, as most servants were expected to follow prescriptive literature like bilingual cookbooks and household guides while performing household tasks.[108]

In Edward's case, as demonstrated by Allen's anecdote above, his close relationship with the Pardees allowed him and his friends to disregard the social expectation that servants should enter the house through the back door. His daily activities, and those of his friends, provide new understanding of how some Chinese servants moved through domestic spaces. In fact, Edward's family continued to maintain close contact with the Pardees even after his retirement. For example, Melvin Jung remembers receiving a Mickey Mouse watch as a gift from the Pardee family many years later. During my fieldwork, I also uncovered a photo album of Melvin from the Pardee Museum collection. The photos depict Melvin playing ball with his white friend, Bradley Schwartz, at his house in Oakland in Spring 1943. As he was only two years old at the time, Melvin does not recall ever seeing the album himself. It is possible that Edward gifted the album to the governor's daughters, Helen and Madeline, as a farewell present at the time of his retirement (figure 1.12).[109] Throughout his time working for the Pardees, Edward was also very well compensated. According to the 1940 Census, he worked 56 hours per week and received an annual salary of $1,020 in 1939, equivalent to the income of a salesman at the time. The decent salary Edward received and his sustained friendship with the family indicates the Pardees' appreciation of his valuable service and their friendship. All of this contributed to Edward's ability to move through the house with more freedom than was typically allowed of domestic servants.

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[108] Katzman, *Seven Days A Week,* 136.
[109] Gifting pictures was common between Chinese servants and their American employers. For instance, Ah Quin exchanged photos with many of his employers.

Edward's presence in the formal front of the Pardee house was not entirely unusual. A 1909 card produced by the Allied Printing Trades Council of San Francisco (figure 1.13) depicts a Chinese cook named Chee Chong waiting for his employer, Francis Joseph Heney, on the front steps of his residence at 1937 Broadway Street. Although not much is known about Chee Chong besides the fact that he was "temporarily discharged by Heney September 8, 1909 for political reasons only," this card indicates a close relationship between the two, which led the servant to greet his employer at the front door. Furthermore, based on the Trades Council's affiliation with the City Labor Council, this card may well have been a mass-produced handbill, demonstrating the commonness of the scenario.[110] Both of these cases shed light on how social relationships helped define Chinese servants' daily practices and movements through domestic spaces, which could challenge the existing architectural order.

Tom Wong and the Haas-Lilienthal House

Another example is Tom Wong (figure 1.14), the Chinese laundryman who worked at the Haas-Lilienthal House in San Francisco in the 1920s and 1930s.[111] The house was built for William and Bertha Haas in the fashionable Queen Anne style in 1886. It is a three-story wood

[110] In fact, the California labor movement in the early 1900s began to shift from a sole focus on skilled workers to working class of various trades, such as laundry workers and butchers. Ira B. Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 229. Special thanks to James Eason, Archivist at the Bancroft Library of UC-Berkeley for sharing insights on the possible historical use of the card.

[111] United States Census Bureau, *1930 U.S. Federal Census*; San Francisco, San Francisco, California; Page: 12A; dwelling 35, family 297, Edward Bransten; Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002; Family History Library microfilm: 2339942; *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930. T626. Tom Wong was also mentioned in the Haas-Lilienthal family oral histories. He worked in the house as a laundryman possibly in the 1920s. "Anecdotes (Full Transcription)/ Family History," San Francisco Heritage Collection, San Francisco Heritage.

frame construction that sits on a raised brick basement. Like other typical Victorian houses, the first floor was designed in a front-back zonal organization (figure 1.15). The carefully arranged interior layout intended to separate the pathways of the served from those of the servants. Upon entering through the front door, visitors arrived in a vestibule. From there, they could see the curved grand staircase, which provided the family with a meandering journey to their private spaces on the second floor. Underneath the grand staircase was another staircase, which granted the family and their guests exclusive access to the ballroom in the basement. Beyond this point was the back hall, marked by a door, which could be closed off to prevent public gaze into the back service quarters. To the left of the vestibule and front hall was the front parlor, from which people could walk straight back into the second parlor and continue on into the dining room. The pocket doors in between these rooms could be opened or closed in different combinations to control the sight-lines and movement of visitors depending on the occasion. Behind the dining room were the breakfast room and the butler's pantry, from which servants entered the dining room to serve meals. Next to the butler's pantry was the kitchen. Servants could conveniently exit the house through the kitchen door to the back porch. They could also pass through the back hall to go to the service quarters in the basement. Tom would have used either the servant staircase in the back hall or the back entrance (Figure 1.16) to get to his laundry room and bedroom in the basement without intruding into the family spaces (figure 1.17). In the basement, Tom would have gathered the dirty clothes from the laundry chute closet and washed them in the laundry room across the hall.

An examination of the daily activities of Tom Wong and the family reveals that the actual uses of the spaces did not always conform to the prescribed functions. Frances Bransten, the granddaughter of William Haas and Bertha Greenebaum, mentioned Tom Wong in her memoir

of her mother Florine Haas Bransten and aunt Alice Haas Lilienthal, the two daughters of William Haas and Bertha Greenebaum:

> …the sisters [Florine and Alice] sometimes left the house via the basement so that Mother could talk to Wah [Wong], the Chinese servant. When Mother went to the basement, she always raised her voice and spoke to Wah in "pidgin English." You did very good laundry-tablecloth. No put starch in mister's shirt. It seemed that Wah was with us forever. Only once did he leave for an extended period of time—he wanted to visit his wife in China…Wah returned bearing bolts of silk for everyone and continued his life in the basement. I liked visiting Wah in the mysterious confines of the basement, but I was strictly forbidden to intrude on him in his little room off the furnace room.[112]

Frances's account indicates a more complex relationship between Tom Wong and her family, one that was not entirely hierarchical, as implied by the floor plans, but rather was imbued with a mutual affection conveyed through their day-to-day interactions. Tom, despite working and living in the confined basement, had frequent interactions with the family he served. Frances's mother and aunt often utilized the back servant staircase to go down to the basement and give laundry instructions to Tom before exiting through the back door. Similarly, we could imagine Frances, a curious teenager, wandering in the basement to watch Tom wash and iron the family's clothes. However, she was not allowed to "intrude" into his bedroom, which was located across the hall from the furnace room. In this sense, Tom had autonomy over his private sleeping quarters, while his work spaces were under the surveillance of his employer. Overall, the hierarchical yet close relationship between Tom and the family complicated their movements in and through the basement, departing from the clear separation prescribed by interior layouts.

Frances's fondness of Tom also propelled her to show more compassion for him compared to the other servants in the house. Tom did not always get along with the white female

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[112] Frances Bransten Rothmann, *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street: A Look Back with Love* (Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1979), 82–84. The 1930 U.S. Federal Census listed Frances as 16 years old and Tom was 41.

servants, possibly due to differences in culinary habits, language, gender and perhaps race, as he was the only nonwhite and male servant in the household. Frances's memoir records,

> Instead of joining the maids for meals, he sometimes devised his own concoctions on a gas burner. The odd-smelling foods he prepared sent their odors sailing through the house and the maids trotted about indignantly, opening windows…When Wah ate in the kitchen, he sat in silence at a separate table from the chattering maids. I thought this [was] discriminatory, sensing that he must feel lonely and unloved. At times when I begged, I was allowed to join him at his table; then we would both sit munching in silence. I remember very little spoken communication with Wah; perhaps he did not speak English very well.[113]

Although not much is known about what Tom actually cooked for himself in the kitchen, it must have been unfamiliar to the Swedish servant Inez Bozdd and German servant Marie Luft as well as to the rest of the family. Tom's oddly different culinary tradition led the other servants to exclude him from joining them for meals and treat him as inferior. In this way, food also played a role in marking the social boundaries within the servant class.[114] Despite the odorous food Tom cooked, Frances's compassion for Tom drove her to "beg" for permission to eat with him in the kitchen, a service domain. Her choice contradicts the dining etiquette of Victorian American families, who were usually expected to eat in the formal dining room separate from the servants. The kitchen thus became a place of compassion for Tom, even for a brief moment.

Perhaps from there, food always connected Tom, Frances, and the rest of the family members. In some instances, it led to opportunities for cross-cultural interaction.[115] Once, Frances went with Tom to have lunch in a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown. She documented the occasion with excitement, remembering, "We sat on a balcony from which I watched pigtailed Chinese in black pantaloons and jackets scurrying along as they bore baskets

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[113] Rothmann, *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street*, 19.
[114] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 193.
[115] For the role of food played in cultural exchange, see Barbas, "'I'll Take Chop Suey': Restaurants as Agents of Culinary and Cultural Change," 669–86.

on their bent shoulders. I love the adventure and I loved Wah's kind, wizened face and gentle manner."[116] Frances's account is not the only one to reflect a fascination with Chinatown. In her interview with San Francisco Heritage, Elizabeth Lilienthal—Frances's cousin and the daughter of Alice and Samuel Lilienthal—recalled a similar adventure with Tom to Chinatown:

> Tom, the Chinese laundryman…always wore a white jacket. When he ironed sheets and table clothes on a big table, he would blow water through a mouth sprayer to dampen the clothes. Before he went back to China he took me, and probably the Bransten children, down to Chinatown and gave us a real Chinese meal and took us to a Chinese show which was incomprehensible to all of us.[117]

The friendship between Tom and the Lilienthal and Bransten children granted the Victorian American teenagers a rare chance to experience Chinese food and opera, both of which were important components of the social lives of Chinese laborers in San Francisco at the time.[118] Although the Pacific Heights neighborhood, where the Haas-Lilienthal House is located, was only a short cable car ride via the Pacific Street Line to Chinatown, it was a completely different world.[119] Pacific Heights, known for its view overlooking the San Francisco Bay, became home to the American genteel class in the 1880s. Its close proximity to Chinatown led many Chinese laborers to work for Victorian American families like the Haas-Lilienthal family. Census surveys from the turn of the century reveal a high concentration of Chinese servants in the area. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that other white American families who shared a similar mutual affection with their Chinese servants might have also ventured into their social spaces. In

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[116] Rothmann, *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street*, 19.
[117] Rothmann, *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street*, 19. San Francisco Heritage operates the Haas-Lilienthal House Museum today.
[118] Ah Quin's diary 3 and 4 frequently mention their visits of Chinese restaurants, theatres and stores in San Francisco's Chinatown.
[119] Diary notes of Alice Haas Lilienthal, San Francisco Heritage Collection. Courtesy Carlo Caldanao.

his 1902 article "The Chinese in America," Sunyowe Pang mentioned a male Chinese nurse, stating:

> As caretakers of children, a mutual affection often springs up, rendering the servant very devoted. I remember the case of the son of a prominent lawyer in California who had a venerable Chinese servitor who was his most devoted friend and guardian. The boy's mother died about a year after his birth, and he was put in charge of a young and very intelligent Chinaman, as he had no female relatives, and there were few reliable women that could be hired to look after him. The Chinaman cared for this boy as for his own life, forsaking his old friends and associates in his devotion. When the child was big enough, his nurse took him to the Chinese quarters when he went to visit his friends.[120]

The depicted affection between this Chinese servant and the white child he nursed was not uncommon. Fong Gan, the cook for the Shinn family in the historic town of Niles (today's Fremont, California) is another example. A 1915 photograph (figure 1.18) depicts Fong smiling at the Shinn's child in a baby carriage while the child also happily reaches out to Fong. Another example is Sam Wong, the Chinese cook who worked at the Cohen Bray house in Oakland. He was fond of Marion Cohen, his employer's daughter. A caption in a family album (figure 1.19) notes that Sam called her "Baby Mally," and that "He adored her, took care of her whenever possible and was jealous of her nurse."[121] These kinds of social relationships allow us to reimagine how the physically separate spaces of white employers and the social spaces of their Chinese servants could have been linked together by everyday practices within the homes and beyond.

Sam Wong, Culinary Material Culture and Middle-Class Gentility

In addition to the strict social order that defined the built environment, middle-class gentility was also established through domestic culinary culture. Since the early nineteenth

[120] Sunyowe Pang, "The Chinese in America," *Forum* XXXII, no. 5 (January 1902): 598.
[121] Family photo album, the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House.

century, the American genteel class began to use elaborately designed dining wares and the adoption of formal table manners based on etiquette books to distinguish their status.[122] Many Chinese servants employed by prominent American families were familiar with these codes of gentility. These servants played a major role in reinforcing the established American middle-class gentility through the food and dining services they provided for their employers.

Sam Fong, the Chinese cook for Emma Bray, the daughter of a successful grain merchant, and her husband Alfred Henry Cohen, a lawyer, provided much more than routine services for their household from the 1890s to the 1900s.[123] Patricia Donald, their great granddaughter, found a photograph of Sam in a family album and shared it with me. The photo (figure 1.20), labelled by her great aunt Edith Emelita, reads, "'Sam,' the cook who ruled '1440' for 14 years. Authority on: child raising, what mother should wear to parties, among many other things not to mention GOOD FOOD." This valuable summary reveals Sam's wide-ranging impacts on household decisions, many of which helped further define the family's genteel status. For instance, one day Emma called Sam into the library to discuss the menu for a dinner party with their friends, the Dargies, who owned and published the *Oakland Tribune* from 1876 and 1911.[124] Emma told Sam that she would like to serve a roast leg of lamb accompanied by several other dishes. After dutifully listening to Emma's suggestions, Sam adamantly opposed the idea, stressing that one would need a silver gravy boat for such a meal, which the family did not own

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[122] Carson and Rice, *Ambitious Appetites*, 60.
[123] Sam appeared in the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, but not in the 1880 and 1910 Census. United States Census Bureau, *1900 U.S. Federal Census*; Fruitvale Precinct 1, Alameda, California; Page: 3; dwelling 58, family 59, Alfred H. Cohen; Ancestry.com. *1900 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004; Family History Library microfilm: 1240081; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623.
[124] Alanah Reid, "A History of the Oakland Tribune," Historic Newspapers, accessed August 25, 2021, https://www.historic-newspapers.com/blog/oakland-tribune-history/.

and the Dargies did.[125] While Emma insisted that the chinaware they owned would be fine for the occasion, Sam responded that using such a substitute would not provide the proper elegance for guests of this stature. When the night of the dinner party came and the roast lamb was presented, Emma noticed that the gravy was served in a silver boat. The family story is that "Sam, not willing to abide with a chinaware vessel, had 'borrowed' a silver one from one of the households where a friend of his worked."[126] Sam's keen awareness of the importance of refined tableware for the American genteel class drove him to obtain a silver gravy boat, a symbol of refinement, which he considered more suitable for the dignified status of the Dargies. In other words, he decided for Emma what a proper table setting should be. Through his adoption of the genteel code, Sam helped his American employer showcase a culture of distinction in front of their elite American friends.

It is possible that Sam became familiar with proper American dining etiquette through the Chinese-English cookbooks that were widely circulated among Chinese domestic servants in the early twentieth century. For example, the cookbook published by the Fat Ming Company includes an illustration of a table setting for a formal dinner (figure 1.21), encapsulating Victorian American dining fashion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[127] The illustration features a floral centerpiece sitting on a round-mirrored mat, surrounded by several intricate candlestick lamps and goblet glasses, as well as sets of china plates, forks, and knives. Illustrations like this provided Chinese servants with some preliminary knowledge of the formal

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[125] English-style leg of mutton is served with a rich brown gravy made from the dripping of the meat and vegetable. A silver boat was commonly used to hold the gravy. Sarah M. Williamson, *A California Cook Book* (San Francisco: Town Talk Press, 1916), 16.
[126] "Humor in the Help," *Victorian Preservation Center News* 2 no. 4 (Winter 2000): cover page.
[127] Fat Ming Co., *Fat Ming Zhong Xi Wen Chu Shu Bao Jian / Chinese and English Cook Book*, preface. For a depiction of dinner decorations for Victorian American families, see Helena Rowe, "Family Fashions and Fancies," *Good Housekeeping* 6 no. 5 (Jan 7, 1888): 125–26.

table settings demanded by the American upper class and the growing middle class.[128] As the democratic movements of the nineteenth century made refined decor more accessible, moderate-income households also began to devote effort to showcasing personal cultivation and social etiquette. For example, even in the aforementioned officer's quarters, Ah Quin had a routine of picking and trimming flowers to display on the dining table inside the house. This practice, along with the story about Sam, demonstrates that some Chinese servants were keenly aware of the genteel material codes that were important to middle- and upper-class American domestic culture. They adopted these codes and played a crucial role in materializing the democratized social expectations of genteel behavior.

In addition to cookbooks, Chinese servants might have discovered proper dining etiquette from other Chinese servant friends. As Ah Quin's social life demonstrates, Chinese servants maintained close ties with neighboring Chinese laborers. The close-knit social network among the Chinese also provided opportunities for them to emulate the genteel behavior of other elite American families to further elevate the status of their own employers. In fact, the story about Sam reveals that he had extensive knowledge of the possessions of the Dargies, which he used as a reference for selecting proper tableware. A dive into the 1900 Census of the Dargies shows that they also had a Chinese cook named Dong Poy and a servant named Lee Suey. It was very possible that Sam learned about the Dargies' possession of a silver boat from one of their two Chinese servants or other mutual Chinese friends in Oakland.[129] During my interview with her,

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[128] Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), XV.

[129] United States Census Bureau, *1900 U.S. Federal Census*; Oakland Ward 7, Alameda, California; Page: 7; dwelling 153, family 161, William Dargie; Ancestry.com. *1900 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004; Family History Library microfilm: 1240082; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623.

Patricia Donald also hinted at the major role that servant networks likely played in elevating the genteel status of middle- and upper-class American families in the neighborhood. She shared:

> The [Cohen Bray] house had many high-end Chinese and Japanese furnishings and artifacts of which I remember Emelita telling us that Sam was very proud of. The [Sam's] high status within the other house servants was utmost important. He would push to buy and borrow silver serving trays to 'up the status' for dinner parties, apparently discussed at great length by the servants in the neighborhood.[130]

As Donald implied, domestic servants could derive a sense of pride from their American employers' processions of refined furnishings and artifacts. Sam's dedication to the Cohen-Bray family allowed him to perceive the family's high status as a part of his own self-worth, which further drove him to advise on borrowing and purchasing fancy household items. For instance, the descendants recall that "Sam felt so much a part of the family that he even 'advised' Emma on matters of dress style and fashion."[131] In return, Sam was well respected by the family members. A handmade male Chinese doll (figure 1.22), likely made in reference to Sam, was a favorite toy of the family and is still a part of the Cohen Bray House collection today. The family's adoration of Sam was certainly not an exception. Numerous similar accounts in women's magazines illustrate American employers' high regard for Chinese domestic servants. For example, it was widely known among female homemakers that a capable male Chinese servant would do the work of two female servants, and do it better.[132] The *Home Journal* also praises, "…the Chinese are so capable, so obedient, and so respectful that they make the best servants in the world."[133] The mutual affection between American employers and their Chinese

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[130] Petty Donald, e-mails to author, July 31, 2021.
[131] Sylvia Ehlers Donald Milham and Ronald H Limbaugh, "Oakland Family Preserve Showcase Mansion," *California Historian* 45, no.3 (Spring 2000): 10–29. The Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House Collection.
[132] Di Vernon, "The Chinese As House Servants," *Good Housekeeping* 12, no. 1 (Jan 1891): 21.
[133] Henry Hoyt Moore, "The Changing Scene," *The Home Journal* 55, no. 29 (Sep 20, 1900): 11.

servants further motivated the servants to undertake actions to uplift the image of the employer's households, as in Sam's case.

In addition to tableware, the food cooked by Chinese servants also enhanced middle-class gentility. Edward Jung, who worked for the Pardee family a few blocks away from the Cohen Bray House, exemplifies this. Through his skillful cooking, Edward helped add elegance to the family's dining table. Allen Chung had fond memories of Edward's elaborate food preparation, stating that: "…while he prepared the dinner [in the Pardee kitchen]…It was fascinating watching him use two paddles to fashion butter into swans for the bread plate."[134] In Edward's hands, a common American dish like bread and butter became a piece of art. Lydia Avery Coonley Ward, another American employer, also reflects on the culinary artistry of her Chinese cook, Toy. In her article "My 'China Boys'" for *Good Housekeeping,* she stated, "Cooking with him [Toy] is a fine art, and he can make as handsome a picture of a salad as I have ever seen. Decoration is his forte, or rather one of his fortes, for he is a remarkably good cook in all lines."[135] Toy did not only live up to the expectations of his employer; he exceeded them.

In addition to preparing regular meals, Chinese servants exhibited their culinary skills through the exquisite desserts they made for their employers. For example, the *New York Times* documents a Rear Admiral's insistence on having his Chinese cook make the cake for his dinner party rather than ordering from Rauscher's, a famous Danish pastry shop in Washington D.C..[136] As described by one of the dinner guests, "It [the cake] was simply delicious, as well as

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[134] Nicole Jung-Alexander, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, June 11, 2021. Extend my gratitude to Esther Kwan for connecting me with Nicole.
[135] Lydia Avery Coonley Ward, "My 'China Boys'," *Good Housekeeping* 41, no. 4 (Oct 1905): 399.
[136] Rauscher's catered the wedding reception of President Woodrow Wilson and received great satisfaction. Rauscher's, Washington D.C., "Both Mrs. Wilson and the President Pleased," *The National Baker Volume 25* (Philadelphia: National Baker Publishing Company, 1920), 5.

ornamental. Before it was out, we all examined the decorations. In the centre, done in chocolate, was the date of the Admiral's birthday; under it the date of the day of the dinner…"[137] The extent of embellishment on the cake impressed all guests. Based on the description, it seems to be even more decorative than the ornamental frosted cake illustration included in the Fat Ming cookbook (figure 1.23). The cookbook also includes many other highly refined dishes. The preface states,

> A large majority of the recipes have been contributed by successful Chinese masters of the art of foreign cooking, others have been contributed by several famous American and European chefs and still others have been culled from reliable foreign authorities on culinary art.[138]

This provides a partial explanation for how Chinese servants were able to master western cooking, particularly the luxurious dishes. In fact, even before learning from books and through practice in America, some Chinese cooks received formal training in western cooking before their migration. The *Hong Kong Telegraph* records an advertisement for western cooking classes in Hong Kong from the 1920s:

> The Kowloon branch of the Technical Institute, has prepared its now [new] courses of instruction in cookery. The course consists of 16 lessons in baking, boiling, invalid cookery, stewing, soup making, pastry making, cheese cookery, fishes, reheating of food, cake making, batters and sauces. These courses are divided into demonstration work and practical work. The final class is by way of a recapitulation of the former. The dishes cooked include all the regular dishes found in a European home, among them many old favorites.[139]

As the advertisement notes, these classes not only taught cooking techniques to those who planned to work as cooks in America, but also instilled them with the genteel values of American middle-class families. Emphasis was placed on "demonstration work," stressing the importance

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[137] "A Talk On Chinese Servants," *New York Times,* April 2, 1911, SM2.
[138] Fat Ming Co., *Fat Ming Zhong Xi Wen Chu Shu Bao Jian / Chinese and English Cook Book*, preface.
[139] "Cooking Classes: Kowloon Branches of Technical Institute," *The Hong Kong Telegraph*, October 22, 1926, 10.

of the presentation of dishes. Cooking schools like this one prepared intending Chinese immigrants for work in domestic service and other public kitchens in America.[140] This also explains why there were so many Chinese cooks who worked for private American families.

Perhaps due to the general impression that Chinese servants had expertise in refined dishes, more moderate-income families felt compelled to clarify their particular needs for common dishes. For example, a simulated conversation on the subject of "Hiring Out as A Cook" in *A Chinese and English Phrase Book in the Canton Dialect* includes an employer's demands for "simple cooking" rather than "fancy dishes."[141] In reality, most Chinese servants mastered not only fine dining but also practical cooking. For instance, during her interview with me, Nicole Jung-Alexander also recalled the foods cooked by her grandfather, Edward Jung, stating:

> My grandfather was an amazing cook. I gotta tell everything he made for our family. He made the best fried chicken. He made the best fruit pies; everything was seasonal. He would make the dough from scratch. He would measure everything by hand, nothing by measuring cups or spoons or anything…Honey baked ham. He roasted turkeys. He made American food so excellent…the gravy…he made gravy from scratch. I know that the Pardee sisters probably had eaten really well when my grandfather cooked for them...[142]

Edward and many other Chinese servants' ability to prepare both fine dining and casual dishes made them ideal cooks for many Victorian American families. Through presenting skillful and

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[140] John Eng-Wong, a scholar in American Studies at Brown University, shared with me that cooking schools in Hong Kong could possibly date back to the late nineteenth century. In his oral history interview with a Chinese restaurant owner who was born around 1910, the owner shared that his father had participated in one such cooking school in Hong Kong before migrating to the U.S. to work as a cook. John Eng-Wong, e-mails to author, July 16, 2016.

[141] Stedman and Lee, *A Chinese and English Phrase Book in the Canton Dialect: Or, Dialogues on Ordinary and Familiar Subjects for the Use of the Chinese Resident in America, and of Americans Desirous of Learning the Chinese Language; with the Pronunciation of Each Word Indicated in Chinese and Roman Characters* (New York: Jenkins, 1888), 108, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b699497.

[142] Nicole Jung-Alexander, interview by Hongyan Yang, June 11, 2021.

artistic cooking, as well as showcasing proper dining etiquette, these Chinese cooks demonstrated their ability to enhance the established middle-class gentility among Victorian American families.

Summary

This chapter explored the influences of Chinese servants on American domestic culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I closely examined the houses' architectural layouts, kitchen spaces, and food material culture. My findings reveal that the everyday practices of Chinese servants played a major role in redefining the nominal meanings of the built environment and enhancing established middle-class gentility in California. These Chinese servants learned about proper middle-class etiquette through bilingual cookbooks and their interactions with American employers and other Chinese servants. Furthermore, their close relationships with their American employers granted them additional power to challenge architectural norms and make deliberate choices for the households.

In addition to revealing their influences on American domestic culture, this chapter offers a rare insight into the personal and social lives of some Chinese servants. As servant-employer relationships were often complex, these case studies do not necessarily reflect the general experiences of all Chinese servants. Nevertheless, they are critical in illuminating the agency that these servants often had in making both household and personal choices. In addition to their specific identity as servants, they all belonged to the broader community of Chinese laborers. Departing from the prevalent custom of compelling live-in servants to obscure their ethnic culture and assimilate to American customs, the Chinese servants in my case studies were able to

retain their culinary traditions and social lives in and beyond the houses they served.[143] These formative experiences working as house servants, and the economic, social and cultural capital they accumulated during this employment, became critical to their upward mobility later on

[143] Katzman, *Seven Days A Week,* 171.

Chapter 2: Building Chinese Restaurants

On the morning of April 18, 1906, a devastating earthquake hit San Francisco, followed by a roaring fire that burned for four days and nights. While this was supposedly a tragedy for all people in the city, the *Overland Monthly* proclaimed otherwise: "Fire has reclaimed to civilization and cleanliness the Chinese ghetto, and no Chinatown will be permitted in the borders of the city…it seems as though a divine wisdom directed the range of the seismic horror and the range of the fire god. Wisely, the worst was cleared away with the best."[144] Led by Mayor Eugene Schmitz, two subcommittees—the Relief of Chinese Committee and Permanent Location of Chinatown Committee—were quickly formed to create segregated Chinese refugee camps and relocate Chinatown to Hunters' Point.[145] The city's speculative plans received strong opposition from the Chinese community. Even before the formal annulment of the relocation plan, Chinese American leaders and merchants such as Lim Shing gathered people to clean up the earthquake debris and start raising funds for rebuilding Chinatown.[146]

It was in this context that the architecture of San Francisco's Chinatown began to take shape. Working with white American architects, Chinese leaders and merchants aimed to create a new positive image of Chinatown by transforming the impoverished slum into an "Oriental City." In contrast to the "prefabricated wooden buildings of no architectural pretension or style" in the pre-earthquake era, distinctive architectural elements such as pagoda towers, terracotta

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[144] Quoted in Connie Young Yu, "Survivors' stories," *Sing Tao Daily*, April 15, 2006, 15.
[145] Joseph Leung, translated by Kai Lui, "Plan or Relocation of Chinatown Rejected," *Sing Tao Daily*, April 15, 2006, 22–23.
[146] Ibid, 29. Yilin Liu, "Remembering the Hero of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake Lim Tuck Sing" (unpublished manuscript, June 7, 2016), typescript; Lim Shing, also known as Lim Fook Sing, received a fifth gear honor from the Qing emperor for his post-earthquake heroic deed, which was the highest honor a civilian outside the Forbidden City could receive. The Lim family also kept a record of the silk award pennant. Andrea Yee, interview by Hongyan Yang, May 15, 2020.

roofs, and gently curved eaves began to dominate Chinatown's skyline.[147] A 1941 Shanghainese traveler noted the interesting juxtaposition of these "Chinese" architectural features with western architectural styles. He wrote, "all the buildings were designed in a western architectural fashion. Although the building bodies were much westernized, the 'head' must be Chinese. Most featured a roof like the Temple of Heaven."[148] For the non-Chinese, stereotypic Chinese architectural elements were more eye-catching than the ordinary western architectural language, such as cornices and columns in classical architectural order. By engaging with these architectural transformations, Chinese American leaders helped recast Chinatown as a popular tourist attraction. Today, the bright red, yellow and green enlivened façades and additional embellishments such as traditional Chinese red lanterns and signage help further accentuate the exoticized Chinese atmosphere of the built environment (figure 2.1).

In this chapter, I investigate the built environment and culinary practices of the Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown, focusing on the Far East Cafe, Hang Far Low, Sing Hung Heung, and Woey Sin Low. Departing from existing studies' primary focus on building exteriors, I draw close attention to a comparison between exterior and interior spaces, as well as the food and dining rituals inside the restaurants. To explore these practices, I conduct close readings of historical photographs, restaurant menus, newspaper articles, Chinese business partnership investigation case files, and building permits. Most importantly, I collected new oral histories from Chinese American descendants. These methods help uncover the material and immaterial *tactics* that Chinese restaurant owners employed to negotiate for survivance and success in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire. I reveal that by framing the building

[147] Sally B. Woodbridge, *Architecture San Francisco: The Guide (*San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1982), 37.

[148] Yang Li, "San Francisco's Chinatown," *Qiao Sheng* (僑聲) 3 no. 8 (1941): 39.

exteriors within the parameter of white Americans' expectations, Chinese restaurant owners successfully demonstrated cultural resistance through the arrangements and practices in the interior spaces. Specifically, they tactically and meticulously employed imported Chinese artifacts, designed interior layouts, and arranged food and dining rituals, which I call "mobile material culture," to communicate regional Chinese culinary traditions in subtle ways. I argue that, in addition to tangible architecture, the objects and practices inside the buildings played a crucial role in revealing the spatial autonomy of Chinese merchants in reclaiming Chinatown as their community space in urban San Francisco in the early twentieth century.

Chinatown Architecture, Orientalism and Resistance

Scholars have long recognized the distinctive architecture in North American Chinatowns and provided morphological analyses of the styles and ornamentation of building façades. A few scholars have examined the architecture of San Francisco's Chinatown. The earliest scholarly endeavor can be attributed to geographer Christopher Salter. He identifies eighteen distinctive architectural elements of Chinatown, which he claims are "idealized" forms rather than genuine reflections of traditional Chinese towns. For Salter, these architectural elements were created to accommodate the political, economic, and social means of the Chinese community.[149] Compared to Salter, architectural historian Christopher Yip provides a more in-depth analysis on the forces that shaped this type of "sinocized" architecture, which he defines as American commercial brick buildings that incorporated Asian derived details.[150] He attributes the architecture to white American architects' limited exposure to Chinese architecture and the economic necessity to

[149] Salter, *San Francisco's Chinatown*.
[150] Christopher Lee Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985), 205–206.

adapt to the lot configurations in the dense urban setting of San Francisco, which explains the unlikelihood of importing traditional Chinese architectural forms from Chinese ancestral villages to urban San Francisco.[151] While Yip's comprehensive focus covers various types of buildings, his colleague Tonia Chao specifically emphasizes restaurants. Chao examines the evolution of Chinese restaurants in San Francisco from 1849 to 1984. Chao argues that after the earthquake, the restaurant market shifted from Chinese bachelors to American tourists and families, thus demonstrating a trend of Americanization from 1906 to 1965.[152] These scholars have laid the foundation for additional studies of the architecture of San Francisco's Chinatown.

Compared to the earlier focus on physical spaces, more recent scholarship has begun to draw greater attention to the racial dynamics and power relations embedded in Chinatowns. As geographer Kay Anderson notes, Chinatown was not a "neutral" descriptor of the Chinese people in the area, but rather a dominant "evaluative" territory that was ascribed by the Europeans.[153] Art historian Anthony Lee and historian Jack Tchen similarly note the emphasis on otherness in Chinatown paintings and photographs.[154] These works, either implicitly or explicitly, all echoed the unequal power relations underlined by the concept of "Orientalism." In his seminal work *Orientalism,* postcolonial theorist Edward Said uses this concept to stress the hegemony underlying western imagination and representation of the East.[155] Although Said focuses on the image of the Middle East, his work provides a useful framework to reflect on the subjugation of

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[151] Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown," 177–178.
[152] Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture."
[153] Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991), 30.
[154] Anthony W. Lee, *Picturing Chinatown: Art and Orientalism in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 287; John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1984), 14.
[155] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

Chinese immigrants in America. With a few exceptions, the field of Asian American Studies largely equates Orientalism with racist representations. Dominated by media and cultural studies, the field tends to prioritize stories of oppression over stories of agency in Asian American communities.[156] For example, in his landmark work *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882*, historian Jack Tchen names three kinds of Orientalism—including patrician Orientalism, commercial Orientalism, and political Orientalism—to mark three distinctive periods of Chinese American history, connecting cultural representations with social attitudes towards the Chinese.[157] Although he does not consider agency, Tchen's work provides a valuable framework to examine the artifacts and material objects inside Chinese restaurants.

Building on the concept of Orientalism, many architectural and urban historians further unpack the power dynamics that reside in the built environment; some explore how the colonized "gained a voice" and "spoke back."[158] Only a small number of scholars engage Orientalism in studying Chinatown architecture. For example, historians Greg Umbach and Dan Wishnoff describe how the elites of New York's Chinatown attempted to exploit exoticized images as

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[156] Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, "Orientalism," in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, eds. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 182–185. Chong names a few exceptions, including Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Rey Chow, "'Have You Eaten?'—Inspired by an Exhibit," *Amerasia Journal* 31 no. 1: 19–22; and Madeline Hsu, "From Chop Suey to Mandarin Cuisine: Fine Dining and the Refashioning of Chinese Ethnicity during the Cold War Era," in *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture*, eds. Sucheng Chan and Madeline Y. Hsu (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008): 173–93.
[157] John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 195.
[158] Zeynep Çelik, "Reflections on Architectural History Forty Years after Edward Said's Orientalism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 77, no. 4 (December 1, 2018): 381–83.

"strategic self-orientalism" from 1950 to 2005.[159] Although such an endeavor did not come to fruition in New York, San Francisco's Chinatown was perhaps the very first successful case. Architect, Chinese American historian, and activist Philip Choy argues that, in San Francisco, architecture was a tool that the Chinese community tactically used to undermine the city's plan to relocate Chinatown, and this contributed to overturning the negative image of the Chinese community.[160] Landscape architect Chuo Li makes a similar claim that the "ethnicity and exoticism" conveyed through architecture were "tactics" that Chinese Americans and immigrants employed for the survival of the Chinese community in San Francisco.[161] These studies evoke the resistance embedded in Chinatown architecture, but nevertheless reduce the built environment to an oversimplified entity captured by Orientalism. This inevitably overlooks the complex paradox in the built environment. In fact, a small number of scholars have revealed conflicting Asian representations in popular culture including literature, films, trade cards, and many other mediums.[162] One particularly relevant work is Brett Esaki's study of Japanese gardening. He uses the concept "outward assimilation" to illustrate how Japanese gardeners capitalized on the popularity of Japanese gardens in the early twentieth century to tactfully incorporate inward

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[159] Greg ("Fritz") Umbach and Dan Wishnoff, "Strategic Self-Orientalism," *Journal of Planning History* 7, no. 3 (2008): 214–38.
[160] Philip P. Choy, *San Francisco Chinatown* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2012), 14; Philip P. Choy, *The Architecture of San Francisco Chinatown* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2008), 22–23.
[161] Chuo Li, "The Politics and Heritage of Race and Space in San Francisco's Chinatown," 43–45. In her study of New York's Chinatown, she also reflects on the essentialism in architecture, meaning the reductions of cultural complexity to a few stereotypical representations. Li, "Commercialism and Identity Politics in New York's Chinatown," 1118–34.
[162] Marina J. Kaneti, "Migrants, Rights, Politics: Political Agency in Times of Exclusion" (PhD diss., The New School, 2016); Sheng-mei Ma, *The Deathly Embrace: Orientalism and Asian American Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

religious meanings through the seemingly secular gardening practices.[163] All of these scholars' attention to the paradoxical self-representations among Asian Americans and immigrants provides a critical path to understanding subaltern agency.

This chapter aims to uncover the complex and purposely inconsistent architectural and culinary choices residing in Chinese restaurants. Departing from existing studies' consideration of Chinatown buildings as self-contained entities, examining interior and exterior spaces separately, I delve into the deliberate, contingent, and seemingly contradictory choices that Chinese restaurant owners made about the built environment at the small scale. In addition to the overall architecture, I focus on the objects and practices inside the buildings.[164] I consider these architectural and culinary choices to be the owners' deliberate responses to gain acceptance and popularity. In fact, in Said's self-reflective essay published in 1985, he humbly admits the Orientalists' dependence on the Oriental. He wrote, "…what for the most part got left out of Orientalism was precisely the very history that resisted its ideological as well as political encroachments…"[165] My research foregrounds Postcolonial Studies' ongoing endeavors to address issues of resistance and agency, in particular the works of Abdual JanMohamed and Homi Bhabha, to explore the incongruous representations in the built environment of Chinatown

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[163] Brett Esaki, "Multidimensional Silence, Spirituality, and the Japanese American Art of Gardening," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 16, no. 3 (October 1, 2013): 235–65.
[164] Many architectural historians have noted that immigrants' imprints on the built environment can be best studied by observing their inhabitance of the spaces and were often intangible and ephemeral. Some notable works include: Chow, *Suburban Space*, 82-85; Pader, "Spatiality and Social Change," 114–27; Hubka and Kenny, "The Workers' Cottage in Milwaukee's Polish Community," 33–52; Arijit Sen, "Staged Disappointment: Architecture and Cultural Contact," *Winterthur Portfolio* 47, no. 4 (2013): 207–44; Sen, "Transcultural Place-Making," 19–33; Keath, *Patina of Place*. The focus on practice is especially important in studying immigrant food spaces due to their different culinary traditions. See Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, *Due Cucine*," 685–695; Yang, "Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen," 89–105.
[165] Edward W Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique*, no. 1 (October 1, 1985): 91, 94.

restaurants.[166] I refer to these stereotypic images of Chinese architecture as "Oriental architecture" that reflect the European American imagination, which imitate architectural forms that originated in China, and yet are fundamentally different. Accordingly, I refer to imported Chinese goods as "Chinese goods" to differentiate them from "Oriental goods," which are American-made and similarly fabricated based on the American imagination. The following sections of this chapter detail how Chinese restaurant owners in San Francisco's Chinatown employed different cultural representations in architecture and food to subvert the negative perceptions of Chinese architecture and Chinese people in the Exclusion Era, comparing their choices before and after the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Oriental Architecture and American Architects in Nineteenth-Century California

Predating the Oriental architecture in Chinatowns, Chinoiserie, "the European imitation and interpretation of Chinese art tradition," had already popularized architectural details like deeply curved eave ends and strong ridge lines in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[167] However, in San Francisco, the reconstruction of Chinatown after 1906 was the first time that Oriental designs became fashionable and of interests to California architects. Prior to this, there

[166] In "The Economy of Manichean Allegory," Abdual JanMohamed notes that the Third World literature is attempted to "negate the prior European negation of colonized cultures and its adoption and creative modification of western language and artistic forms in conjunction with indigenous language and forms." Similarly, Homi Bhabha articulates the perplex choices the colonized could make using the concept "mimicry." He argues that the "ambivalence of colonial discourse" allows "a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically." Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 84–85; Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 89–91.

[167] Nancy Steinhardt, "Chinese Comes to Europe, Europe Comes to China, Chinese Students Come to the United States" in *Chinese Architecture: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 314–317.

was limited presence of Chinese architecture in California. Chinese architectural details were mostly confined to building interiors.[168] Regional trade magazines such as *The California Architect and Building News* and *The Architect and Engineer of California* made little mention of Chinese architecture from 1898 to 1900.[169] In the nineteenth century, American architects who wanted to pursue the best architectural education were trained in the model of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris or by working as apprentices in architectural offices of those who were already in practice.[170] These professional training opportunities provided American architects with limited exposure to Chinese architecture.

In addition to professional training, pattern books were an important medium for influencing taste and sharing various housing types.[171] They provided alternative ways to promote architectural forms among architects and builders, who often customized these forms for their local audiences.[172] One pattern book that included Chinese architecture and was widely employed by architects in California was James Fergusson's *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, the fourth volume to *A History of Architecture in All Countries from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Published between 1865 and 1876, the four volumes served as important architectural references for California architects in the late nineteenth and early

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[168] Karen J. Weitze, "Charles Beasley, Architect (1827-1913): Issues and Images," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 3 (1980): 197.
[169] This is based on an extensive research on the two magazines. Both are digitized and available through archive.com and Hathitrust Digital Library.
[170] Bernard Michael Boyle, "Architectural Practice in America, 1865-1965--Ideal and Reality," in *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*, ed. Spiro Kostof (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 309–44.
[171] James Garvin, "Mail Order House Plans & American Victorian Architecture," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 4 (1981): 309.
[172] Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860," *Winterthur Portfolio* 19, no. 2/3 (1984): 107–50.

twentieth centuries.[173] Written based on a premise that the civilization and art of the East was inferior to the West, a central idea of "Orientalism," the volume reflected the deeply embedded cultural hegemony possessed by the West in the architectural profession. Fergusson illustrates this western ignorance of Chinese architecture, writing it off as not worthy of much attention:

> It is extremely difficult, in the present state of our knowledge, to write anything, either conclusive or satisfactory, about the architecture of China. This may arise partly from the incuriousness of travelers, and partly because there really are no buildings in the country worthy of the people or their civilization.[174]

In Fergusson's brief account of Chinese architecture in the volume, he draws attention to a few stereotypic images of Chinese architecture—including pagodas, Buddhist temples, taas (towers), tombs, and pailoos (gateways)—considering them as "unprogressive."[175] He agrees with the contemporary popular opinion that Chinese architecture should be viewed mainly as "works of art" rather than "works of science."[176] Following this logic, Fergusson focuses on the color scheme, rather than construction techniques or formal strategies, as the definitive features of Chinese architecture. He extols red pillars, green friezes and open work, blue floors and stronger lines, and the gilding used throughout.[177] This influenced later American architects who frequently associated the use of these colors with Chinese architecture.[178] It was certainly easier for them to adopt the color schemes, which did not require much in-depth understanding of the

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[173] Architectural historian Karen Weitze notes that American architects were familiar with James Fergusson; his book was reprinted in multiple editions in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s. Weitze, "Charles Beasley, Architect (1827-1913)," 187, 199.
[174] James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (London: John Murry, Albemarle Street, 1876), 685.
[175] Ibid, 710.
[176] Ibid, 707.
[177] Ibid, 704.
[178] Louis Christian Mullgardt, "Color in Architecture," *Architect and Engineer of California,* March 1911, 40.

engineering details of Chinese architecture. Meanwhile, Fergusson also warns American architects that imitating Chinese towers was not only technically impossible but also worthless:

> Edifices so original and so national must be interesting from that circumstance alone, and it seems almost impossible to build anything in a tower-like form of great height, whether as a steeple, a minar, or a pagoda, which shall not form a pleasing object from its salience and aspiring character alone, even without any real artistic merit in itself.[179]

Such a message further emphasized the otherness of Chinese architecture and the lack of means for American architects to build stand-alone towers in the West. Fergusson was also uninterested in seeking a technical solution, as Chinese architecture was not considered as science from the beginning, and thus did not deserve scientific scrutiny. Instead, he favored the building typology of the Winter Palace in Beijing (figure 2.2), which has a solid masonry base and fewer tiers of pagoda towers perched on the top.[180] In addition to pagoda towers, Fergusson discusses the curved eaves and the roofline ornamentation in Chinese architecture but disparages them as inconceivable and unpleasing:

> …they exaggerate their favorite hollow curve to an extent unpleasing to a European eye—the angles being, in some instances, actually turned back, and the ridge being also ornamented by upturned ornaments at its end, to an extent we cannot reconcile with our notions; nor indeed is it possible we should, when they are overloaded with grotesque ornaments to the extent too often found.[181]

The negative depictions of Chinese architecture in this influential pattern book helps explain why architects in California were lack of interest in incorporating such elements into design practices in the nineteenth century.[182] This attitude towards Chinese architecture made it difficult to

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[179] Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 698
[180] Ibid, 707.
[181] Ibid, 703–704.
[182] One exception was the Agricultural Pavilion in Stockton, California designed by local architect Charles Beasley in 1887. Beasley's choice of designing the judges' stand and grandstand in a Chinese pagoda style was quite unusual considering both the negative and limited mention of Chinese architecture in the architectural profession and the strong anti-Chinese sentiment at the time. Weize attributes Beasley's decision to design these buildings in a

imagine any significant application of such design principles during the rebuilding of San Francisco's Chinatown. Nevertheless, American architects did end up appropriating these stereotypic architectural features to appeal to a local fascination with Oriental design. What contributed to the changing attitudes towards Chinese design features in the post-earthquake era? How were these features represented through the exterior and interior of buildings? In the rest of this chapter, I examine several Chinese restaurants in Chinatown from both the pre- and post-earthquake eras. In particular, I draw attention to the role of Chinese restaurant owners in shaping the built environment, in terms of both the objects and the practices inside the buildings.

Chinese Restaurants in the Pre-Earthquake Era

Pre-earthquake Chinatown buildings followed western architectural styles and were devoid of any continental Chinese architectural features.[183] A street view photograph (figure 2.3) taken from the third-floor balcony of Hang Far Low captures buildings in western styles with either gabled or flat roofs. Also clearly visible are Chinese lanterns, plants, and other business signage, which announce the occupants of the buildings. While the properties were nearly all owned by whites, Chinese restaurant owners used these imported Chinese artifacts and furnishings to leave an evident cultural imprint on the buildings, asserting their control over the spaces through these less permanent features. In a sense, these features were tactics that Chinese business owners used to demonstrate cultural resistance.[184]

Chinese style to his exposure to Chinese people through his religious and architectural activities, and a likely reference to Fergusson's book. In his design, Beasley simplified the process by accentuating the upturned eaves while leaving out other decorative features such as the finials and grotesques on the roof ridges of the Summer Palace. Weitze, "Charles Beasley, Architect (1827-1913)," 196–200.

[183] Ying Zi Pan, "The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco's Chinatown" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1991), 130–131.

[184] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

Hang Far Low

Hang Far Low, one of the most well-known restaurants in Chinatown, was one such example. A photograph circa 1885 shows that the façade was essentially classical in its configuration (figure 2.4). The nine-bay ground floor was articulated by ten pilasters. The windows on the second floor were paired with pointed pediments. In between the windows, large eave brackets supported the cornice line. The top floor featured decorative balustrades that were adorned with frets. In addition to these classical architectural features, the façade abounded with Chinese ornamentation, including customized paper and wooden lanterns hanging by the second- and third-floor balconies, wooden Chinese restaurant signage, potted Chinese plants, and Chinese miniatures placed in front of the balcony on the third floor. Due to an unfortunate fire, parts of the restaurant were rebuilt in 1892.[185] A photograph from around 1894 (figure 2.5) indicates that the previous pediments on the second floor were replaced with voussoir arches while the building continued to employ nearly identical Chinese artifacts to decorate the western architectural façade. This 1894 photograph more clearly displays these features. Comparing the two photographs, one can see that although the façade was dominated by permanent western architectural features, Chinese decorative details were carried throughout. In fact, Hang Far Low was also registered as a company that specialized in importing and trading Chinese provisions. Supported by a group of over thirty Chinese merchants in both San Francisco and China, the total value and credit of the company was $35,000 in 1893.[186] Such a business provided the

[185] "A Chinatown Blaze," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 27, 1892, 16.
[186] Hung Far Low &Co., Immigration Chinese Business Partnership Investigation Case Files 13502-713, National Archives at San Francisco. The file indicates that the restaurant had this Chinese provision business at least since 1884. Courtesy David Lei for generously sharing the file with me during shelter in place due to COVID-19.

Chinese restaurant owners with the advantage of easy access to a variety of Chinese furnishings and goods, which they used to give the space a clear cultural touch.

In addition to these exterior ornamentations, the Chinese restaurant owners also employed imported furnishings and goods to decorate the interior space. A 1892 *San Francisco Chronicle* article names Hang Far Low as the most gorgeous restaurant in Chinatown. It goes on to describe the luxurious interior as "…handsomely decorated after the fashion of the Chinese and its furnishings were elegant. There were several chandeliers in the place that cost $1500 each."[187] These decorative choices reflected the Chinese restaurant owners' keen observation of a western fascination with Chinese goods. Therefore, they employed such goods to create a distinctive dining environment. As Ben-Chang Chen notes, "the concept of 'decor' and 'atmosphere' is a product of an American context and Chinese American interaction. It is not intrinsic to Chinese restaurants as an intuition."[188] Rooted in the long history of trade between the U.S. and China, dating back to the eighteenth century, refined Chinese goods signified distinction and were important status markers for European Americans.[189] In particular, Victorian Americans relied heavily on material objects to define and distinguish themselves from others in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[190] Through decorating the interior using luxurious decor, Hang Far Low successfully appealed to both white Americans and local Chinese immigrants.

In addition, the main dining room on the third floor (see figure 2.6) had several big round tables that each could seat a group of ten people or more. The stools, which were rectangular and

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[187] "A Chinatown Blaze," 16.
[188] Ben-Chang Chen, *Mei-guo Hua Qiao Can Guan Gung Ye* (Taipei, Taiwan: Far East Book Co., 1971), quoted in Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture," 206.
[189] Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*, 3–24.
[190] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 233.

without back rests, were commonly found in the homes of the upper class in China.[191] These intricate Chinese interior decorations also received detailed coverage in *Hittell's Hand-Book of Pacific Coast Travel*,

> The upper floor, for the accommodation of the more wealthy guests, is divided into apartments by movable partitions, curiously carved and lacquered. The chairs and tables, chandeliers, stained window-panes, and even the cooking utensils used at this restaurant, were nearly all imported from China…The tables are decorated with satin screens or hangings on one side; the balconies or smoking rooms are illuminated by colored lanterns; and Chinese music adds to the charms of the entertainment.[192]

Chinese restaurant owners carefully used these arrangements to accommodate the Chinese communal style of dining, *gongshi* or *gongcan*, which has been commonly referred to as family-style dining in America. In this dining style, several main dishes are placed in the center of a round table for everyone to share. Diners use their individual utensils to take food directly from the main dishes. Family-style dining has long been an important and definitive feature of Chinese foodways. In their latest work, food historians Yong Chen and Clare Gordon Bettencourt note that Chinese communal dining has been challenged during many historical epidemics because of the associated potential hygiene risks. Nevertheless, this centuries-old tradition has been carried on as an essential part of Chinese cuisine. Citing the works of Chinese scholars such as Lin Haicong and Jiang Xiaolin, Chen and Bettencourt also note that this dining style marks the Chinese culture of collectivism as opposed to the western culture of individualism, which instead promotes serving dishes individually.[193] By arranging the interior to

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[191] Karen Mazurkewich, *Chinese Furniture: A Guide to Collecting Antiques* (Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2006), 75.
[192] John S. Hittell, *Hittell's Handbook of Pacific Coast Travel* (San Francisco: The Bancroft Company, 1887), 100, quoted in Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture," 65.
[193] Yong Chen and Clare Gordon Bettencourt, "Chinese Food during Covid-19 in China and the United States: A Tale of Two Countries," in *The Pandemic: Perspectives on Asia*, ed. Vinayak Chaturvedi (Association for Asian Studies, 2020), 137–51.

accommodate family-style dining, Chinese restaurant owners helped create a familiar dining environment for their fellow countrymen.

Along with family-style dining, the restaurant also served traditional Chinese banquets, which can be dated back to the early Qing Dynasty.[194] The costs of banquets at Hang Far Low ranged from $20 to $100 for small parties of around a half dozen people, and the entire upper floors could be reserved for hosting bigger parties.[195] Wealthy Chinese merchants also entertained their white guests at the restaurant. One such occasion was the annual banquet of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Yinn Ye Kong Sow on February 20, 1897 (see figure 2.7). Present at the banquet were some of the highest-ranking city officials, who were seated at the long rectangular table in the center of the room. On the side were the Chinese association members, who enjoyed their meals in a traditional family style at the big round tables. The banquet's menu included six entrees, eight kinds of dessert, and various native and Chinese wines and champagnes, including dishes common to Manchu-Han imperial feasts such as bird's nest soup, Chinese snow fungus with gravy soup, and stewed abalone. During the meal, Chinese music was performed.[196] Through these luxurious Chinese dishes, Chinese embellishments in the interior and exterior spaces, and the music, the Chinese restaurant owners of Hang Far Low created a unique cultural experience that was familiar to the Chinese and also desirable to white

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[194] Isaac Yue, "The Comprehensive Manchu-Han Banquet: History, Myth, and Development," *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 22 (2018): 93–111.
[195] Hittell, *Hittell's Handbook of Pacific Coast Travel,* 100.
[196] In addition to the dishes listed in the main text, the menu also included white olive fish fin, stewed French mushrooms, fried spring pigeons, fresh lotus nut, duck soup, roast pig, roast turkey, chicken broth fish fin, stewed bundle duck, stewed white beche de mer and chicken, stewed fish brain with chicken soup, stewed Chinee fish maw, fried gold coin chicken. "Annual Banquet of A Chinese Society," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 21, 1897, 29. For an example of Manchu-Han Banquet, see a sample menu of *Pleasure Boat*, quoted in Yue, "The Comprehensive Manchu-Han Banquet," 103–105.

Americans. By doing so, Chinese restaurant owners successfully upheld their familiar culinary tradition through both food and dining rituals.

Woey Sin Low

Another Chinese restaurant that also highlighted Chinese decor was Woey Sin Low. Like Hang Far Low, Woey Sin Low operated not only as a restaurant but also as an import and export company. According to the 1893 Chinese business partnership investigation case file, Wooey Sin Low & Co was listed as both a restaurant and a merchandise dealer.[197] This business practice gave the restaurant an advantage of decorating the western façade with imported Chinese embellishments. Intricate wood carvings adorned nearly the entire third-floor façade (figure 2.8 and figure 2.9). It featured a grand centerpiece that consisted of a circular Chinese landscape carving, which fit perfectly into a square frame with even the small interstitial spaces filled with beautiful carvings. Right in front of the centerpiece was a small Chinese water fountain that illustrated the central idea of Chinese garden design. Flanked symmetrically on either side of the centerpiece were two wooden double doors topped by half-circle transoms crafted with Chinese wood carvings. Moving further out from the center were two-over-two glass floral windows on either side. In addition to these delicate wooden details, white marble panels were placed beneath the windows and centerpiece, further elevating the refinement of the façade. Through employing these intricate Chinese embellishments, the restaurant owners clearly announced their cultural influence on the exterior space.

In keeping with the exterior embellishments, Woey Sin Low's interior was also beautifully decorated with imported Chinese artifacts. In addition to the ornate Chinese lanterns

[197] Wooey Sin Low& Co., Immigration Chinese Business Partnership Investigation Case Files 13502-808A, National Archives at San Francisco.

and chandeliers found in other Chinese restaurants, Woey Sin Low featured especially elaborate furnishings. For example, its grand saloon on the third floor was imbued with the finest materials (figure 2.10).[198] Traditional Chinese philosophy and practices guided the interior arrangements. The saloon featured a Chinese rosewood couch bed with marble insets at back and mother of pearl inlays. Behind it, a large mirror was used to expand the view of the interior and invite positive energy into the space according to the principles of Feng Shui. On a wooden table in front of the mirror, a wide shallow bowl held symbolic sacrifices to Chinese ancestors. To the tray's left side was a beautifully painted Chinese porcelain vase. To the right, a marble and wooden table screen with a finely carved wooden frame was used to suggest the mountainous landscapes of China. In addition, the interior was replete with inlaid movable screens, which were commonly found in Chinese restaurants.[199] As seen in figure 2.11, the screens were decorated with nature-inspired carvings and finished with lacquers. They were folded up and secured in place using strings to make big open areas. At times, the screens were expanded, working together with the trellis transoms to create small divisions for hosting private banquets.[200] All of these elements were carefully arranged by the owner to create an effect that satisfied both the nostalgic Chinese and curious American diners.

Looking comparatively at the two restaurants, it is clear that although both buildings adopted a western architectural façade, the Chinese restaurant owners were similar in their efforts to use luxurious Chinese embellishments to grant the restaurants substantial traditional

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[198] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft: the History of California, Vol. 5* (San Francisco: the History Company Publishers, 1886), 331–332, quoted in Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture," 59.
[199] Other Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's and Vancouver's Chinatowns also widely adopted the screens. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 160.
[200] Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, 331–332. Quoted in Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture," 59.

Chinese character in the interiors. Both the exterior and interior spaces asserted the owners' agency in preserving the traditional culinary practices and creating ornate decor that appealed to both Chinese clientele and local Americans. In the following section, I detail the role that Chinese merchants played in redefining the restaurants' exteriors in the post-earthquake era.

Chinese Merchants and Restaurant Exteriors in the Post-Earthquake Era

At the beginning of the post-earthquake reconstruction, the city of San Francisco did not specify any visual expectations other than the buildings being fireproof and having proper lighting and ventilation.[201] A few studies have noted that Chinese merchants and leaders such as Look Tin Eli played a critical role in working with white American architects and property owners to incorporate stereotypic Chinese architectural features into San Francisco's Chinatown.[202] Architectural historian Dell Upton argues that these exoticized architectural features suited both the non-Chinese property owners and the Chinese tenants in promoting the neighborhood as a tourist attraction, responding simultaneously to "outsider's imposition of difference" and "insider's adoption of ethnicity as a distinguished identity."[203] In other words, these features were "invented traditions" derived from a western imagination of Chinese

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[201] *San Francisco Examiner*, May 21, 1906, quoted in Pan, "The Impact of the 1906 Earthquake on San Francisco's Chinatown," 130.

[202] Raymond W. Rast, "The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882–1917," *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (2007): 53–54; Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown," 197–200. During an interview with Bruce Quan, Jr., the great grandson of Lew Hing (the President of the Pacific Coast Canning and Vice-President of the Canton Bank of San Francisco), recalled that Lew Hing and other elite Chinese merchants observed the significance of the intersection of Dupont Street (later renamed as Grant Avenue) and California Street in establishing a new image for Chinatown, which was a key stop of wealthy white Americans who lived in Nob Hill. Having stores with unique Oriental features at this location would effectively capture their attention. Bruce Quan, Jr,, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, June 2, 2020.

[203] Dell Upton, "Ethnicity, Authenticity, and Invented Traditions," *Historical Archaeology* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 1996): 5.

architecture to fight against the racist Chinatown relocation efforts.[204] In fact, these exoticized Chinese architectural features reflected more of the imperial architecture in Beijing than they did the vernacular architecture of rural villages in Guangdong Province, where most of the Chinese immigrants were from.[205] In this chapter, building on the well-trodden scholarship of Chinatown architecture, I briefly explain how the scholarship applies to the exterior spaces of the Chinese restaurants in my case study. By comparing the new restaurant façades with the ones from the pre-earthquake era, I articulate how Chinese restaurant owners promoted Oriental features on the restaurants' exteriors to attract non-Chinese clientele, uplift the image of Chinatown and Chinese architecture, and eventually obtain leverage to continue occupying and making decisions in the spaces.

Far East Cafe

Restaurants, like stores that sold imported Chinese goods, demanded a commercial utilization of Oriental traits.[206] The building of Far East Cafe, one of the oldest Chinese restaurants still standing in San Francisco's Chinatown today, was designed in 1908 by architects William H. Crim Jr. and Earl B. Scott (later refers to as Crim & Scott). The property was owned by Lillora Canfield and originally housed two Chinese import and export stores, Wing Sing Lung and Shanghai Bazaar.[207] A historical photograph from 1910 (figure 2.12) features the building's terracotta roof with gently curved eave ends, which granted this ordinary two-story brick building a magnificent and imposing effect. Other than the roof, the building body was heavily

[204] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2.
[205] Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown," 177–178.
[206] Salter, *San Francisco's Chinatown: How Chinese a Town?*, 16–18.
[207] *San Francisco Block Book* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1909), San Francisco Public Library.

influenced by classical architectural language, including features like cornices and modillions. Similar to most architects who were a part of the design team for rebuilding Chinatown, Crim & Scott were relatively new to the architectural profession and had no prior experience working with Chinese architecture.[208] *The Architect and Engineer of California* comments on the practices of Crim & Scott, stating, "No particular style is followed by this firm, although the majority of their buildings have a tendency to be the Colonial."[209] They captured the stereotypic images of Chinese architecture using adapted forms such as a gable roof with upturned eaves, giving the building an exotic effect. The imitation was based on aesthetics; it was the image that was appropriated. Chinese restaurant owners further accentuated the exotic imagery through later façade alterations. A photo of restaurant manager Art Lew in the 1950s (figure 2.13) shows the vertical store sign and decorative marquee, highlighting the popular American Chinese dish choy suey and a feather fan figure—a beautiful far east collectible—rising up from the clouds. All of these demonstrated the Chinese restaurant owners' further commercialization of their ethnicity and culture to attract non-Chinese clientele.

Sun Hung Heung

In addition to Far East Cafe, Crim & Scott also designed the building for Sun Hung Heung, but not in an Oriental style (see elevation drawing figure 2.14). This was because the three-story building was initially constructed in 1906 for a Chinese poultry and fish store with

[208] Yip notes that the people who undertook the immense amount of reconstruction work were mostly lesser known commercial builders and architects. Yip, "San Francisco's Chinatown," 179.
[209] "Some of the Work of WM. H. Crim, Jr. and Earl B. Scott, Architects," *The Architect and Engineer*, May 1910, 35.

tenements above.[210] Wentworth Place, the alleyway where the building was located, was known as the "Fish Alley." The main clientele of the businesses in the alley were local Chinese people; therefore, the building's design did not require the use of exotic architectural features to attract non-Chinese attention.[211] Instead of an explicit Oriental theme, the building made frequent references to western architectural elements. It was designed in the Italianate style, which featured tall and narrow windows and elaborated window crowns in both inverted-U and trapezoid shapes with keystones in the center. The corner edges were decorated with quoins. Despite the original intention for the space, the Sun Hung Heung Restaurant, founded by by Sam Wong and Yun Wong, has occupied this site since 1919.[212] The restaurant stayed in the hands of the founders' family until 1990. The purely western design of the original building didn't seem to be adequate for attracting American customers who were interested in obtaining a unique cultural experience. As the Wong family realized that they could use architecture to capitalize off of the western imagination of the Orient, they added a marquee and vertical sign like those of the Far East Cafe and many other restaurants as seen in the background of a historical photograph (figure 2.15). This façade treatment was typical of Chinese restaurants prior to the 1960s, when chop suey was still very popular. The dish successfully encapsulated an American perception of

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[210] The 1908 building permit from the City of San Francisco lists 744 Washington Street as a Chinese poultry and fish store, which was consistent with the information on the 1885 "Official Map of Chinatown in San Francisco," Library of Congress, accessed November 25, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4364s.ct002129/?r=0.111,0.224,0.514,0.224,0. After the earthquake, many Chinese merchants renewed their leases to continue operating their business in the same location. Application to Make Alternation or Repair to Building 744 Washington Street (1908), City and County of San Francisco.

[211] Chas. Weidner, *Fish Alley, Chinatown, San Francisco, California,* postcard, ante 1910. Photo Collection, California Historical Society. The postcard depicts the scene of local Chinese people shopping in the alley.

[212] Dexter Waugh, "70 Years of the Right Stuff in Chinatown," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 22, 1989, A-2. Application to Make Alternation or Repair to Building 744 Washington Street (1919, 1920), City and County of San Francisco.

authentic Chinese food, which led to the opening of many chop suey houses in San Francisco's Chinatown and across the United States. Through highlighting chop suey in their signage, Chinese restaurant owners used this familiar and widely accepted American Chinese dish to successfully make their restaurants more palatable and attractive to white Americans. In Sun Hung Heung's later alterations, the marquee was replaced with a large overhang with curved eaves, which were further accentuated by neon trim along the eave lines to give an Oriental effect (figure 2.16). A new pagoda-shaped vertical neon sign further exoticized the building façade.[213] With the neon sign illuminating the façade at night, the original Italianate-style façade was very much overshadowed by the Oriental features.

Hang Far Low

Hang Far Low, which still stands today, also features an exoticized restaurant exterior (figure 2.17). According to the 1894 and 1907 editions of the *San Francisco Block Book*, the property was owned by Paul Fleury and Leonide Arizerais.[214] This three-story three-bay building was designed by Albert Pissis and completed in 1907. Among one of the first generations of American architects trained in Paris, Pissis was highly influenced by the Baroque and Renaissance traditions, and was actively involved in rebuilding downtown San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire.[215] Despite his Parisian training, his design of the Hang Far Low building incorporated some of Oriental details and decorations that were commonly employed in

[213] This sign was put up by the current owner of Sun Hung Heung Restaurant Jimmy Quan. Jimmy has run the business since 1990. Jimmy Quan, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, July 8, 2020.
[214] *San Francisco Block Book* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1894); *San Francisco Block Book* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1907).
[215] "Albert Pissis," San Francisco Architectural Heritage, assessed November 20, 2021, http://www.sfheritage.org/bw_old/architects.html#pissis.

the buildings of Chinatown. In addition to the vibrant green and red colors, the most evident feature was the cupola tower that perched on top of the building. Different from typical cupola towers found in Renaissance-influenced architecture, Pissis dressed this square copula in an Oriental fashion, accentuated by the red and green color schemes and upturned eave ends to evoke the sense of exoticism associated with a Chinese pagoda tower. Unlike the pagoda towers in China, this cupola tower kept its western ornamental connotation and was used vertically and scenically in the composition of Oriental architecture, without any adjacency to a monastery or religious significance. It also featured a simple structural system with straight crossed beams and columns, instead of the intricate structural system typical of pagoda towers in China. American architects were keenly aware that these newly constructed buildings did not represent traditional Chinese architecture, even with the inclusion of Oriental features like pagoda towers. An article in *The Architect and Engineer of California* states,

> They are not, perhaps, Chinese, but certainly Chinesque, and ought to satisfy the tourist longing for the exotic. One might wish that they had copied some quaint old Chinese street, like Nanking Road in Shanghai, a charming and picturesque thoroughfare, but one can at least be grateful for the Oriental color and the pagoda effects grafted on the very American groundwork.[216]

Similarly, architect Charles Peter Weeks refers to these kinds of design appropriations as symbolic rather than literal because local conditions inevitably limited design choices.[217] Nevertheless, by highlighting the stereotypic images of Chinese architecture that American architects were familiar with, these buildings were designed to reflect the Chinese restaurant owners' purposeful marketing scheme to reconstruct Chinatown into a tourist attraction.

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[216] James Gordon, "San Francisco—the Phoenix City," *The Architect and Engineer of California* XXVI, no. 2 (September 1911), 56.
[217] Charles Peter Weeks, "American Architecture," *The Architect and Engineer of California* XIX, no. 2 (December 1909), 36.

Through the Orientalization of building exteriors, Chinese American leaders successfully helped elevate the images of both Chinese architecture and Chinatown in the city. *The Architect and Engineer of California* praised Chinatown for its architecture, noting

> Architecturally it is the more interesting, for where previously the rigid lines of cheap occidental building construction had provided perpendicular walls, now the fantasy of the Far East has been borrowed by the architects and in the Chinatown of today the pagoda style is the sign of progressiveness.[218]

Departing from the historical view of Chinese architectural forms as inconceivable, as asserted in Fergusson's account, architectural features such as pagodas now signified "progressiveness." American architects employed newly invented materials and techniques to promote the "Chinese" architectural concepts. For example, the Yee Fung Toy Association on Waverly Place, designed by architect Hamilton Murdock in 1908, employed common local building techniques such as cast-iron columns, heavy joists, and girders to strengthen the structure and meet the "Chinese idea of permanency." No longer seen as separate from science, Chinese architecture was now cast in the same light, working harmoniously with modern building materials. This was perhaps the first discussion of Chinese architecture from an "engineering standpoint."[219] Chinese architecture soon received its first lengthy coverage in *The Architect and Engineer of California* in an essay titled "Some Features of Chinese Architecture." The article highlights the architectural features that were familiar to the American eye, such as curved and peaked roofs, the dragon national emblem, and pagodas.[220] These architectural elements were also mentioned in Fergusson's book, but were now placed in a favorable position. For example, the previously

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[218] "By the Way: Some Industrial Information Worth the While," *The Architect and Engineer of California* XIX, no. 2 (April 1908): 88–89.
[219] "Unique Building for Chinatown, San Francisco," *The Architect and Engineer of California* 7 no. 3 (April 1908): 46.
[220] R. I. Geare, "Some Features of Chinese Architecture," *The Architect and Engineer of California* XXXVII no. 2 (June 1914): 87–91.

inconceivable "upturned ornaments" on the roof ridge were now clearly recognized as "finial dragons and long rows of fantastic animals." Although derogatory comments on Chinatown still existed, American architects began to recognize the importance of architecture in bringing improvements to Chinatown.[221] An article from *Building Progress* depicts the new Chinatown as "modern tenements" that received "their baptism of blood and their seasoning of smoke and red posters," contrasting the razed old Chinatown that featured "smoke-stained, odorous cliff dwellings, reeking of murder and mystery."[222] Arnold Genthe, who was best known for his photography of San Francisco's Chinatown, also remarked on the contrasts between the old and new Chinatowns, stating, "The once quaint streets are now brilliantly illuminated, smoothly asphalted, filled with noisy automobiles and crowds in American clothes."[223] These accounts testify that the Chinese merchants' commercialization of Orientalism had become an opportunity to establish "political agency."[224] They reconstituted and uplifted existing social imagery of Chinatown and Chinese architecture in general.

By visually substantiating Oriental architecture in Chinatown, Chinese American leaders were able to fund the construction of the buildings in Chinatown. Within one year of the earthquake, an estimated three hundred buildings had been completed in Chinatown.[225] Although

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[221] A prominent clergyman of Washington D.C. who had not been to San Francisco's Chinatown because he was "content to accept the word of others as to its moral ugliness." The competing conceptions of Chinatown co-existed and represented the ambivalent attitudes towards Chinese people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "Praise for San Francisco Homes," *The Architect and Engineer of California* XXI, no. 1 (August 1910): 97.
[222] Gordon, " San Francisco—the Phoenix City," 56.
[223] Arnold Genthe, "Time's Whirligig in Chinatown," *Asia: Journal of the American Asiatic Association*, no. 28 (1928): 300–05.
[224] Kaneti, "Migrants, Rights, Politics," 210; Choy, *The Architecture of San Francisco Chinatown*, 22–23; Li, "The Politics and Heritage of Race and Space in San Francisco's Chinatown," 43–45.
[225] Louis J. Stellmann, "Chinatown Rebuilding on the Old Site," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 17, 1907, 6.

few Chinese immigrants owned property due to exclusion laws, the strategic exoticization of building façades allowed Chinese restaurant owners to claim physical existence in the city, where Chinese people were historically unwelcome and were almost expelled entirely after the earthquake.[226] Instead, Chinese restaurants survived and flourished as Chinatown continued to rebrand itself as an important tourist attraction for the city.

Negotiating Power and Identity in the Interiors

Chinese restaurant owners' strategic promotion of Oriental architecture ensured their increasing autonomy over their spaces. In the post-earthquake era, names of Chinese restaurants were listed under the owner category on building permits such as applications for building alterations.[227] This indicated that Chinese restaurant owners, despite not being legal property owners, possessed crucial decision-making power. In this section, I discuss how Chinese restaurant owners continued to engage with luxurious Chinese decorative details as well as traditional and adapted dining rituals in restaurant interiors.

Far East Cafe

Lim Shing, a San Francisco native, was one of the many Chinese American businessmen who found such an opportunity when he opened Far East Cafe (Yuen Tung Low in Cantonese) in 1920. The building permit indicates that approximately $33,500 was spent on reconstructing the

[226] Kaneti, "Migrants, Rights, Politics," 199.
[227] This was the case for the Far East Cafe, Hang Far Low and Sun Hung Heung. Application For Permit to Erect 631 Grant Ave (1908), City and County of San Francisco; Application For Permit to Erect 723 Grant Ave (1907), City and County of San Francisco; Application For Permit to Erect 744 Washington St. (1906), City and County of San Francisco.

preexisting building into a restaurant.[228] The first floor served small parties, and the upper floor was reserved for large parties and for special occasions. As perhaps the largest restaurant in Chinatown, it once hosted large banquets for up to 1,000 people.[229] The traditional Chinese banquets and family-style dining at banquet halls like Far East Cafe played a significant role in fostering tight knit family and community relationships.

In 1926, Far East Cafe installed parallel booths inside the restaurant.[230] The *San Francisco Chronicle* describes the booths as "private rooms with the unmistakable atmosphere of the Orient."[231] Decorated in a Chinese fashion, the entryways of the booths used curtains rather than hardwood doors, a common strategy that is still used among the Chinese today to divide interior spaces and provide privacy. Herbert Chu, the stepson of Art Lew, who managed the restaurant in the 1950s, worked at the restaurant as a busboy between 1960 and 1964. He recalled that his mother handmade additional curtains for the booths.[232] Originally, there were four rows with a total of 36 booths. As noted by two grandchildren of Lim Shing, Victor Lim (figure. 2.18) and Sylvia Tsang, there were two rows of large booths with big round tables accommodating eight to ten people along the sides, and two rows of small booths with square tables accommodating four people in the middle.[233] However, the right row of large booths was

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[228] The 1920 building permit lists the owner as Juen Fung Low, which was soon changed to Yuen Tung Low in 1921. The latter's direct translation in English is Far East Cafe. "Chinese Raises $2,500 For St. Ignatius," *The San Francisco Examiner*, April 29, 1921, 13.
[229] "Worthy Cause Lures through to Chinatown: Oriental Pilgrimage Part of Prelude to St. Ignatius Church festival," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 29, 1921, 4; "Chinese Raise $2,500 For St. Ignatius," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 29, 1921, 13; "Advertisement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 10, 1969, 35.
[230] Application of Yuen Tung Low Cafe Owner To Make Addition, Alternation or Repair to 631 Grant Ave (1926), City and County of San Francisco.
[231] "Advertisement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 26, 1932, 32.
[232] Herbert Chu, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, July 6, 2020.
[233] Victor Lim, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, May 18, 2020; Sylvia Lim Tsang, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, May 21, 2020.

removed by the late 1940s. Furthermore, in the early 2000s, the current restaurant owner, Bill Lee, replaced the central two rows of small booths with open tables to seat more people, which prompted many complaints from the local Chinese community. The seven remaining large booths on the left row today (figure 2.19) are rare examples of the type of curtained booths that were common in Chinese restaurants during the early twentieth century.[234] These booths prescribed a unique Chinese family-style dining experience for those who dined at the restaurant. For example, a 1950s photograph depicts the Lim family and their friends in one of the large booths, enjoying the traditional Cantonese dishes in a family style (figure 2.20). The booths operated on an electrical bell system to ensure privacy. This system consisted of an indicator board (figure 2.21) mounted on the back wall of the dining hall next to the kitchen and labelled according to the numbers of the booths. Buzzers (figure 2.22), connected to the indicator board, were placed inside each booth. Waiters were only summoned when customers pressed the buzzers, which triggered the arrows on the indicator board to turn 90 degrees towards the number of the booth where service was needed. After providing the service, waiters would reset the indicator board. This operating system and the booth curtains worked together to ensure that the dining parties had a great deal of privacy.

Similar private booths had existed since the Revolutionary era, but in the early twentieth century, nationwide ordinances were introduced to eliminate their use, specifically targeting

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[234] Gabriel J. Chin and John Ormonde, "The War Against Chinese Restaurants," *Duke Law Journal* 67, no. 4 (2018): 726. Many other Chinese restaurants also had curtained booths, such as Shanghai Low, Tai Ping Café, and Sun Wah Kue Cafe in San Francisco's Chinatown. Shanghai Low's marketing of the private booths that catered to parties and banquets was illustrated in a photograph of the restaurant façade. The photograph can be found in Edwin Rosskam, *San Francisco: West Coast Metropolis* (New York: Alliance Book Corporation, 1939), 81. The information of Sun Wah Kue's booths was confirmed in a group interview with local Chinese American leaders and activists David Lei and Brian Choy on June 24, 2020. "Advertisement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 17, 1952, 5.

Chinese restaurants.[235] In Ogden, Utah, the City Council passed an ordinance that prohibited restaurants from installing booths and screens, and explicitly ordered Chinese restaurants to remove these items to provide an open view for the public.[236] Although the law was eventually overturned, it initiated more widespread hostility towards Chinese restaurants. Similarly, in 1916 and 1917, San Francisco openly condemned the use of curtained booths in restaurants and cafes as a part of a large-scale anti-vice operation in the city. Police Commissioner James Woods announced,

> …the curtained booth in restaurants and cafes is one of the most evil inducements to immorality. The thing is frowned upon by every respectable element of society, and there is no good reason why it should continue any longer in this city as an adjunct to the sale of liquor.[237]

The following year, the city's "Redlight Law" ordered "the immediate removal of all curtains, booths and boxes in cafes where liquor was sold."[238] While the order was in part an early consideration of prohibition and attempt to control lewd behavior and illicit sex, it certainly became racialized. Soon after, the abolition of closed booths targeting Chinese restaurants became a nationwide regulation. The U.S. Public Health Service cited "recurring complaint[s] … that in 'chop suey' places…the boxes, partitions, and booths made favorable places of solicitation and operation for pimps and prostitutes…" Removing these private booths would

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[235] Jan Whitaker, "Restaurant Booth Controversies," *Restaurant-ing through History*, accessed November 25, 2021, https://restaurant-ingthroughhistory.com/2012/08/27/restaurant-booth-controversies/?unapproved=281982&moderation-hash=ffa49a77bb1d9e752f8c014b26330135#comment-281982. Vancouver's restaurants were also subject to similar regulations on closed-curtain booths. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 160.

[236] "Ogden Restaurant Keepers Win Case," *The Salt Lake Tribute*, March 5, 1904, 3.

[237] "Police Commission Will Order Vice Clean-Up To-Day," *The San Francisco Examiner*, January 26, 1917, 3; "Protection of Young Women Urged by Research Workers," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 23, 1916, 3.

[238] "San Francisco Prepares to Clean Up-Town Cafes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 30, 1917, 1.

create spatial openness, allowing a "public gaze" to deter "unlawful acts."[239] Despite the stigma associated with private booths, their popularity among restaurant patrons in the 1920s led the strict regulations to be overturned.[240] The curtained booths in Far East Cafe and other restaurants exemplified the resilience of Chinese restaurant owners in preserving this common architectural configuration in spite of its associated racial stigma.

In addition to the booths, the interior of the Far East Cafe preserved many original Chinese embellishments. Similar to the booths, these features communicated the desire of the restaurant owners to display traditional Chinese culture. The first-floor dining hall still features the original timber archway (figure 2.23 and figure 2.24) with symmetrically displayed Chinese decorative details, such as golden dragon heads extending from the central roofline, golden lions sitting on top of the beam and central roof, and engraved wooden couplets framing the archway. The intricate craftsmanship of Chinese carpenters invites guests to enjoy the cultural ambience in the dining hall. Looking up at the ceiling, there are two kinds of Chinese lanterns from the late Qing Dynasty. The inscriptions on the Chinese kingfisher lanterns (figure 2.25) indicate that they were handmade by Lumke Leung (梁霖記) from the Tungkat & Company (同吉號) in Canton and imported to San Francisco. Sylvia Tsang shared the following with me:

> The lantern is interesting. When they were ordered, delivered…I don't know when…my two youngest aunts, Mamie and Jane, were still children living at home. Those big lanterns were delivered to their homes on Minnesota Street in San Francisco. They were like huge doll houses with little people that they could move the people around. I used to play with them. The lanterns I think they were like about 4 feet tall and 3 feet in diameter.[241]

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[239] U.S. Pub Healthy Serv., Venereal Disease Ordinance 29 (1919), quoted in Chin and Ormonde, "The War Against Chinese Restaurants," 727.
[240] Whitaker, "Restaurant Booth Controversies."
[241] Sylvia Lim Tsang, interview by Hongyan Yang, May 15, 2020.

The ornate details on the kingfisher lanterns (for a closeup of a lantern see figure 2.26) remain intact, including the various gilt carved ornaments further inlaid with vibrant turquoise kingfisher feathers. The center of each lanterns features a three-dimensional scene with miniature figures in traditional Qing-dynasty clothing standing in front of the Chinese backdrop paintings that depict the natural scenery of China. The bottoms of the lanterns are adorned with glass and fabric tassels. Another granddaughter of Lim Shing, Andrea Yee, recalled the moment when her family received the lanterns:

> My mother told me how when she was a little girl, I think about 8 years old…She was at the restaurant and she started to play as they were breaking down the crates. She saw the lantern and was very excited and started to play with the delicate turquoise kingfisher features and the miniatures, and she was punished for it. She always tells me that story of how these crates were so so beautiful too, the kingfisher feather. But they came from China.[242]

Alongside the kingfisher feather lanterns, a different kind of wooden lanterns (figure 2.27) also hangs from the ceiling. Small carved dragons sit on each corner of these hexagonal lanterns, gazing down and holding the hanging tassels in their mouths. Each of the six glass panels are framed by wood carvings and portray Chinese landscapes. In addition to the lanterns, the dining hall also features eight watercolor paintings that depict the natural scenery of China in the 1920s, such as Longevity Hill, Kunming Lake, and the Seventeen-Arch Bridge in the Summer Palace in Beijing, as well as the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Canton.[243] Compared to the American architects' surface-level imitation of stereotypic Chinese architectural features on the exterior, the Chinese restaurant owners demonstrated a greater appreciation of different regional Chinese landscapes in the interior through these imported Chinese paintings.

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[242] Andrea Yee, interview by Hongyan Yang, May 15, 2020.
[243] Wing Pau (manager of the Far East Cafe), interview by Hongyan Yang, July 8, 2020.

In the interior, the Chinese restaurant owners' imported Chinese decor stands in contrast to the American architects' classical architectural design (figure 2.28). Between the juncture of the walls and the ceiling are ornamental egg-and-dart and leaf-and-dart cornices. Corinthian capitals sit on top of the square columns, decorated with scrolls and acanthus leaves and flowers sprouting from the bottom. These interior design features display Crim & Scott's familiarity with and emphasis on classical architectural elements. As the Chinese restaurant owners observed the importance of providing a unique cultural experience for both fellow Chinese immigrants and white American diners, they employed imported Chinese decor to make the interior entertaining and materially enticing. Chinese immigrants' desire for a more familiar dining environment and western diners' curiosity about Chinese decor coincided in the quest for Chinese embellishments in the interiors. More importantly, the regional and local emphasis of the interior space set it apart from the stereotypic Oriental architectural features on the exterior, together demonstrating the Chinese restaurant owners' goal of meeting the needs of both Chinese and American diners.

Hang Far Low

Hang Far Low also replicated traditional Chinese ornamentation in its interior. Chinese merchants frequently held banquets at the restaurant to address important issues and celebrate momentous events. One such occasion was the series of meetings hosted by the leaders of the Six Companies and Chinese Consul to end the local Tong and factional wars. Present at these meetings were the Chinese Tong members.[244] In addition, Chinese merchants were eager to showcase the restaurant's luxurious decorative interior to non-Chinese audiences. On October 5th, 1911, Chinese merchants volunteered to host the 300 delegates who attended the 35th

[244] "Wu is the Guest at A Chinatown Banquet," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 1, 1908, 1; "Banquet May End Local Tong War," *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 5, 1913, 10.

National Convention of the American Humane Association at the restaurant.[245] The background of a photograph of the event (figure 2.29) features movable wooden screens, delicately carved in floral patterns with inscriptions of Chinese idioms in stylish Chinese characters such as "Ji Xiang Ru Yi," meaning "good luck and happiness." By comparing this scene with another photograph taken in 1912 (figure 2.30) during the celebration of San Francisco Mayor James Rolph's successful election, we can clearly identify the same movable wooden screens, which were taken down to enlarge the banquet hall in the latter case.[246] The Chinese scroll paintings and calligraphy, wooden lanterns, and Scavo glass chandeliers can also be more clearly identified in this second photograph. On both occasions, all of the guests sat up straight on the traditional Chinese backless stools, without the slouching often seen in American restaurants.[247] The Chinese merchants successfully presented their uniquely Chinese decorative interiors and dining furniture to white diners during these two major events.

In addition to the Chinese embellishments, the table settings at the two events were also noteworthy; they showcased an influence from American dining etiquette. A photograph of one event (figure 2.29) shows a number of large round tables set up for a traditional Chinese family-style banquet. However, a close examination reveals that actual table settings seem to indicate otherwise. Vaguely visible are the individual teacups and plates on the dining tables. Similar to this, figure 2.30 more clearly displays that all guests were served with pre-plated meals and individual teacups and utensils. This architectural order of the dining tables prescribed western dining etiquette and table manners, which did not promote sharing dishes or dipping individual

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[245] "Humanitarian Workers Meet Here: Open Annual Convention tomorrow," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 1, 1911, 62.
[246] This event was identified by Bruce Quan, Jr., the great grandson of Lew Hing, who sat on the right side of Mayor James Rolph.
[247] Courtesy of food historian Jan Whitaker for sharing this observation.

utensils into shared dishes. In fact, Chinese restaurant owners were well aware of this difference between western and Chinese dining etiquette. The Chinese periodical *Xing Hua Magazine* discusses two practical solutions for Chinese restaurants to resolve the differences. One proposed solution was having the kitchen staff divide the food into individual plates before bringing them out. The other was to supply each diner with two sets of utensils: one for personal use, and one for serving food from common dishes onto individual plates.[248] For practical reasons, both events adopted the first solution, highlighting the Chinese restaurant owner's readiness to make necessary cultural concessions in order to accommodate American culinary norms. In particular, the 1912 photograph displays long rectangular dining tables, featuring decorative centerpieces and wine glasses, which matched the pre-plated meals that the guests were served. Comparing the two photographs from 1911 and 1912 carefully, we could certainly observe a hint of acculturation among the Chinese diners. This was also demonstrated by the western suits they wore in the 1912 photograph as opposed to the traditional clothing of the late Qing Dynasty in the 1911 photograph. This change could be explained by the overturn of the Qing dynasty and the founding of the Republic of China in 1912. Whether it was a true sense of acculturation or not, the architectural ordering of the dining tables bespoke the Chinese owner's keen desire to make appropriate table arrangements to accommodate the dining tradition of their white guests. The interior of the restaurant was clearly designed with a spatial flexibility to meet different demands.

Looking collectively at the pre- and post-earthquake eras, Chinese restaurant owners consistently used imported movable Chinese artifacts and furnishing to create classic Chinese dining ambience. In the post-earthquake era, with more and more American customers

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[248] "One Suggestion," *Xing Hua Weekly* (興華週刊) 33, no. 4 (1936): 15.

frequenting Chinese restaurants, Chinese restaurant owners' awareness of western diners' lower tolerance for Chinese family-style dining also led them to adopt western table settings. This tactical adaptation helped Chinese restaurants flourish in the new era. In the following section, I conduct critical readings of restaurant menus to further explore how Chinese restaurants used food as a mechanism to advocate for their culinary traditions.

The Political Agency of Food

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, derogatory comments about Chinese people based on their food consumption habits were widely circulated in America. Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labor and Herman Gutstadt, San Francisco local official of the Cigar Market International Union noted, "you cannot work a man who must have beef and bread alongside a man who can live on rice. In all such conflicts, and in all such struggles, the result is not to bring up the man who lives on rice to the beef-and-bread standard, but it is to bring down the beef-and-bread man to the rice standard."[249] The negative perception of Chinese people based on food posed a challenge for Chinese restaurant owners. How could they market food that was familiar to Chinese diners while simultaneously appealing to Americans? I examine the designs of restaurant menus and other historical accounts to explore how Chinese restaurant owners tactically used food to express regional culinary traditions while balancing the needs of the American palate.

The Far East Cafe menu in the 1930s (figure 2.31 and figure 2.32) was designed with cultural sensitivity, carefully selecting headings and language to introduce the food to different

[249] Senator James G. Blaine, speech on February 14, 1879, to the U.S. Senate in Samuel Gompers and Herman Gutstadt, "Meat vs . Rice–Part III," *LC* 7, no.19 (June 26, 1908): 1, 6, quoted in Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 166–67.

audiences. The menu was mainly designed bilingually in English and Taishanese, a Chinese dialect spoken in the greater Taishan area of Guangdong Province, where most Chinese clientele came from. English headings such as "Chop Suey," "Boiled Noodles," "Eggs," "Soup," "Fried Noodles," and "American Dishes" provided "safe" choices for the Americans because they represented familiar culinary categories. The 1936 menu of the Hang Far Low restaurant (figure 2.33) also used similar headings, and both menus listed various chop suey dishes. The "Li Hong Chong Chop Suey," named after the well-known Chinese politician and diplomat in the late Qing dynasty, was included in both menus to promote this popular dish among white Americans. According to a legendary story, Li Hong Chong inspired the creation of chop suey during his visit to the U.S. in 1896. Whether or not this story is true, naming the dish after Li Hong Chong demonstrated the Chinese restaurant owners' intention to use the popular diplomat's name to enhance Americans' interest in this dish. Far East Cafe and Hang Far Low were certainly not alone in this pursuit.[250] Americans' fascination with chop suey began in the late 1890s and lasted well into the early decades of the twentieth century.[251] As mentioned in the previous discussion of restaurant façades, neon signs advertising chop suey were featured on the marquees and façades of many Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown. Additionally, the menu of Far East Cafe included one page of American dishes, featuring eggs and ham, sandwiches, salads, relish, teas, soda waters, beverages, and wine (figure 2.34). The restaurant owners simply knew that offering Chinese dishes alone would not be feasible for sustaining the business.[252] This

[250] Chen noted that chop suey was one of the prominently featured dishes in Chinese restaurants that served non-Chinese customers. Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*, 136.
[251] Marie Ilene Drews, "Cooking Up Trouble: the Cultural Work of Kitchen Kitsch" (PhD diss., Washington State University, 2008), 96.
[252] The success of Chinese restaurants was also attributed to the support of White Americans. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown, 159–160.

careful choice to include familiar American Chinese dishes such as chop suey and other standard American dishes on the menu attests to the Chinese restaurant owners' intention to accommodate the tastes of mainstream Americans.

Accommodating American diners also gave the Chinese restaurant owners leverage to supply regional cuisines for local Taishanese people and introduce Chinese family-style dining to all. The language on the 1930s menu of Far East Cafe was worded based on direct phonetic translations of Taishanese and would have only been comprehensible to the Taishanese immigrants if the menu did not also include smaller-font English annotations underneath that allowed Americans to learn more about the ingredients in each dish. These annotations also helped ease the concerns of some Americans who were suspicious that Chinese food contained distasteful or exotic ingredients. For example, the menu lists five types of boiled noodles, including yako min (noodles with roast pork and egg), chop suey min, chicken noodle, duck noodle, and gai woh min (noodles with chicken and broiled pork, water chestnut, bamboo shoots and Chinese mushrooms). Based on the linguistic choices, it is evident that the most popular dishes among Taishanese immigrants were yako min and gai woh min, both of which were named with their phonetic Taishanese translations. By mixing American and regional Chinese dishes, the restaurant owners also provided a cross-cultural experience for American diners through food, allowing them to try traditional Taishanese cuisine. Similarly, the 1939 menu of Hang Far Low appears to be written based on a phonetic translation of Taishanese, making it more appealing to and convenient for local Taishanese immigrants, even for dishes that were not uniquely Chinese. For example, the menu uses "yuk" rather than "meat," and "dun" rather than "egg." This more traditional way of presenting the menu echoed the restaurant's interior decorations using imported Chinese artifacts. Both decisions aimed to provide their fellow

Taishanese and Taishanese American customers with a more genuine Chinese culinary experience. The menus became mediums through which the Chinese restaurant owners negotiated more power for satisfying the nostalgic needs of their own fellow citizens while balancing the interests of American diners.

Chinese restaurant menus, mostly designed based on American conventions, were not able to include all Chinese dishes. For that reason, the last page of the Hang Far Low's menu hinted towards a secret menu. Written in traditional Chinese, it states, "there are too many dishes that we couldn't include all in this menu." Chinese customers would know how to make special inquiries about ordering particular dishes that were not listed. The variety of Chinese food also made it hard to fit some dishes into the conventional headings of American menus. Those dishes are instead included under the heading "Miscellaneous." This was the case at both Far East Cafe and Hang Far Low. Under this heading is a list of comfort food for Taishanese people using phonetic Taishanese with English annotations. For example, Far East Cafe's menu lists dishes like chai siu (roast pork), hom yee yuck (steamed salt fish with meat), fan kai ngow yuk (tomato cooked with beef), fo kwa ngow yuk (bitter melon cooked with beef), siu ap (roast duck), and bo lo pai gwat (pineapple with spareribs).[253] Many of these dishes still remain on the menu today. The dessert section also features traditional Taishanese food. The choices were nearly identical at both restaurants, serving pineapple, rice cake, almond cake, kumquat-golden lime, lichee-preserved fruit, tong keung (preserved ginger), and Chinese mixed preserves. Hang Far Low also made Chinese desserts available for takeout services. In 1933 and 1934 (see figure 2.35), the

[253] Many thanks to both Victor Lim and Sylvia Lim Tsang for generously assisting with interpreting traditional Cantonese dishes based on their memories of the Far East Cafe. Victor Lim, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, May 18, 2020; Sylvia Lim Tsang, email message to Hongyan Yang, May 21, 2020.

restaurant supplied large orders of sesame and almond cakes to the Commodore Stockton School.[254] Filling the dessert section with traditional sweets further demonstrated that the restaurant owners designed the menu with the Chinese people in mind while simultaneously providing opportunities for American diners to try these dishes.

Perhaps the most interesting part is found on the last three pages of the Far East Cafe's menu (Figure. 2.36), printed in traditional Chinese only and with prices marked in Chinese currency units—"元""毛""仙"—making them easier for Chinese people to understand and inaccessible to most white Americans. The dishes on these pages are listed under different headings, distinguished by cooking methods, which more accurately define Chinese cuisine for native Chinese people. The headings include 炒味 (Stir Fry), 燉飯 (Clay Pot), 蒸肉 (Steamed Meat), 羹 (Soup), 蛋 (Egg), 燒味 (BBQ), 炒麵 (Chow Mein), 湯麵 (Boiled Noodles), 菜式 (Featured Dishes), and 臘味 (Cured Meat), featuring both everyday Taishanese dishes such as salted fish with meat, steamed winter melon with meat, and various BBQ meats as well as Chinese fine dining such as shark fins, braised abalone, and bird's nest soup. The prices of the Chinese fine dining dishes under 菜式 (Featured Dishes) are much higher than the ones in the bilingual sections of the menu, ranging mostly from $2.50 to $6.50 compared to less than $1.00. The restaurant owners' decision to print these dishes only in traditional Chinese was perhaps based on a desire to distance the restaurant from the racial stigma associated with these less common dishes. When the Chinese merchants did decide to serve these unfamiliar dishes to their

[254] Today's Gordon J. Lau Elementary School; originally known as "the Oriental School."

American guests, they also did so tactically. Even as early as the late 1800s, John S. Hittell documented similar food served at Hang Far Low:

> Among the delicacies served on such occasions are bird's nest soup, shark's fins, Taranaki fungus (which grows on a New Zealand tree), Chinese terrapin, Chinese goose, Chinese quail, fish brains, tender shoots of bamboo, various vegetables strange to American eyes, and arrack (a distilled liquor made of rice), champagne, sherry oysters, chicken, pigeon, suckling pig, and other solids and liquids familiar to the European palate, and also find their places at the feast.[255]

Instead of completely avoiding serving these formal but exotic Chinese dishes to Americans, Hang Far Low paired them with dishes that Americans were familiar with, again catering to the needs of both wealthy Chinese merchants and American guests. The menus were designed with culinary sensibility in mind while offering new culinary experiences for some American guests who felt ready to venture into the exotic Chinese dishes. By doing so, Chinese restaurant owners safely negotiated for Americans' acceptance of these dishes.

Additionally, both restaurants used their menus to promote serving the dishes in the traditional Chinese family style. The cover page of the menu at Far East Café (figure 2.31) displays a welcoming message, encouraging reservations for private parties and banquets. Similarly, Hang Far Low's menu invited American customers to order family-style meals:

> Suggestion is offered dining parties that all Chinese dishes are served in very generous portions, almost any order except soups, being sufficient for two or three persons if supplemented by some other order. For instance, instead of individual orders, if a party of four orders a variety of single dishes to be served to all on individual plates after being brought to the table, a really pretentious spread may be secured at a trifling expense. Try it. If you experience difficulty in making selections, the management will be pleased to assist you.

[255] Hittell, *Hittell's Handbook of Pacific Coast Travel,* 100.

Interestingly, this was also a standard message printed on many other Chinese restaurant menus.[256] Perhaps Chinese restaurant owners acutely observed white American customers' unfamiliarity or hygienic concerns with Chinese family-style dining, and therefore decided to use this message to encourage them to order meals in this way. The paragraph above details the process of how the restaurant served family-style Chinese meals in an adapted American way. Each guest could still enjoy various single dishes on individual plates, which resonated with the table settings depicted in the two banquet photographs of Hang Far Low.

To further promote serving food in the family style, Chinese restaurants offered a list of daily specials (figure 2.37 and figure 2.38) in addition to their regular menus. The Far East Cafe's daily special menus are handwritten using traditional Chinese calligraphy and feature set menus for parties of four different sizes. Instead of the mix of Chinese and American dishes on the regular menu, the dishes listed on the special menus are all traditionally Taishanese. In 1939, a guest could order a combination of four different dishes for $1.00 with the daily special menu. For $2.50, they could have seven different dishes. In 1950, in addition to four pre-set menus, the daily special menus list several individual dishes at special rates, which are spelled out using the traditional Chinese abacus-based accounting method.[257] The two daily special menus were only comprehensible to local Chinese people and were apparently catered to them. By doing so, the restaurant owners ensured greater satisfaction for their Chinese diners at the restaurant. In addition, different daily special menus were printed in English (figure 2.39) using adapted forms, further enticing American diners to enjoy food in the family style. Quite unlike the Chinese daily

[256] Chen notes that the Shanghai Café also included this passage on its menu. Chen also confirms the frequent citation of this paragraph on other restaurants' menus. Chen, *Chop Suey*, *USA,* 198.
[257] Many thanks to Esther Kwan. It was during the process of reading Kwan's father's original recipe books of the Eastern Bakery in Chinatown that I discovered the traditional Chinese accounting methods.

special menus, the dishes listed on these English menus featured simple American-style Chinese dishes, such as chicken and rice broth, sweet & sour pineapple spareribs, and fried jumbo shrimp. Just as food historian Yong Chen articulates, the introduction of Chinese food to America has been a "two-way street," stating that "While Chinese restaurateurs made changes to accommodate their white clientele, they also helped to change the palates of their non-Chinese customers and to influence the visibility of Chinese culture."[258] By using these familiar American Chinese dishes, the restaurant owner tactfully introduced Chinese family-style dining to American diners. Furthermore, while the Chinese were used to family-style group dining, Americans preferred eating in small parties or alone. Chinese restaurant owners shrewdly observed these different needs. In order to make family-style dining even more accessible to Americans, they provided English daily special menus that accommodated special dinners for one person, including a soup, a meat dish, and a rice or noodle dish. This was also quite different from the Chinese daily special menus, in which the simplest choice still included three entrees and a soup. The design of these menus once again demonstrated the owners' keen awareness of the different dining preferences of Chinese people and white Americans, as well as their efforts to accommodate both clienteles.

Summary

By closely examining several restaurants located in San Francisco's Chinatown, this chapter reveals that both architecture and food, to different extents, communicates Chinese restaurant owners' agency to establish Chinese traditions in both original and reinvented forms. The 1906 earthquake and fire became an opportunity through which Chinese American leaders

[258] Chen, *Chop Suey, USA*, 198.

and merchants used architecture to uplift the image of San Francisco's Chinatown. Chinese architecture, once inconceivable in nineteenth-century California, became attractive to American eyes due to exoticized Oriental architectural features. Comparisons across time as well as interior and exterior spaces indicate that Chinese restaurant owners engaged in hybrid practices to negotiate social acceptance.

In the pre-earthquake era, despite using western architectural façades, the Chinese restaurant owners used their import and export businesses to channel artifacts and furnishings from China to decorate the exterior and interior spaces in a classic Chinese fashion. The interior furnishings such as large round tables and backless stools prescribed Chinese family-style dining rituals that were familiar to Chinese diners. Meanwhile, cultural expressions in the built environment also represented the owners' broader awareness of white Americans' fascination with Oriental goods, as well as the significance of decor and atmosphere in the American context. The restaurant owners' emphasis on using Chinese decor continued to grow in the post-earthquake era. In that new era, Chinese restaurant owners displayed more complex and hybrid practices, engaging in simultaneous Orientalizing and de-Orientalizing efforts. While promoting permanent stereotypic Chinese architectural features on the exteriors, they retained and preserved Chinese culture and traditions in the form of movable Chinese embellishments, furnishing, family-style dining, and regional Chinese cuisine in the interiors. These strategic exterior and interior arrangements could be also found in many Chinese restaurants in Chinatown.[259] The

[259] Another example was the Chinese Tea Garden at the intersection of Pine Street and Grant Avenue. Similar to the other restaurants, it occupied a building with typical Oriental façades but its interior was decorated with luxurious Chinese details such as Chinese lanterns and potted plants. The cover page of the restaurant's menu depicted the interior. "New Tea Garden to open in September," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 16, 1924, 8. Chinese Tea Garden menu, California Historical Society Menu Collection.

seemingly conflicting choices over space and food granted the restaurant owners increasing autonomy over their restaurant businesses. Over time, the mobile material culture constituted by imported Chinese artifacts and furnishing consistently served as a source of enchantment and appeal to both nostalgic Chinese immigrants and curious American diners.

In contrast to the overlapping interest in physical ambience, the restaurant menus implied divergent culinary practices between Chinese and American diners while serving as a middle ground between the two. Chinese restaurant owners keenly observed the fact that white Americans had a different breadth of cultural tastes, and their willingness to move beyond established comfort zones was contingent on forms of material culture. Compared to the wide comfort zone for architecture, they had less tolerance for traditional Chinese food and family-style dining. When non-Chinese diners were present at the banquets, table settings reflected influences from western dining etiquette, serving individual pre-plated meals rather than shared family-style meals. However, at the same time, the restaurant owners marketed regional Taishanese food and family-style set menus to both Taishanese immigrants and white Americans through tactful menu designs. White Americans' different tolerance for space and food might be attributed to the fact that the built environment afforded them the ability to observe Chinese culture from a distance, but consuming food requires an inherently immersive experience. Chinese restaurant owners' strategic materialization of Chinese traditions was dependent on the inclusionary ideology of architecture and the exclusionary ideology of food.[260] It was through this matrix of choices regarding the built environment and culinary practices that Chinese

[260] Sociologists believe that the era of culinary ominousness did not arrive until the late twentieth century. Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, "Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing," *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 1 (2007): 165–204.

restaurant owners extended Chinese traditions to white Americans and successfully negotiated for greater acceptance and success during the Exclusion Era.

Chapter 3: Making Home in America

Existence is what you find, but life is what you create from that land.

—Jue Joe

In "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance," feminist theorist bell hooks states, "Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issues of humanization, where one could resist."[261] What hooks stresses is the significance of the homeplace in exploring the resistant voices of subaltern groups. For these groups, homeplace is "a site of resistance and liberation struggle" in the face of "an oppressive and dominating social reality."[262] This chapter aims to tell a similar story of the Jue Joe Ranch, a Chinese American homestead located in Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. Using an agency-oriented theoretical perspective, I connect the architectural and culinary practices of the Jue family with the local social, cultural, and economic contexts. I argue that the history of the Jue Joe Ranch, which was established in 1919 and expanded in 1945, is an architectural manifestation of the family's complex Chinese American identities. Through the purchase, construction, and inhabitation of the Ranch, they actively reconstructed their positions in society, demonstrating their successful pushback against the restrictive land and immigration laws and participation in postwar suburban life.[263] While Jue Joe, a first-generation immigrant,

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[261] bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 42.

[262] Ibid, 45. Historian Andrew Wiese similarly notes that homeplace was the center of the social life of middle-class blacks, offering them a haven from racism outside home. Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[263] Michel Peter Smith defines the "agency-oriented theoretical perspective" as one that "concretely connects macro-economic and geopolitical transformations to the micro-networks of social action that people create, move in, and act upon in their daily lives." Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 6.

treated the land and buildings primarily as spaces of production, the second- and third-generation children deployed the built spaces mainly for cultural production and reproduction, balancing their Chinese roots with their newly found American middle-class ideals. The family's desire to preserve the material aspects of Chinese traditions was tactically expressed through the interior spaces and intangible everyday culinary practices. Overall, the making of the Jue Joe Ranch was a deliberate response to the larger cultural and political processes in the Chinese Exclusion Era and postwar American suburban development.

Chinese Homemaking in Agriculture and Emerging Suburbia

The focus on Chinese homemaking practices on farmland provides a unique opportunity to explore the voices of resistance among Chinese American families. Despite the indispensable role that Chinese migrant laborers played in the development of agriculture in California, the experiences of Chinese immigrants in rural America have been given less attention in Asian American Studies.[264] This might be attributable to the fact that Asian American Studies emerged as a field out of the civil rights movement, which was dedicated to confronting racial oppression, and Chinese farm laborers were seldom the focus of anti-Chinese hostility.[265] Drawing from an insider's perspective, a small number of Chinese American historians note the success and resilience of Chinese farming families and challenge the predominant narrative of Chinese farm laborers as cheap, docile scapegoats for land monopoly. These studies are foundational for understanding the social history of Chinese farming families and community contexts in Los

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[264] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 2; Philip P. Choy, *Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy* (Sacramento: Chinese American Council of Sacramento, 2007), 65; Gary Y. Okihiro, "Fallow Field: The Rural Dimension of Asian American Studies," in *Frontier of Asian American Studies: Writing, Research and Commentary*, eds. Gail M. Nomura et al. (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1989), 7.
[265] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 2.

Angeles, but did not make architecture their primary subject of inquiry.[266] On the other hand, studies of the spatial history of agriculture in California place a greater emphasis on the whiteness in the landscapes and the oppression stories of migrant laborers.[267] Though they acknowledge the contributions of migrant laborers, the central focus of these studies is the politics of exclusion in the suburban landscapes, rather than the everyday lives and identity formation processes of the migrant workers themselves.[268] Largely missing, too, are careful analyses of the "aesthetic and social aspects of buildings."[269] This focus on buildings is critical for exploring both the everyday lives and identity formation processes of individual people, as well as the broader geopolitical environment, in particular how social positions are constituted by race.[270] For example, architectural historian Dianne Harris underscores: "… the built environment constitutes a primary structure for the performance of everyday life… [and] must be examined as an active agent in the formation of ideas about race, identity, belonging, exclusion,

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[266] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil;* Haiming Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2005).

[267] Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Laura R. Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley: Rural Landscapes, Urban Development, and White Privilege* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011); Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[268] One exception is Kelly Nicole Fong's work. "Kelly Nicole Fong, "Excavating Chinese America in the Delta: Race and the Historical archaeology of the Isleton Chinese American Community" (PhD diss., University of California, Loa Angeles, 2013).

[269] These studies primarily focus on the landscape scale rather than the micro building scale. Dolores Hayden similarly points out that environmental historians concerned more with the "deployment of land and natural resources" rather than "the aesthetic and social aspects" of buildings. Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), 17.

[270] To name a few related studies: Dianne Harris, "Race, Space, and the Destabilization of Practice," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 1–9; Richard H. Schein, ed. *Landscape And Race in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2006); George Lipsitz, "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture and Landscape," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 10–23; Wiese, *Places of Their Own*.

and minoritization."[271] Building on this and other studies along the same lines, this chapter places race and ethnicity in the foreground while analyzing the material and ideological conditions of the Jue family's everyday lives.

The specific location of the Jue Joe Ranch in an emerging suburb also made it an underexplored and interesting case to study. For a very long time, the spatial practices of immigrant groups in suburban areas were often associated with assimilation.[272] As Asian immigrant groups rapidly transitioned to suburbs beginning in the 1970s, scholars began to draw attention to this phenomenon, but early research mainly focused on simple documentation of migration patterns. It was not until more recently that studies started to undertake a more in-depth analysis on the experiences and lives of Asian Americans in suburbs.[273] A small but growing body of literature has begun to address Asian placemaking practices in suburban neighborhoods. These studies challenge the idea of suburbia as solely a space of immigrant assimilation and instead reveal the transcultural lifestyles of immigrant groups.[274] In this way,

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[271] Harris, "Race, Space, and the Destabilization of Practice," 2.

[272] The spatial assimilation theory argues that minorities' residential integration through socio-economic achievements also implied assimilation with the majority. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, "Spatial Assimilation as a Socioeconomic Outcome," *American Sociological Review* 50, no. 1 (1985): 94–106; Richard D. Alba et al., "Immigrant Groups in the Suburbs: A Reexamination of Suburbanization and Spatial Assimilation," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 3 (1999): 446–60; John Myles and Feng Hou, "Changing Colours: Spatial Assimilation and New Racial Minority Immigrants," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens De Sociologie* 29, no. 1 (2004): 29–58; Scott J. South et al., "Migration and Spatial Assimilation among U.S. Latinos: Classical versus Segmented Trajectories," *Demography* 42, (2005): 497–521.

[273] Becky M. Nicolaides. "Introduction: Asian American Suburban History." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 6.

[274] Shenglin Chang, *The Global Silicon Valley Home: Lives and Landscapes within Taiwanese American Trans-Pacific Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Paradise Transplanted: Migration and the Making of California Gardens* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014); Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, "Bungalows and Mansions: White Suburbs, Immigrant Aspirations, and Aesthetic Governmentality," *Anthropological Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 819–54; Willow S. Lung-Amam, *Trespassers? Asian Americans and the Battle for Suburbia* (Oakland: University of California

these studies have broadened our understanding of homemaking practices in Asian-concentrated suburbia since the late 1960s, but still lack consideration of the "politics of immigrant integration and inclusion."[275] Furthermore, we still know remarkably little about Chinese homemaking practices before the 1960s, despite the fact that Chinese migrant farm laborers and entrepreneurs have lived in suburbs since 1865.[276] In fact, Chinese American historians note that it was a common practice for Chinese farm owners to build houses on ranches.[277] My research on the Jue Joe Ranch seeks to address this scholarly oversight by focusing on the complex meanings of the homeplace and identity formation processes of the family.

This chapter employs artifactual evidence and oral histories to show a different facet of Chinese agricultural history, not only addressing racial oppression but also revealing resistance. When I first discovered the "Jue Joe Clan History Blog" written by Dr. Jack Jue, Jr., I felt like a prospector who had found my own fortune to tell a story of resistance through the perspective of a Chinese immigrant family. Building mainly on the work of architectural historians who focus on the living experience of homeplaces, particularly the culturally informed homemaking practices of ethnic groups, my study emphasizes how the design and use of homeplaces provides an intimate look into the everyday life and agency of Chinese immigrant families.[278] In addition,

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Press, 2017); Willow S. Lung-Amam and Anisha Gade, "Suburbia Reimagined: Asian Immigration and the Form and Function of Faith-Based Institutions in Silicon Valley," *Journal of Urban Design* 24, no. 5 (January 1, 2019): 1–19.

[275] Willow S. Lung–Amam, "Out of the Urban Shadows: Uneven Development and Spatial Politics in Immigrant Suburbs," *City & Community* 19, no. 2 (June 1, 2020): 304, 307.

[276] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 52.

[277] For example, Choy notes that Lee Chong, who provided asparagus plowing service in Ryde, California, built a housing project that included bedrooms, a kitchen, and a Chinese cook for his farm laborers. Haiming Liu also mentions that asparagus farmer Sam Chang built a "new, spacious, and comfortable house on the second farm." Choy, *Canton Footprints,* 67; Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 195.

[278] Many studies have placed a great emphasis on people's everyday practices and how they inhabit the place in different ways rather than the rooms' designated functions. To list a few:

my research draws on the idea that identity formation is a political process, focusing on the fluidity and contingency of identity as represented through the material construction and experience of the built environment.[279] Centering on oral histories and artifactual evidence from the Jue family collections as well as other archival sources such as historical newspapers and Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files, my research examines the architectural choices and spatial experiences on the Jue Joe Ranch, exploring how it was originally built, modified and actually inhabited. In addition, building on the work of human geographers and architectural historians, I situate the family's homemaking practices in the contexts of land deployment and postwar suburbanization.[280] Through closely examining their everyday spatial and culinary practices, I argue that the Jue family's complex identity-making processes were deliberately and tactically represented through the built environment, which allowed them to successfully navigate racial

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Williams. *Homeplace*; Annmarie Adams, "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 5 (1995): 164–78; Thomas C. Hubka, *Houses without Names: Architectural Nomenclature and the Classification of America's Common Houses* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 88; Herman, *Town House,* 21, 28. Some focus specifically on ethnic groups' homemaking practices: Didem Kiliçkiran, "Migrant Homes: Ethnicity, Identity and Domestic Space Culture," in *Constructing Place: Mind and Matter*, ed. Sarah Menin (London: Routledge, 2003): 99–110. James Rojas, "The Enacted Environment: Examining the Streets and Yards of East Los Angeles," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson*, eds. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 275–92; Chow, *Suburban Space,* 82–83; Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, Due Cucine," 685–95; Pader, "Spatiality and Social Change," 114–37; Heath, *Patina of Place*.

[279] Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 222–37; Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Long Grove: Little, Brown and Company, 1969); Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1991): 24–44; Wiese, *Places of Their Own*, 7; Kiliçkiran, "Migrant Homes: Ethnicity, Identity and Domestic Space Culture."

[280] Spatial processes are intertwined with social processes. Some pioneer works include: Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis :University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); James S. Duncan and Nancy G. Duncan, *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land,* 3–5.

exclusion in a predominately white emerging suburb from the early twentieth century to the early postwar years.

Jue Joe: The Family Pioneer

During the mid-nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Chinese migrants in the United States were mainly young men from the Guangdong Province in Southeastern China. One of the many men who undertook this transnational journey was Jue Joe (figure 3.1).[281] Raised by his widowed mother Lee Shee, Jue Joe and his four siblings were born in wretched poverty and raised in a chicken coop in San Gong Village in Sunwui. Located on the southwestern periphery of the Pearl River Delta, Sunwui was hilly and barren and offered few economic opportunities.[282] Then, in 1848, gold was discovered in California. As a result, word of a fabulous new country, the United States, spread across the region and motivated the emigration of many Chinese laborers who hoped to find fortune and opportunity in America. Jue Joe's adventurous spirit and desire to free himself and his family from poverty led him to embark on this transnational journey. In 1874, at the age of 18, Jue Joe traveled to America by securing a position working as a cabin boy. According to family oral history, his mother Lee Shee gave him 16 pounds of rice for his long and arduous transpacific journey. When he landed in San Francisco, he had less than one pound of rice left. While on the steamship, he worked in the first class during the day and slept in steerage with the other Chinese laborers at night. For many of them, including Jue Joe, this was the very first intercultural contact they had with Americans, allowing them to learn basic survival skills for their new lives in America.

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[281] Other names of Jue Joe that appeared in archival records were Jew Joe, Jew Soong, and Jew Pan Jeong. In this chapter, I use Jue Joe consistently.
[282] Chan, *This bittersweet soil*, 18.

According to the documentation of Jack Jue, Jr., Jue Joe's great-grandson, Jue Joe was first employed as a vineyard laborer in St. Helena and Marysville. He also worked on the Southern Pacific Railroad and served as a houseboy for the Johnson family in Chatsworth in the San Fernando Valley during his initial years in California. As farming was a relatively easy occupation to enter, even for these without extensive capital or English skills, Jue Joe started farming potatoes in Chatsworth in 1896 and sold his produce at the City Market in Downtown Los Angeles.[283] As was nearly every Chinese migrant's dream, after accumulating some wealth, Jue Joe wanted to start his family. However, the 1875 Page Act prevented the immigration of most Chinese women to discourage long-term familial settlement among Chinese immigrants. The resulting gender imbalance led most Chinese male laborers to return to China to get married. In 1902, Jue Joe went back to his ancestral village to seek a wife, leaving his younger brother Jue See in charge of the farming business. He married Leong Shee and built a two-story brick home for his new wife and two young sons, San You and San Tong, hoping to permanently settle in the village. However, to Jue Joe's shock, Jue See sold the farming business and stopped sending remittances. Because the Exclusion Act was still in effect, only those Chinese immigrants who were merchants could bring their family members to America. As a laborer, Jue Joe could not take his wife and two sons with him to Los Angeles, so he returned alone in 1906, determined to remake his fortune.[284]

Upon returning to Los Angeles, Jue Joe first worked as a domestic servant to accumulate capital before restarting his farming business. In 1916, Jue Joe successfully obtained merchant

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[283] Jack Jue, Jr., "Jue Joe Family Timeline with Blog Links," Jue Joe Clan History, accessed November 26, 2021, https://juejoeclan.blogspot.com/2010/08/jue-joe-clan-time-line-with-blog-links.html.

[284] Leong Shee, Chinese Exclusion Act Case File no. 17119 (created for Leong Shee's immigration to America in 1918). The National Archives at San Francisco.

status by registering as a buyer and salesman for the Thomas G. Chung Company (figure 3.2), one of the largest wholesale asparagus dealers in Los Angeles. Shortly after, in 1918, Jue Joe sponsored his wife and two sons to immigrate to the United States (figure 3.3).[285] The *Los Angeles Times* (figure 3.4) reported on the reunion of this long-lost family:

> United after a separation of more than a dozen years. One of the happiest families in Los Angeles today is that of Jue Joe, [a] well-known Chinese merchant and marketman. A few days ago, Jue Joe's two sons and their mother arrived from the province of Sun Wai [Sunwui], China. Jue Sun You is 15 years old, and Jue Sun Tong is 13. Jue Joe had not seen them nor his wife since the youngest boy was a few months old.[286]

Upon their arrival, the family lived temporarily in the Ferguson Alley of Los Angeles's Old Chinatown. However, Jue Joe never intended to limit himself and his family to this Chinese ethnic enclave. When he got the opportunity, he rented a larger apartment on Newton Street, a predominately white working-class neighborhood in 1920.[287] To help his wife and two sons transition to their new environment, he hired an English tutor to give them daily lessons. His long-term goal was to provide his two sons with an American education, so they could inherit the family farming business and become successful businessmen.[288] Adjusting quite quickly, his two sons soon became essential helpers for Jue Joe's farming business. In 1919, Jue Joe purchased a ranch in Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley, on which he built the Jue Joe Ranch homestead.

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[285] Ibid.
[286] "Daddy Welcomes Family from across the Seas: an Oriental Reunion in the Occident," *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1918, II2.
[287] The residence in the Ferguson Alley was according to Soo-Yin Jue's accounts. The 1920 Census from January indicated that Jue Joe, Jue Ho (Leong Shee), Jue San You, Jue San Tong, and Jue Ah How (Corrine) lived at 1311 Newton Street in downtown Los Angeles. The occupations of the people living on the street include laborers, auto repairs, mail carriers, etc. Jue Joe's neighboring buildings were all occupied by whites. United States Census Bureau, *1920 U.S. Federal Census*; Los Angeles Assembly District 74, Los Angeles, California; Page: 3A; dwelling 44, family 74, Jue Joe; Ancestry.com. *1920 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010; NARA microfilm: T625_114.
[288] Soo-Yin Jue, e-mail to author, June 27, 2019.

Until he passed away in 1941, Jue Joe worked closely with both Chinese and white colleagues, as well as braceros, to circumvent exclusion and successfully expand his asparagus farming business.

A Space of Exclusion: The San Fernando Valley

The San Fernando Valley (figure. 3.5), located on the northern outskirts of Los Angeles, is a particularly suitable place to examine the issues of spatial exclusion and immigrant agency. From Spanish missionaries' domination of Native Americans to Anglo-Americans' dispossession of Mexican lands and the employment of immigrant farm laborers, the history of land conquests in the San Fernando Valley demonstrates that it is essentially a spatial product of white supremacy reliant on nonwhite labor forces.[289] By the 1880s, most of the land in the Valley were owned by a small number of elite Angelo-American capitalists, whose surnames became familiar town names such as Van Nuys, Lankershim, and Porter.[290] Small, homestead-style ranches began to appear in the era in the late 1880s.[291] However, it was not until 1917 that small ranches began to flourish. The newly introduced California Land Settlement Act created a state land settlement board that assisted qualified candidates, particularly white gentleman farmers, with financing family farms through private banks.[292] In the 1920s, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce promoted "small farm homes," "little farms," and "small family farms" in the San

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[289] Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley*, 25–84; Laura Pulido et al., *A People's Guide to Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 233–262.; Kevin Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley: America's Suburb* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, 2001), 140; Clifford M. Zierer, "San Fernando-A Type of Southern California Town," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 24, no. 1 (March 1, 1934): 1–28; Jackson Mayers, *The San Fernando Valley* (Walnut: John D. McIntyre, 1976), 101.
[290] Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley*, 27.
[291] Mayers, *The San Fernando Valley*, 96.
[292] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 170.

Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, primarily targeting white Midwesterners.[293] This reflected the broader context of Los Angeles as a "white spot" in the 1920s, a fact that boosters and developers used to market the lands to newcomers.[294] On the other hand, immigrant farmers were portrayed negatively. For instance, Elwood Mead, the chairman of the California Land Settlement Board, commented:

> these aliens were in sorry contrast to the State's first settlers, who were the finest type of American citizen this nation had produced. The California pioneer had been a citizen first, a moneymaker second. He was generous and public spirited to a fault. In contrast, the alien renter had no interest in rural welfare. He had a racial aloofness and he farmed the land to get all he could out of it in the period of his lease. Wherever he displaced the American, he put rural life on the down grade.[295]

To further elevate the production and livelihoods of white farmers, discriminatory immigration and land-use policies, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the California Alien Land Law of 1913 and 1920, were introduced to halt the immigration of Chinese laborers and prohibit these who were ineligible for citizenship from owning land. As a result, most residents of the San Fernando Valley at the turn of the century were elite Anglo-American investors and white middle-class Midwestern transplants who held privatized ownership of agricultural homesteads.[296] The restrictive laws, which required people to have "a fixed place of business," also made it more challenging for foreign farm laborers to obtain merchant status.[297] Such a

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[293] Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Paradise Transplanted*, 58; Rachel A. Suris, "Urban Homesteading: An L.A. Story," Los Angeles Agriculture, accessed November 26, 2021, https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=4268.
[294] William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 4; Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 38, quoted in Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley*, 27–29.
[295] Starr, *Inventing the Dream,* 171.
[296] Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley*, 33–34.
[297] A merchant was defined as "a person who buys and sells his merchandise at a fixed place of business, which place of business may be run in his own name or in the firm name of which he is a member, and while he is so employed he does no other work than that connected with a said

requirement intentionally excluded seasonable farm laborers and vegetable peddlers from land ownership, many of whom were Chinese.

Navigating Exclusion: Chinese Asparagus Farming in the San Fernando Valley

Despite the exclusionary nature of the agricultural industry and regional development in the San Fernando Valley, it is undeniable that the success of white-owned farms would not have been possible without nonwhite and immigrant labor forces.[298] As historian Laura Barraclough reveals, most gentleman farmers retained only a "recreational interest" in agriculture, with full-time employment in urban industries like oil, railroad work, etc.[299] Therefore, the two faces of racism in agriculture—the simultaneous exclusion of immigrants from land ownership and heavy dependence on their labor—also made farming a portal to success for some Chinese farmers. According to the U.S. Agricultural Census 1920-1940, Chinese farm operators generated the highest average per farm value among white, black, Indian, and Japanese farm operators.[300] To carve out their niche, Chinese farmers mostly grew labor-intensive crops.[301] One such crop was

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business." Jew Sun Tong, Chinese Exclusion Act Case File no. 14036. The National Archives at Riverside.

[298] Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley,* 51.

[299] Ibid, 34.

[300] According to the 1920, 1930 and 1940 U.S. Agricultural Census, Chinese farm operators generated $36,920, $38,778 and $22,758 average per farm value compared to whites of $26,200, $25,459 and $16,602, blacks of $12,502, $8,654, $4,761, Indians of $4,511, $4,167, $2,654 , and Japanese of $26,659, $21,690, $12,810. Calculated by author. United States Census Bureau, United States Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture Historical Archive, accessed November 26, 2021, http://agcensus.mannlib.cornell.edu/AgCensus/homepage.do;jsessionid=563B9613885B675FDD4120466BEFC7DF.

[301] Chan, *This Bittersweet Soul*, 254. However, white growers contended that it was the Chinese's "short stature and ability to survive on appallingly low wages made them content to do the work that no white worker would do." This was a typical case of blaming the victims of racial discrimination as the reasons for the problems. Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land,* 92.

asparagus. At the time, the cutting of asparagus was an arduous and delicate task.[302] The process, from sowing to harvesting, took roughly three to five years, and required a greater degree of optimism and patience from growers.

In the San Fernando Valley, a small group of Chinese businessmen successfully promoted their asparagus farming business by working with their white allies. In a 1925 *Los Angeles Times* article titled "Asparagus Grower Tells of Profits," S. O. Houghton, the vice president of the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association, reported that the association's 250 acres of asparagus farms generated a gross return of $128,000 in 1924, with 3.3 percent overhead cost.[303] The article credited this success to the astute Chinese businessmen in the Valley, namely association president Joseph Y. Woo, secretary Thomas D. Chung, treasure P.D. Chung, and directors Wong Fong, Mow Lung, Hop Lung, Hop Chung, Johnson Sing, and Jue Joe.[304] Among the prominent growers in the association, Houghton was the only white man.[305] The Chinese growers' ability to work with white allies, combined with their hard work in the fields, was critical to their success. Houghton was the first president of the Van Nuys Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of

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[302] According to Sam Chang, an asparagus farm merchant in Los Angeles, most asparagus farmers in the region were Chinese because of the hard work involved. Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 121.

[303] According to the 1940 U.S. Census of Agriculture, the state per acre value of asparagus was $151.4 in 1920. The return of the region was $502 per acre, more than three times of state average.

[304] "Asparagus Grower Tells of Profits," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1925, 6.

[305] S.O. Houghton was the only white member working with other eleven Chinese growers in 1925 and twelve Chinese growers in 1927. "Kiwanis Club Hears Talk on Asparagus," *The Van Nuys News*, May 19, 1925, 1; "No, Green Bottom. Is Not New Dance, It's Asparagus," *The Van Nuys News*, Apr 1, 1927, 10.

Van Nuys. He was very active in local business and civic affairs.[306] Through these business and social connections, he promoted asparagus farming in the Valley among his white friends and stressed the need for "intelligent growers" like the Chinese to accomplish that goal.[307] Houghton was also critical to helping the Chinese ranchers advance their farming skills. For instance, he hosted a meeting at his own ranch in south Van Nuys for farming experts, such as Professor F. H. Jones of the truck crop division of the University Farm, to offer the Chinese farmers advice on growing asparagus, such as how to detect old fields, read seedbed conditions, and many other topics. The farming experts complimented the excellent condition of the asparagus seedbeds in the San Fernando Valley as "well above the average." Houghton credited this to the Chinese ranchers, who he described as "excellent business men and a fine body of business associates."[308] While enforced restrictive laws limited competition and opportunities for non-white farmers, it is also critical to recognize the agency of these Chinese asparagus businessmen in navigating such conflicts through productive working relationships with their white and Chinese allies.[309] Furthermore, such productive collaboration helped Chinese farmers survive some instances of racial discrimination. For example, the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association supplied nearly $70,000 to the Asian shareholders at the City Market and successfully helped

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[306] "Houghton-Murietta Wedding a Charming Event," *The Van Nuys News*, January 30, 1920, 4; "More New Buildings Are New in Sight," *The Van Nuys News*, May 14, 1920, 1; "First National Bank of Van Nuys," *The Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet*, Dec 16, 1920, 25.

[307] One such example was his principal speech on asparagus at the luncheon of the Kiwanis Club. "Kiwanis Clubs Hears Talk on Asparagus," 1.

[308] "Experts Praise Asparagus Fields Here and in Valley," *The Van Nuys News,* October 9, 1925, 1.

[309] Unlike their white counterparts, most Chinese truck gardeners farmed in partnerships. Historian Sucheng Chan claims that the success of Chinese entrepreneurs in agriculture could be largely attributed to their "organizational talents to link their fellow countrymen and white society at large" rather than "means of production." Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 103, 357.

them remain in business when white stockholders attempted to squeeze them out.[310] The Chinese asparagus farm merchants in the San Fernando Valley carved out a path to survival and success despite the racial hostility around them.

The Jue Joe Wholesale Produce Company

Jue Joe's involvement with the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association granted him access to broader markets. In addition to conducting business in the Asian-concentrated City Market by 9th and San Pedro Streets, Jue Joe also extended his sales to large white-dominated wholesale markets.[311] His company (figure 3.6) sold produce at 117-118 6th Street, a market founded by the Los Angeles Market Company in 1909. When the market expanded in 1918, vendors—including the Jue Joe Company—moved to the newly founded Union Terminal Wholesale Market at 7th and Central Streets.[312] This market was the largest and mainly carried out import and export trade as well as wholesale business.[313] Although the Union Terminal Wholesale Market was white-dominated, there were other Asian farmers at the market as well, including Chin Poo, How Fay Company, Lee Kun Fong, and some others alongside the Jue Joe Company.[314] These Asian grocers successfully remained in the market despite white

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[310] Tara Fickle, "A History of the Los Angeles City Market: 1930-1950," Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, accessed November 26, 2021, https://lachinatown.chssc.org/neighborhoods/a-history-of-the-los-angeles-city-market/. Same piece was also published in *Gum Saan Journal*, 32, no.1 (2009): 14–39.
[311] According to family oral history and the *Los Angeles Times*, Jue Joe sold at the City Market. John Steven McGroarty, "The Market That Feeds the West," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1934, H6.
[312] Fickle, "A History of the Los Angeles City Market"; Leong Shee, Chinese Exclusion Act Case File no. 17119, The National Archives at Riverside.
[313] Sam Chang's notes, quoted in Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family,* 122–123.
[314] "We Are Not Leaving: The Los Angles Union Terminal Wholesale Market," *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1927, 4.

grocers' attempts to push them out.[315] This demonstrated the resilience of Asian farmers and their ability to retain their competitive position in the produce wholesale business.

Perhaps through Houghton' connection from the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association, Jue Joe eventually joined the Van Nuys Chamber of Commerce. He was the only non-white member in the Chamber in 1922.[316] In 1924, Jue Joe's sixty-acre asparagus farmland in West Van Nuys yielded earnings as high as $1.50 per pound.[317] His asparagus also won the first premium prize at the Los Angeles County Fair in 1939.[318] Jue Joe's important leading role in the Valley's asparagus farming industry also received recognition in the *Los Angeles Times*. Columnist John Steven McGroarty wrote,

> I was interested in everything I saw and in the people I met, but especially so, I think, in the vast asparagus caravansary of Jue Joe, the asparagus king…It was the story of Jue Joe that absorbed me—the story of the man…He brought with him not only the traditional industry of his race but also the heritage of Chinese brains developed in the race through 6000 years of education and culture. Slowly but surely he established himself in the confidence of the community. He came to be trusted. His mere word was the same as another man's bond. He bought land on longtime payments, meeting the conditions of the sale with religious punctuality. Again he bought more land, running true to Chinese form, and knowing that the land—the good earth—is man's surest dependence…Now he operates and owns 700 acres of producing asparagus which he disposes of at top price not only in his own local market but broadcast through the country.[319]

Notwithstanding the California Alien Land Law and the Federal Chinese Exclusion Act, many immigrant farmers were able to circumvent restrictive land laws by placing the deeds under the names of their American children. The Jue Joe Ranch in Van Nuys was one such case. As a trusted member of the community, Jue Joe was able to invest his savings in a few parcels of

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[315] Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 123.
[316] "Chamber of Commerce Membership List," *The Van Nuys News*, April 13, 1922, 9.
[317] "Large Profit Made on Asparagus Farm," *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1924, E14.
[318] "Valley Exhibit Fair Winners," *The Van Nuys News,* October 2, 1939, 1.
[319] McGroarty, "The Market That Feeds the West," 10.

farmland with crucial assistance from his white business partners and friends.[320] In 1919, the year that Jue Joe's older daughter Corrine was born, Jue Joe purchased the Van Nuys ranch for $18,000 with the help of his friend Otto F. Brant of the Title Insurance and Trust Company and formally established the Jue Joe Ranch homestead at 16608 Vanowen Street.[321] Because Corrine was an American citizen, the company was able to purchase the land on behalf of Jue Joe on October 29, 1919, and assigned beneficial interest to Corrine on November 7, 1919. When Corrine turned 21 years old in 1940, the company conveyed the property to her.[322] Through this process, Jue Joe circumvented both the barriers of immigration and land exclusion to establish his family homestead in Van Nuys. As human geographer Tim Cresswell describes, "The unintended consequence of making space a means of control is to simultaneously make it a site of meaningful resistance."[323] The successful establishment of the Jue Joe Ranch in the San Fernando Valley, a region that was founded and regulated through the lens of racial exclusion, made it a particular sign of resistance.

In addition to obtaining land, Jue Joe knew that it was also important to establish merchant status for his China-born sons. In 1935, he expanded the partnership of the Jue Joe Produce Company (figure 3.7) and rented an office space at 1105 ½ South San Pedro Street in Los Angeles near his former apartment on Newton Street.[324] Having this registered address was

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[320] "California Case Law File Jue v. San Tong Jue," 163 Cal. App. 2d 231, August 28, 1958, accessed November 26, 2021, https://casetext.com/case/jue-v-san-tong-jue.
[321] According to Jack Jue, Jr., ample documentations in real estate deeds and family oral histories indicated that Otto F. Brant and Jue Joe were associates and friends. Jack Jue, Jr., "Details-Otto F. Brant," Jue Joe Clan History, accessed November 26, 2021, https://juejoeclan.blogspot.com/2010/07/details-otto-f-brant.html.
[322] California Case Law File Jue v. San Tong Jue, 163 Cal. App.2d 231, August 28, 1958.
[323] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 163.
[324] Jew San Tong Chinese Exclusion Act Case File no. 14036. The National Archives at Riverside.

critical in helping San Tong, Jue Joe's only living son after the passing of San You in 1933, to formally establish merchant status. To further clarify San Tong's leading role in the company, Jue Joe stepped down to the role of buyer and let San Tong serve as the manager of the company. Each of them owned a share of $2,000 and received a $100 monthly salary. The company's annual gross receipts totaled $80,000.[325] The profitability of asparagus reached a new high during World War II. The substantial increase in the price of the product was reflected in the wages paid to harvest laborers. It was so significant that the California Asparagus Growers Association even petitioned the War Food Administration to impose a wage ceiling on such laborers.[326] In 1942, San Tong signed a government contract to supply asparagus to overseas U.S. troops in Europe and the Pacific. He farmed 3,000 acres of asparagus (figure 3.8) simultaneously to meet the quotas needed for the army. The length of the season differed with each ranch, allowing it to produce nearly year-round.[327] This helped the family recover from the economic downturn of the Great Depression and eventually obtain large enough profits to build a new main house and other leisure amenities on the ranch in the years following the war.[328]

Jue Joe Ranch

The original Jue Joe Ranch (figure 3.9) in Van Nuys covered about 700 acres of land, bordered by Sherman Way to the north, Victory Boulevard to the south, Balboa Boulevard to the

[325] Ibid.
[326] Lloyd H. Fisher, *The Harvest Labor Market in California* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 125, 139.
[327] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.
[328] Sam Chang also noted the economic challenges in the business and life of the Chinese community during the Great Depression, in particular speaking for all Chinese asparagus farmers. Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 112–113.

west, and Hayvenhurst Avenue to the east.[329] The buildings on the ranch were located south of Vanowen Street and east of Bull Creek. Despite the sales of their original farmland to subdivision developers in the 1940s and 1950s, the family continued to operate the remaining 300 acres of land south of Vanowen Street, among which the 100 acres north of Haynes Street was dedicated to asparagus farming.

The construction of the Jue Joe Ranch (figure 3.10, figure 3.11) can be roughly divided into two historical periods: 1919-1944 and 1945-1955. During the first historical period, in particular his initial settlement in 1919 and 1920, Jue Joe applied for construction permits for the first four buildings erected on the ranch, using this as a form of documentation for having a fixed place of business. A 1928 aerial photograph (figure 3.9) captured the buildings from this era, including the asparagus packinghouse and horse barn (also used as Jue Joe's original living quarters) constructed in 1919, and the carport and Leong Shee's cottage from 1920. Although the construction permits for other major buildings in this older section—including the tool shed, Jue Joe's office, Jue Joe's cabin, and chicken coop—are not available, family oral histories and the 1928 aerial photograph confirm that they were also constructed in 1920. After World War II, using the large profits from the farming business, San Tong expanded the living quarters to the west side of the older section, commissioning a new two-story main house and other amenities to make the Ranch the family headquarters in America.[330] In the following section, I detail how the Jue family used the production of food as a means to fashion their lives on multiple spatial scales through securing ownership of agricultural properties. I examine the landscaping on the community scale as well as the two eras of development on the Ranch scale, and then look

[329] "Food Control Now Measuring Its Land Clod by Lowly Clod," *The Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet*, July 14, 1947.
[330] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.

closely at the individual building scale and human body scale, focusing on their everyday culinary practices in the living quarters.

The Landscaping of the Jue Joe Ranch

For the Jue family, moving from their rented one-bedroom apartment in downtown Los Angeles to the Ranch in Van Nuys indicated a major lifestyle shift and brought about new responsibility for the land they occupied. This was the first time that they were able to plan the landscape around their living quarters. The landscaping at the Jue Joe Ranch reflected the family's heightened concern for the regional climate's influence on farming productivity and privacy issues.

An aerial photograph from approximately 1947 (figure 3.12) displays the delineated trees by Vanowen Street on the north side and De Celis Place on the east side. According to Soo-Yin Jue, her grandfather Jue Joe planted the trees mainly as a windbreak to minimize the impact of the strong, downslope Santa Ana winds on farming productivity. However, such a concern about the climate was not shared among the majority of the local ranchers. A closer look into a 1928 aerial photograph (figure 3.9) reveals that, except for farmland along major roads like Sherman Boulevard, vegetation around farmland was uncommon. This realization prompted my investigation into reasons beyond regional climate. In our interview, Soo-Yin noted that the trees also provided additional privacy for her family, which was apparently not an overriding concern for most other Van Nuys residents. In the decades following Van Nuys's founding in 1910, a vast amount of land was available and accessible only to the people who were not subject to restrictive immigration or land laws. The resultant racial homogeneity in the region did not require most white landowners to utilize trees or other seclusive designs for exclusion or to

affirm their white middle-class membership.[331] In addition, most families did not live in close proximity, so purposeful landscape planning was not necessary to ensure privacy for the homes. Nevertheless, compared to the common experience of their white neighbors, who traditionally had exclusive access to land, land ownership meant something new and different for the Jue family. It was extremely challenging for a non-white immigrant family to obtain even a small parcel of land in Van Nuys, let alone the expansive farmland that the Jue family owned. As a result, the landscape around the Ranch demonstrated the family's heightened concern for land and privacy compared to that of their white counterparts. This intention was clear because most trees were planted around the family's living quarters, as demonstrated by a 1955 aerial photograph (figure 3.10), which displayed the newly added, densely planted trees on the west side of the new main house. An analysis of the Jue family's meticulous landscaping allows us to see the material differences between their homestead and the ones owned by their white neighbors.

The Jue Joe Ranch's Early Days: 1919-1944

In the early days, the built environment on the Ranch reflected Jue Joe's prioritization of farming; improving everyday living standards became a secondary concern. The buildings were austere, simple, and practical. In this section, I focus on the three living quarters from the era, including the horse barn (Jue Joe's original living quarters), Leong Shee's cottage, and Jue Joe's cabin.

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[331] Scholars think that the construction of fences in postwar America was in large part due to racial concerns. Dianne Harris, "Race, Class, and Privacy in the Ordinary Postwar House, 1945-1960," 129; Anna V. Andrzejewski, "Building Privacy and Community: Surveillance in a Postwar American Suburban Development in Madison, Wisconsin," *Landscape Journal* 28, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 45, 50–51.

Horse Barn/Jue Joe's Original Living Quarters

While his wife and two sons were still residing in the downtown apartment, Jue Joe applied for construction permits for the first two buildings on the ranch on December 15, 1919: a horse barn that also functioned as Jue Joe's living quarters and a farm shed to be used as the asparagus packing house.[332] As the heart of the farming operations on the Ranch, these two buildings were centrally located. Measuring about 1,280 square feet, the construction of the redwood horse barn cost about $800. It featured a dirt floor—the natural coarse sandy loam commonly used for culturing asparagus.[333] Compared to the design of other small barns from the same era, the horse barn (figure 3.13) was rather simple and crude. For example, according to William Draper Brinckloe, who reviewed over ten thousand letters and rough sketches for the home-planning contests run by *The Ladies Home Journal, The Farm Journal,* and other magazines, a small barn of 672 square feet would typically cost at least $1,344. Brinckloe's plan for a small barn (figure 3.14) also indicated that the space was used exclusively for animals, and was further divided by species.[334] Even four decades earlier, around 1882, one of the Lankershim ranching stations in the Valley, the Patton Ranch, separated family living quarters from livestock.[335] In contrast to this common spatial arrangement, Jue Joe chose to live alongside the horses under one roof; his bedroom, storage room, and kitchenette were located adjacent to the

[332] Original building construction permits no. 12408 and no. 12404. Department of Building and Safety Online Database, City of Los Angeles, accessed November 26, 2021, https://www.ladbs.org/services/check-status/online-building-records.
[333] "Fertilization of Asparagus Beds," *The Pomona Progress*, March 5, 1921, 9.
[334] William Draper Brinckloe, *The Small Home: How to Plan and Build It, with Sixty Practical Plans for Low Cost Bungalows, Cottages, Farmhouses, Apartments, Garages and Barns* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1926), 210–211.
[335] The Lankershim ranching stations were the earliest stations in the Valley. The Los Angeles Times correspondent Jesse Yarnell described the Patton Ranch in details in 1882: it had one large dwelling house, one or two other sleeping quarters, and a separate stable for livestock and a few other buildings, quoted in Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley,* 44.

horse stable area. A back door from the kitchenette offered convenient access to the packing house to its west. It was evident that even this most basic and makeshift living space was designed around careful consideration of accelerating farming operations. Similarly, he invested all of his earnings into equipment for his business and did not live ostentatiously. Though he did own a car as one of his few indulgences, it was nevertheless utilized mainly for commuting between the farms and markets.[336] By putting up with modest living conditions, Jue Joe was able to secure greater economic rewards for his farming business in the early days.

Leong Shee's Cottage

After settling into the farming operation, Jue Joe constructed a one-story farm shed with a shingled roof on the northeastern corner of the Ranch in 1920. This structure, which the family refers to as the "old house" or "Leong Shee's cottage," became the family's first formal living quarters on the Ranch. Compared to the makeshift horse barn that Jue Joe used as both a working and living space, this house was dedicated solely to family living, originally housing Jue Joe's wife Leong Shee and their four children.[337] Still, the building demonstrated a similar material simplicity to Jue Joe's original living quarters. The construction cost $800 and the interior had the same sandy loam dirt floor. This similar treatment of the built environment could largely be attributed to Jue Joe's sojourning mindset. Like many of the Chinese men who came to America in the nineteenth century, Jue Joe did not come with the intention of permanent settlement.

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[336] Another Chinese asparagus farmer Sam Chang also used his car primarily for an utilitarian reason. Original letter from Sam to Tennyson, quoted in Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 105.

[337] According to the original building permit (no. 25132), the house measured 16 by 42 feet, about 672 square feet. Department of Building and Safety Online Database, City of Los Angeles, accessed November 26, 2021, https://www.ladbs.org/services/check-status/online-building-records.

Chinese American historian Haiming Liu provides a keen insight into this "sojourning tradition" in Chinese society, explaining that for Chinese migrants, "the purpose of migration is not to look for another place to reside but to explore opportunities away from home."[338] Although Jue Joe did eventually settle in America for the collective interests of his family, his sojourning mindset drove him to treat the land in America primarily as a vehicle for production. In clear contrast to the permanency of the family compound (figure 3.15) he built in China in 1902, the first formal living quarters in America featured temporality through their austere, simple, and utilitarian built environment. Perhaps these material features also provided Jue Joe with a meaningful sense of home continuity and familiarity, reminding him of the rural society he grew up in. Meanwhile, this house's designated use for family living also symbolized an advancement from Jue Joe's first makeshift living quarters in the horse barn.

In the early 1940s, this house became San Tong's family home, housing him and his second wife Yee Lai Ping (later referred to as Ping), their children, and his children from his first marriage with Rose Chung.[339] As detailed in Soo-Yin's hand-drawn floor plan (figure 3.16) and oral history, the common area was casual and multifunctional, featuring a four-burner cast iron stove, a kitchen sink, a round dining table, a few chairs, and a couch. Family members consumed daily meals such as breakfast and lunch at the dining table. The separation of this common area from the private sleeping quarters showcased the family's more differentiated use of the space, delineating the public domain from the more private domain. In the latter, family members

[338] Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family,* 6.
[339] In 1937, Leong Shee accompanied San Tong to visit San Gong village to seek for a new wife for him after the passing of his first wife Rose Chung in 1935. Yee Lai Ping, who was also from Sunwui, married to San Tong in Hong Kong in the same year. With merchant status as the manager of the Jew Joe Produce Company, San Tong was able to bring Ping back for permanent residence on the Jue Joe Ranch. San Tong's Declaration of Intention for Naturalization File, no. 127833, August 27, 1947. The National Archives at Riverside.

occupied the four bedrooms down the hall according to traditional Chinese family hierarchy ranked by age. San Tong and Ping occupied one room. Next to their room was the room of San Tong's two oldest children from his first marriage, Jack Sr. and Joan. Across the hall were the rooms for San Tong and Ping's children, with the two elder children Soo-Jan and Guy in one room, and the two younger children Pingeleen and Soo-Yin in the other.[340] The family's increasingly specialized uses of spaces indicated that their life gradually took root in America.

Jue Joe's Cabin

In the same year that he built Leong Shee's cottage, Jue Joe also constructed a tool shed, an office building, and a cabin for himself on the south side of the cottage, allowing him to be closer to the central farming operations and oversee the asparagus fields. The cabin (figure 3.17) featured the same sandy loam dirt floor, a basic kitchen, a big round dining table, some benches, and a bedroom in the rear. It was Jue Joe's mancave—except for at dinner time. While informal breakfasts and lunches were consumed at Leong Shee's cottage, formal dinners were always held at Jue Joe's cabin. Joan Jue recalled that when she and Jack Sr. were little, they would carry the food Leong Shee prepared in her cottage on their heads and bring the meal to Jue Joe. Soo-Jan remembers that, for some time, Jue Joe also had a ranch hand who helped prepare meals at the cabin and the whole family had formal family dinners there. This carefully directed movement towards Jue Joe's cabin demonstrated the family's respect for Jue Joe as the patriarchal authority of the household.[341] Respect for elders was, and still is, a key value in Chinese society and

[340] The birth years of the six children are: Jack Sr. in 1928, Joan in 1930, Soo-Jan in 1938, Guy in 1939, Pingeleen in 1942, and Soo-Yin in 1944.
[341] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.

culture. Rooted in Confucian teachings, this important cultural principle was deeply ingrained in the Jue family's daily lives.

Jue Joe Ranch's New Era: 1945-1955

The west side of the farming operation marked a new era on the Jue Joe Ranch. In 1945, San Tong hired Van Nuys architect George O. Chapman to design a new main house for his family and added other leisure amenities in the following decade. The built environment captured how the family's new lifestyle was tied to their changing identities. The fast-growing second and third generations began to embrace the emerging middle-class identity of the postwar era. For them, the Ranch was not only the working farm and temporary residence that Jue Joe conceived two decades ago; it had become the family's permanent home, placing increased demands on the built environment to accommodate their leisure-oriented lifestyle. From the blueprint stage to its final completion and later modifications, the materiality and experiences of the new main house and other amenities on the Ranch clearly stated the family's negotiated Chinese and American identities, which were tactfully represented with consideration of geopolitical situations, Chinese cultural traditions, and new family aspirations.

The Main House

As one of the few pioneering Chinese families who settled outside the urban enclaves of Chinatown in Los Angeles, there was little precedent for the Jue family to refer to in deciding on how to present their home as a Chinese immigrant family in an emerging residential suburb.[342] In the postwar era, minorities were unwelcome in most parts of the San Fernando Valley. The 1950

[342] Around 1945, when the new section of the Jue Joe Ranch was being conceived, the San Fernando Valley was transforming from an agricultural empire into a residential suburb. Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley,* 1.

Census indicates that among the 402,538 residents, black people made up only 0.66%, and the population of other nonwhites was even smaller, consisting of only 0.54% of the entire population.[343] As racial minorities in the area, the Jue family had to ask how the home of a Chinese settler in a fast-expanding American suburb should be represented. Should it be formulated based on the stereotypic architecture of Chinatown, or something else? This section explores how the Jue family used discursive representations to tactfully illustrate the family's complex Chinese American identities, balancing Chinese culinary tradition and cultural values with societal expectations.

The stylistic choice on the exterior: an American face

The style of the house became a major top of discussion among the Jue family members during its design stage. Should it be Chinese or American? San Tong and his wife Ping had different opinions. During an interview, Soo-Yin Jue, the couple's youngest daughter, recalled:

> My mother wanted it to blend into American culture. She didn't want to be singled out for discrimination, even though originally my father's idea was to have a Chinese-style house. When my mother protested…he said okay. He backed down.[344]

Ping's concern was based on the escalating anti-Japanese sentiment at the time. The 1941 Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbor during World War II unleashed a new wave of racial hostility towards the Japanese, leading to the mass incarceration of people of Japanese descent as well as numerous racial assaults on Asian immigrants in America. San Tong nearly became the victim of a racial hate crime while conducting business in downtown Los Angeles. "People

[343] The first postwar census of 1950 indicated that among the 402,538 valley residents, only 2,654 were black and 2,189 were other nonwhites. Most lived in and close to Pacoima, the valley's unofficial minority district, quoted in Roderick, *The San Fernando Valley,* 140; Pulido, et al. "The San Fernando Valley and North Los Angeles County," 233–262.
[344] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 18, 2019.

thought he was Japanese, so they caught him...they were gonna beat him up," Soo-Yin recalled, "but another co-business associate recognized him and then they intervened and said this man is Chinese, not Japanese. So they let him go. From then on, they wore patches that said, 'I am Chinese, not Japanese.'"[345] Although the joint war effort between China and the U.S. during World War II, as well as some other factors, led to increasing nominal inclusion of the Chinese people in the postwar period, exemplified in particular by the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, these violent attacks against Chinese people and other Asians were not uncommon, as in San Tong's case.[346] This was due in part to the reductive perception of all Asians as one race based on similar physical appearance, overlooking their internal differences. As outsiders in a predominately white society, the distinctive public experience of Asian immigrants indelibly shaped their perception of a private home. The anti-Asian political climate provoked anxieties and roused uncertainties about having a Chinese house. Ping asserted that a house that appeared American on the outside would be a safer choice for the family, allowing the home to blend into the surrounding landscape inconspicuously. This belief culminated into the final built project: a custom-designed two-story house that partially resembled the ranch style and type (figure 3.18).

Local architect George O. Chapman played a major role in realizing the Jue family's vision for their new house. George O. Chapman and Son Inc., a local building contracting firm, was first founded in 1920 by George A. Chapman, George O. Chapman's father. The company had numerous projects in the San Fernando Valley and the greater Los Angeles region.[347] The

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[345] Ibid.
[346] William Gow, "Performing Chinatown: Hollywood Cinema, Tourism, and the Making of a Los Angeles Community, 1882-1943" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2018), 1.
[347] For example, the Van Nuys Masonic Temple and the San Fernando Valley Walnut Growers plant in Northridge. Their design of the UCLA Elementary School received the American Institute of Architects Distinguished Honor Award. "Many Important Structures Credited to Chapman Firm," *The Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet,* January 26, 1965, 95.

Chapmans were particularly well-known in the homebuilding industry. When homebuilding companies were first getting established in Van Nuys in the 1920s and 1930s, the Chapmans were often highlighted in the press. As *The Van Nuys News* reported, "building better homes in Van Nuys over a period of many years has established the Chapman built house as foremost among ideal residences of the district."[348] The company's experiences working with private clients to build customized homes were noteworthy.[349] Based on the reputation of George O. Chapman (figure 3.19), the company focused on building Spanish Colonial or Spanish Eclectic houses for private clients starting in the 1930s.[350] The stylistic features associated with these houses, such as one-story, low-pitched red-tiled roofs, thick stucco exterior walls, and arched doorways and windows, became synonymous with the "ideal home" in Van Nuys in the 1930s (figure 3.20).[351] This was also when the ranch style was formally recognized as a distinctive architectural style. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester define the style as "loosely based on early Spanish Colonial precedents of the American southwest, modified by influences borrowed from Craftsman and Prairie modernism of the early twentieth century." Generally, houses in this style are identified by their asymmetrical, one-story, and ground-hugging design. Influenced by Spanish houses, ranch-style

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[348] The company obtained a contract to erect ten 5-room stucco homes in the Rasor Tract with a total investment of $40,000 in 1930. The level of investment was unusual compared to the "One Thousand Dollar House" marketed by the Provident Building-Loan Association in the region. "Van Nuys Ideal Home Community," *The Van Nuys News*, April 25, 1930, 12–13.
[349] In 1936, George O. Chapman was the contractor for a new Spanish home in Encino for Mr. Charles Wood, a broker in Hollywood. The construction of this nearly 4,500 sq ft grant home costs $5,000. "Hollywood Broker Building in Encino," *The Van Nuys News*, February 3, 1936, 1.
[350] The company obtained a contract to erect ten five-room stucco homes in the Rasor Tract with a total investment of $40,000 in 1930. The level of investment was unusual compared to the "One Thousand Dollar House" marketed by the Provident Building-Loan Association in the region. "Van Nuys Ideal Home Community," 12–13.
[351] Ibid. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 128 and 416

houses feature partially enclosed or outdoor living areas, which are often located in the rear of the house. The emphasis on horizontality is articulated through low-pitched roofs and eave overhangs.[352] With less attention given to visual characteristics, vernacular architectural historians name a few dominant types of ranch houses based on overall forms and floor plans. For example, James Jacobs notes that the split-level, split-foyers, and bi-level ranch houses became popular in Mid-Atlantic cities in the decades following World War II, all of which are distinctively different from the one-story ranch houses found in California and other states in the Sunbelt.[353] In addition, based on regional surveys in Springfield, Thomas Hubka also defines three local dominant types based on floor plans, including the standard ranch, kitchen-in-front ranch, and box ranch.[354] The Jue family's main house was unlike any of the dominant ranch housing types previously identified by vernacular architectural historians, though it did share some features with the ranch style. Chapman's design selectively adopted and diverged from both the ranch style and the ranch housing types to meet the specific needs of the Jue family, making the house uniquely Chinese American.

In the San Fernando Valley, ranch became the standard domestic architectural style of new home construction, upholding leisure culture and the informal way of living in Southern

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[352] McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 479. Most scholars attributed the creation and popularization of the ranch style to designer Cliff May; his designs were featured in periodicals including *Sunset*, *American Home*, and *California Arts and Architecture* in the 1930s. Early designs were distinctive projects done by architects and designers for wealthy clients and not accessible to the general public. John Mack Faragher, "Bungalow and Ranch House: The Architectural Backwash of California," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (August 1, 2001): 165, 173; Laura Anne Kviklys, "The Identification and Preservation of 1950s Ranch House Interiors" (thesis., University of Georgia, 2011), 11; Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 213.
[353] James A. Jacobs, *Detached America: Building Houses in Postwar Suburbia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 151–152.
[354] Hubka, *Houses without Names*, 84–88.

California.[355] Chapman's choice to imitate the ranch style in part while designing the main house made sense in light of its local popularity. However, Chapman had to come up with a slightly different plan—a house with two stories instead of one—to meet the multigenerational structure of the family. Aside from this, the main house adopted the common design features of the ranch style. It extended horizontally east and west with side-gabled roofs and moderate eave overhangs. The front of the house featured bay windows by the dining room and picture windows in other front rooms. The rear of the house was designed with an open porch. Both the front and back of the house emphasized the indoor and outdoor connections commonly found among ranch-style houses. The ranch style's unembellished exterior and minimal architectural ornamentation also made it an ideal choice for the Jue family to stay under the radar and avoid racial hostility.

In addition, the main house exhibited the Jue family's readiness to embrace the "California dreaming" movement of the emerging middle class in the postwar era.[356] The associated leisure culture was an explicit class marker.[357] Over the last few years, the Jue family had obtained a high level of esteem in the local community. *The Van Nuys News* referred to Jue Joe as "one of the interesting characters here whose jolly smile and cheery greeting are familiar to every old-timer in the Van Nuys community."[358] The family actively participated in local events at the Van Nuys High School, which the younger generation attended, and other social clubs.[359] For example, San Tong's younger sister Dorothy Jue and mother Leong Shee offered

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[355] Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 14, 166; Roger A. Clouser, "The Ranch House in America" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1984), 129–130.
[356] Faragher, "Bungalow and Ranch House," 173.
[357] Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure,* 9
[358] Maurice W. Markham, "Current Comment," *The Van Nuys News*, April 2, 1936, 2.
[359] The American generation's active participations in social venues were noted in local news: "Swimming Party at Dot Turner's Saturday Fete," *The Van Nuys News,* June 24, 1937, 6;

toasts at the school's annual mother-daughter banquet, which was well attended by two hundred guests.[360] In addition, the family business also received recognition in the local community. San Tong was elected as the chairman of the San Fernando Valley Vegetable Growers Center of the Los Angeles County Farm Bureau, leading discussions on engagement with the Los Angeles Wholesale Market, seasonal cultural problems in the industry, and the distribution of produce.[361] All of these notable achievements, both socially and economically, motivated San Tong to declare the family's hard-earned middle-class status in material but unobtrusive ways. A new main house, which adopted the leisure lifestyle that was synonymous with the emerging American middle-class status, was therefore an ideal choice.

In addition to the main house, other structures on the Jue Joe Ranch complemented the leisure activities promoted by ranch-style living. In 1947, San Tong commissioned the construction of a swimming pool (figure 3.21) in the back of the house and added a bathhouse facing toward the pool. The addition of these two features not only completed the common "L" pattern of ranch-style houses, but also was conducive to outdoor activities in the backyard. Specifically, these new additions were particularly well suited to the recreational and social activities of San Tong's American-born siblings and children, such as pool parties and barbeques in the backyard (figure 3.22 and figure 3.23).[362] These leisure-oriented facilities were also a

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"Spinsters Meet at Pat Daugherty's," *The Van Nuys News*, January 30, 1941, 27; "Crystal Shower Compliment for Dorothy Turner," *The Van Nuys News,* May 4, 1943, 6; Mary Kaye Poole, "Prexy Joan: Popular High School Coed Chosen to Head Student Body in the Fall," *The Van Nuys News,* May 19, 1947, 1.

[360] "Two Hundred at Mother-Daughter League Banquet," *The Van Nuys News*, June 24, 1937.

[361] "Growers Elect Van Nuys Ranchers at Head of Valley Group," *The Van Nuys News*, October 5, 1944, 1; "Vegetable Grower Meet Wednesday at Farm Labor Office," *The Van Nuys News*, October 19, 1944, 1; "Will Discuss Air Transporting of Fruit, Vegetables," *The Van Nuys News*, November 26, 1945, 5.

[362] For example, Dorothy Jue was among the many younger adults at the swimming party of her classmates at Van Nuys high school, enjoying the variety of entertaining programs, such as

conscious class-making act. The family's participation in recreational activities signified the transformation of their lifestyle and reinforced their American middle-class identity. To further expand the focus on leisure at the Jue Joe Ranch, San Tong also refashioned the main house's surrounding areas. In the early 1950s, he commissioned the construction of a fish pond (figure 3.24 and figure 3.25) in front of the main house near Vanowen Street. Differing from the fish ponds in China, which were used for raising fish as a food staple, the fish pond on the Ranch contained fantail goldfish and baby koi for pure visual enjoyment. The pond was accompanied by a simple water spraying feature, resembling a garden fountain, also for visual pleasure. The family's recasting of the fish pond as a recreational feature, rather than a source of food, also served as an explicit class marker for the family. By demonstrating their access to the privilege of leisure, which was often associated exclusively with the white middle class, the family announced their agency to break racial lines and enjoy similar experiences that white Americans enjoyed.[363]

However, having an American façade did not necessarily imply absolute assimilation into an American middle-class lifestyle. Human geographer Richard Schein argues that cultural landscapes are likely to reflect "dominant norms and values regarding race," but "There is always the possibility of resistance in and through the landscape."[364] Rather than stating their Chinese identity adamantly, the family chose to communicate "cultural resistance" in delicate and subtle ways. Hidden under the American façade, Chinese culture was also expressed. For

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badminton, pingpong, dancing, and barbecue. "Swimming Party at Dot Turner's Saturday Fete," 6.

[363] Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 3, 9.

[364] Richard Schein, "Normative Dimensions of Landscape," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscapes Studies After J.B. Jackson*, eds. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003), 204, 217.

example, the Chinese character "fook" ("fu" in Mandarin) was permanently engraved on the front door (figure 3.26). In Chinese, the word means good fortune and happiness. It was, and still is, a common practice among Chinese families to place fook banners on front doors to bring symbolic blessings to their home, especially during Chinese New Year. Leong Shee, San Tong's elderly mother and the most respected member in the family, chose the "fook" ornamentation for the door. San Tong then worked with Chapman to customize the door, designing it to fit the character and serve as a convenient passthrough for a gurney in case Leong Shee had a medical emergency.[365] The character was written in seal, a common font in Chinese calligraphy. The choice of the carving's color was also tactical. The minor color contrast between the gold-colored brush strokes and the white door allowed the family to display this Chinese symbolic character in a less obtrusive way.[366] This was very different from the traditional bright yellow and red contrast commonly used for fook banners in China (figure 3.27). From ordering the customized door to choosing the subtle engraving color, the Jue family showcased careful planning, allowing them to use the fook engraving to bless their home while not revealing their ethnicity too overtly. The family's perception of an ideal house exterior was deeply connected to their self-experience. As geographers Nancy Duncan and James Duncan put it, "there is no such thing as 'mere aesthetic.' There is always a politics of aesthetic."[367] As racial outsiders in a predominately white community, the Jue family concluded that distinctive cultural expressions needed to be carried out carefully.

[365] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.
[366] Jack Jue, Jr., interviewed by Hongyan Yang, July 19, 2019.
[367] Nancy G. Duncan and James S. Duncan, "Deep Suburbia Irony: The Perils of Democracy in Westchester County, New York," in *Visions of Suburbia*, ed. Roger Silverstone (London: Routledge, 1997), 170.

The hybrid interior

In contrast to the American exterior, both the original and modified floor plans (figure 3.28) of the new main house demonstrated a mixed influence from American and Chinese spatial practices. Working in collaboration with the Jue family, Chapman's design was carefully balanced between granting an architectural formality to the space, as was shared by many American middle-class families in the prewar years, and allowing for an individual expression of the Jue family's habitual Chinese practices. Specifically, the floor plans and their evolution communicated the Jue family's socioeconomic status, multi-generational family structure, and everyday culturally-informed practices, especially culinary practices.

The original floor plan reflects important American middle-class ideals from the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The house had a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and two bedrooms on the first floor, and an office, a bathroom, three regular bedrooms, and a master bedroom with a dressing room and walk-in closet on the second floor. The floor plan prescribed a formal and function-specific way of living, which was embedded in middle-class gentility.[368] The first floor was also designed based on a common front-back spatial hierarchy.[369] Upon entering through the front door, visitors could see the carefully arranged living room, displaying the refined taste of the family. The main staircases near the entrance had wrought iron railings, selected to create an airy and spacious effect. The staircases led up to a landing area with two approximately three-foot tall Chinese vases (figure 3.29), which helped

[368] Since the mid-nineteenth century, house plans demonstrated increasing specialization of rooms based on different functions. Hubka, *Houses without Names,* 66; Wright, *Building the Dream*, 77.

[369] Many scholars have noted the front and back spatial hierarchy and its coded social relationships, which lasted into the early decades of the twentieth century. To name to few: Herman, *Town House*, 119–54; Bushman, *The Refinement of America,* 119–121; Cromley, *The Food Axis*, 85; Andrzejewski, *Building Power*, 98–117.

create a ceremonial experience when walking upstairs. In contrast, the back staircases, which led up to San Tong's office and down to the basement were narrow and plain with only walls on both sides instead of any railings.[370] Both the emphasis on differentiated room usage and spatial hierarchy set the Jue main house apart from typical ranch houses in the postwar era, which placed a greater emphasis on openness and flexibility, for example featuring a dual purpose living and dining room instead of having a separate dining room, which promoted an informal way of living.[371] These architectural distinctions allowed the Jue family to declare their prominent socioeconomic status in material ways.

In addition to referencing the traditional middle-class ideals from the prewar years, the house was designed to accommodate the multi-generational structure of the family. Quite differently from typical one-story ranch houses in the beginning years of the postwar era, which were mainly developed to host white middle-class nuclear families, San Tong had Chapman designed the house in two stories.[372] Even with this larger square footage, the house was still not

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[370] The Jue family had a domestic servant for a short period of time, who used the back staircases to get to the basement. Soo-Yin Jue, interview by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.

[371] These qualities of the ranch style were upheld and promoted by Cliff May, who first helped recognize the ranch style in the building industry. Cliff May, "The California Ranch House," interview by Marlene L. Laskey, Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles, (1982): 62, 169–70, quoted in John Mack Faragher, "Bungalow and Ranch House: The Architectural Backwash of California," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (August 1, 2001): 165–166. Laura Anne Kviklys notes that ranch houses promote a relaxed approach to living and are against the rigidity of functions and formality in Victorian American houses. Kviklys, "The Identification and Preservation of 1950s Ranch House Interiors," 52; Hubka in his survey of ranch houses in Springfield, Oregon also points out the commonly combined use of living-dining room. Hubka, *Houses without Names,* 86–87.

[372] In 1953, 88 percent of new ranch homes in the United States were one-story. By 1956, two-story split-levels became more popular. Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City: The Forgotten Virtues of Community in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 82–83. Other studies also noted similar evolutionary patterns: McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 481; Arrol Gellner, "Architect's Viewpoint: Ranch Style Fit Postwar Years Series: Third in a Series," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 2003.

spacious enough to meet the growing family needs. Shortly after the house's completion, San Tong had Chapman enclose the back porch to serve as an additional family space. The room used expansive casement windows to join indoor and outdoor spaces, which continued to promote the idea of bringing nature inside—an important factor in ranch houses. By doing so, the family ensured that the change would not compromise their simultaneous participation in American middle-class ranch living. In fact, San Tong built a greenhouse next to Leong Shee's cottage in the 1950s to cultivate indoor houseplants for use in the enclosed porch—such as palm trees and orchids—to further enrich the area's connection with nature.[373]

The family room

Between 1946 and 1950, San Tong also commissioned Chapman to add a den and a family room in the rear of the first floor. Differing from the original home, which sat on a raised foundation, the family room and the den were added hastily to meet the family's immediate need for additional usable space and therefore both rooms had a simple slab-on-grade foundation. Soo-Yin explains, "it was a quicky...when you were in the kitchen, you could feel the hollowness when you were walking. Then you went down, just slightly to the ground level, then it was really hard concrete in the family room."[374] Compared with the other formal and private rooms on the same floor, the decoration of the family room and the den were much simpler. Both rooms were covered with linoleum in a yellow marble pattern consistent with the kitchen floor. The den was smaller than the other bedrooms in the house. Formerly, San Tong's six children shared the three bedrooms on the second floor in the same pattern as in Leong Shee's cottage, with Jack Sr. and Joan in one room, Guy and Soo-Jan in another, and Pingileen and Soo-Yin in the nursery room.

[373] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.
[374] Ibid.

As the two older children, Jack Sr. and Joan, grew into young adults, they moved downstairs and slept in separate bedrooms. The added den was for Jack Sr. This further division of sleeping quarters also resembled American middle-class households, which emphasized a bedroom as "a personal haven for an individual occupant."[375]

In addition to adding an individual space, the floor plan was modified to accommodate traditional Chinese culinary spatial practices. The family consumed their daily meals in the newly added family room (figure 3.30) behind the kitchen. The open connection between the family room and the kitchen brought in fluidity and spaciousness, which the family highly desired. Soo-Yin reflected on the different spatial practices enabled by the formal dining room and the family room, noting "because of the family room's openness and casual features, everything flowed together. In contrast, the formal dining room was a more enclosed world and was less conducive to [a] Chinese family's lifestyle."[376] The family's preference for spatial openness led them to add a family room that connected directly to the kitchen. This change disrupted the rigidity and formality written in the original closed floor plan. Before the postwar era, the spatial and conceptual separation of cooking activities from dining activities was important in preserving the sanctity of the reception area of the house and establishing the gentility and social status of a household.[377] Chapman's design choice to separate the dining room from the kitchen reflected his understandings of the middle- and upper-class American

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[375] Elizabeth Cromley, "A History of American Beds and Bedrooms, 1890-1930," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, eds. Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth, T. J. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 138.
[376] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by Hongyan Yang, February 20, 2021.
[377] Herman, *Town House,* 42; Carson and Rice*, Ambitious Appetites,* 39; Williams, *Homeplace*, 60–66; Cromley, *The Food Axis*, 37, 48, 85, 92, 104, 169; Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Dell Upton and John Michel Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 321.

tradition from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, because historically only working-class families integrated cooking and dining spaces.[378] For Chapman, this was crucial for helping the Jue family make a clear distinction between their house and those ranch-style houses of modest-income middle-class families, marking their more esteemed socioeconomic status. However, as architect Herman Hertzberger reflects, "Form can be vested with meaning, but can be also divested of it, by the use to which the form is put and by the values that are attributed and added to it, or indeed removed from it—all depending on the way in which users and form interact."[379] The spatial formality in the original floor plan did not meet the family's everyday practical needs. The Jue family's bodily memories of food led to culturally-specific spatial inhabitations. For Chinese families, separating cooking and eating activities and containing food smells were less important than convenient food service. The family needed a greater degree of spatial connection between cooking and eating spaces to ensure such convenience. This arrangement also indicated a spatial continuity from Leong Shee's cottage, where the common area was used for cooking and dining together. The added family room and resulting open floor plan of the side wing accommodated the fluid Chinese spatial practices, which coincidentally matched the relaxed and informal approach to domestic living in the postwar era. Architectural historian James Jacobs notes that the term "family room" came into frequent usage in the 1950s, but it was not until the 1960s that it actually became common to have a family room in American houses.[380] In a sense, the Jue family's casual living, derived from traditional Chinese customs, preceded similar changes in American housing development by nearly two decades.

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[378] Cromley, *The Food Axis*, 187.
[379] Herman Hertzberger, *Lessons for Students in Architecture* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij, 1991), 150.
[380] Jacobs, *Detached America*, 145.

Interestingly, the Zoraster family, who owned a hatchery and a poultry supply store at 16119 Vanowen Street about a half mile east of the Jue Joe Ranch's main house, also hired George O. Chapman to design their new house on Woodley Avenue around 1945.[381] A comparison of the two houses further reveals the deliberate efforts of the Jue family in working with Chapman to materialize their esteemed socioeconomic status and meet specific cultural needs. David Zoraster recalled,

> My mother had a story that when they were designing the new house she went to George Chapman, who was the custom home builder in the area. He had built the Jue ranch house and recommended that she looked at it for ideas. Based in part on the Jue ranch house, my mother had Chapman draw up plans for our considerably smaller house. Chapman also of course provided a cost estimate, and as a result, a number of features, a fireplace specifically, got dropped. It was also only one story and was much smaller; major additions were made later as more little brothers arrived…I remember my father saying how small the second bedroom was; it was converted to a laundry room.[382]

According to David's memory, his home exemplified a few main features of ranch-style architecture, including a single story, a modest size, and an open floor plan with multi-functional spaces and a separation between quiet and active zones.[383] Many of these features stood in contrast to the main house on the Jue Joe Ranch. The Zoraster house measured about 1,500 square feet. Although much smaller than the Jue house, it was still above the average size of ranch houses in the area in the 1950s. When David worked for the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, he did an appraisal for the track houses south of the Jue Joe Ranch, noting that those houses are about 1,100 square feet.[384] According to David, due to the war and resulting

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[381] The online building permits from the Department of Building and Safety, City of Los Angeles indicates that the house was built in 1945 (digital entry; the year on the scanned print permit is not legible) while David Zoraster recalled that the house was built in 1947 or 1948. Despite this discrepancy, both sources indicated that Chapman designed the house.
[382] David Zoraster, e-mails to author, July 12, July 21, 2020.
[383] Rachel Simmons, "The Renovation of Post World War Two Ranch House Interiors: Case Study-Wood Houses C. 1947 (Thesis., Arizona State University, 2010), 95.
[384] David Zoraster, interviewed by author, March 28, 2021.

lumber shortage, very few houses were built in Van Nuys in the 1940s. It was indeed unusual for the Jue family to be able to build a grand two-story house. In addition, the floor plan of the Zoraster's house (figure 3.31) was significantly different than that of the Jue house. Without a formal dining room, the house had a large living-dining room area, an open kitchen, two bedrooms, and one bathroom. The kitchen was loosely separated from the living-dining room by a nearly four-foot counter with wood cabinets. The unobstructed traffic between the kitchen and living-dining room, as well as the absence of a formal dining room, resembled typical postwar ranch-style houses.[385] By comparing the houses of the Zoraster and Jue families, we can see that individual clients were highly influential in directing the design and alterations of their houses, driving the spatiality of the two houses to be distinctively different. The Jue family used a modified floor plan to send an important message: their statement of middle-class genteel status was balanced with the practicality demanded by their multigenerational family structure and different cultural sensibilities.

The formal living room

The formal living and dining rooms featured the most decorative details and embodied San Tong's dream to create the best out of both the American and Chinese worlds. The flooring of both rooms included rose-colored carpet made of Chinese silk. The living room also exhibited several important status symbols. As illustrated in a drawing and photograph (figure 3.28 and figure 3.32), the center of the east wall featured an ornate fireplace with a brick base and an

[385] As noted in David's interview, this was also partially based on a consideration of affordability. Few families could afford a separate dining room. Kviklys, "The Identification and Preservation of 1950s Ranch House Interiors," 20, 29-30. Neither was having a separate dining room popular. Wright wrote, "Informal meals were the trend, and a separate dining room would have added a few thousand dollars to the basic price of a tract house." Wright, *Building the Dream*, 254.

elegant white molding surround. Jue Joe's portrait, which hung in the prominent location above the fireplace, showcased the family's high respect for the family pioneer. To its right, a large built-in wooden bookcase displayed hardcovered volumes of classic works from world literature, announcing the family tradition of valuing education. In fact, while Jue Joe could never speak and write English fluently, he always taught his children and grandchildren the importance of education and even financially supported the children of his bracero ranch hands to attend school. The books exhibited this family value of education and also served as important status symbols.[386] During the holiday season, a Christmas tree was placed in front of the bookcase, adding a sense of festivity to the room. On the opposite side of the Christmas tree, there was a Steinway & Sons piano (figure 3.33), another common status symbol that indicated the cultural cachet of the household. The refinement of the living room was further articulated with the exquisite furnishings, including a cherry-finished plant stand and two upholstered armchairs next to the front staircases (figure 3.34).

The Chinese dining room

While the status symbols in the formal living room expressed the family's American middle-class status, the family's interaction with food became an interesting instance of reverse assimilation. The formal dining room became the most classically Chinese space in the house, showcasing refined taste through imported Chinese decorative art and furnishings. The dining room wallpaper depicted Chinese landscape scenes. Hanging on top of the wallpaper, several

[386] Studies noted that a bookcase was not only used for holding books but also for performance as people began to be ranked by the knowledge they possessed. A home library was also for molding character and personal fulfillment. Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 218, 283; Candace M. Volz, "The Modern Look of the Early-Twentieth-Century House: A Mirror of Changing Lifestyles," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services,* eds. Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 36.

Chinese brush paintings portrayed classic Chinese folktales. On top of the china cabinet, the family displayed a Kwanyin statue (figure 3.35). As the "Chinese goddess of Mercy," Kwanyin symbolized a blessing for the family and brought a particular Chinese spirituality into the room. In addition, a large Chinese porcelain vase (figure 3.36) about two feet tall was placed either at the center of the dining table or on top of the small display table by the bay windows. The placement of the porcelain vase in these prominent positions communicated the family's intention to display refined Chinese art to both family members and passersby to see from the outside. Soo-Yin recalled many decorative details in the formal dining room,

> Oh, it was beautiful…a mahogany teakwood table. And there was this Chinese hand-made octagonal lanterns (figure 3.37) with carved legs hanging above the dining table. You saw it in restaurants actually. It was beautiful. The wallpaper was Chinese, soft grey-blue background with drawings of old men and gigantic mountains. And that was just a hint of China with those mountains you see…river…was beautiful…things that just remind you that it's just China.[387]

Having never been to China as a child, these interior furnishings and pieces of art allowed the young Soo-Yin to forge a strong material and emotional link with her motherland. These powerful cultural images and sentiments helped the younger generation cultivate an important awareness of their Chinese roots, which was especially important as many generations of Chinese Americans invested extensively into their American identity. As historian William Gow notes, their connection with China was "solely a familial one."[388] Therefore, the home became a key place for cultivating their Chinese identity. In addition to teaching Chinese culture to his Chinese American children, the dining room was also a restorative place for San Tong. As architectural historian Didem Kiliçkiran points out, "people who are physically separated from places they know as 'home' have a profound desire to recreate a home-place, and the private

[387] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 18, 2019.
[388] Gow, "Performing Chinatown," 120.

world of domestic space plays a pivotal role in this."[389] By decorating the dining room in a Chinese fashion, San Tong recovered a sense of belonging in their new house in America.

San Tong's technique of using refined objects to decorate the dining room also expressed his awareness of the performative role of the dining room in American homes. Architectural historian Jan Gilliam notes that dining rooms began to gain importance in the eighteenth century as food consumption signified the social rituals performed by the genteel class.[390] Material culture scholar Kenneth Ames similarly notes, "normal, well-socialized people in Victorian America voluntarily put these boldly expressive objects in their dining rooms and ate daily in their presence." For Victorian American families, dining was not only a necessary daily activity, but also provided "an occasion for the display of highly civilized behavior."[391] Architectural historian Elizabeth Cromley also notes the importance of the dining room for middle-class families to declare their gentility in the second half of the nineteenth century.[392] Nearly a century later, San Tong tactically adopted a similar treatment for his dining room to make its decoration a clear class-making act.

Furthermore, San Tong selectively employed only refined Chinese artifacts to create the unique Chinese character of the dining room. Ames wrote, "The extent to which and the ways that people engage objects, the extent to which they dominate or are dominated by those objects, also provide evidence of their culturally constructed character, their roles, their positions within power structures. Here too is communication"[393] In the Jue family's case, the room served to

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[389] Kiliçkiran, "Migrant Homes: Ethnicity, Identity and Domestic Space Culture," 99.
[390] Jan K. Gilliam, "The Evolution of the House in Early Virginia," in *The American Home: Material Culture, Domestic Space and Family Life,* ed. Eleanor McD Thompson (Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1998), 184.
[391] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 67.
[392] Cromley, *The Food Axis*, 104.
[393] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 187.

remind the family members that the new main house was not only a home for an American middle-class family, but also a home for a Chinese immigrant family. Ironically, despite the significant effort the family put into decorating the room, it received little use except during special occasions such as holidays and hosting guests. Soo-Yin further explained the reason:

> Because it was so beautiful. It was exquisite. It was all Chinese decor. Those were imported from Hong Kong. Just having us kids running around, banging furniture, this and that…my parents didn't want that to happen. Dining room was more for show and reminds us kids that we came from China. China was part of our culture. This was the best and most beautiful Chinese art. He [San Tong] wanted us to appreciate Chinese arts and culture.[394]

Soo-Yin's comment illustrates that her family's embrace of American genteel living through their choice of decoration and use of the dining room was never absolute. Although they used elaborate Chinese decor to curate the space according to American upper- and middle-class standards in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the family chose not to align their daily culinary practices with the formal etiquette the space was historically meant for. Unlike the Victorian American families who used the dining room daily, the Jue family did not feel comfortable regularly sitting in the formal dining room surrounded by refined artifacts; they were nervous about maintaining the pristine condition of the room. In his study of merchant culture in mid-Atlantic cities from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, architectural historian Bernard Herman similarly notes the tensions between "the forms and iconography of social knowledge" and "the resources necessary to act on that knowledge," which calls "a fragment of material gentility."[395] Herman's concept, although developed in a completely

[394] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, February 20, 2021.
[395] Herman had a similar observation on the Grant family's possession of tea tray and candy, dining and breakfast tables. He argues that although the family had the social knowledge of the tea assemblage, they did not fulfill its associated behaviors due to insufficient resources. Herman, *Town House,* 200-207.

different context, is useful in explaining the Jue family's use of their formal dining room. Their actual practices did not conform to the genteel behavior prescribed by the material conditions of the formal dining room. Although the Jue family recognized the performative and cultural meanings of the dining room, they chose to "perform" only on rare occasions instead of making it a daily practice as the American genteel class. For them, the dining room was mainly used to help their American children acknowledge their Chinese roots rather than a place to cultivate American genteel behavior. This gap between the material and behavioral adoption of middle-class gentility is still commonly found among immigrant families today.[396]

The material contrasts between the formal living room and dining room also reveal the family's uneven and complex identity-formation processes, balanced between becoming American and reinvesting in their Chinese identity. During our interview, Soo-Yin noted her father's nuanced choices in decorating the interior spaces, saying, "He wanted the family to feel or at least especially his mother to enjoy his success and so he wanted a little bit an American [interior decorations], but he wanted to make sure that we didn't forget our Chinese culture and that was a core value of our family."[397] As explained earlier, the formal living room mostly adopted important status symbols of American middle-class families. However, for immigrant groups in America, traditional foods and cooking habits are retained long after other aspects of immigrant culture are given up.[398] The central role of Chinese culinary traditions in family life as

[396] Because of the messy and intensive ethnic cooking, many immigrant families have developed domestic arrangements like a second kitchen or a second dining room for daily use to maintain the formal look of the performative spaces. Cromley, *The Food Axis*, 231; Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, Due Cucine," 685–95.
[397] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 8 , 2019.
[398] Many studies indicated that immigrants continued traditional culinary practices in their homes in America. To name a few: Ray, *The Migrant's Table*; Hadjiyanni and Helle, "Kitchen as Cultural Mediums," 97–116; Pascali, "Two Stove, Two Refrigerators, Due Cucine," 685–95; Yang, "Cooking in the Hmong Cultural Kitchen," 89–105.

well as the performative meaning of the dining room made it an ideal location to materialize aspects of their Chinese identity.

The Chinese American kitchen

In contrast to the refined and performative living and dining rooms, the Jue family kitchen was an utilitarian space. It incorporated key elements of American modern kitchens alongside other unique features to accommodate traditional Chinese cooking practices. It was laid out according to a U-shaped plan with extensive counter space on three sides of the room, situating the two stoves and the refrigerator on opposite sides. A double-bowl sink occupied the lower-left corner of the kitchen with a good view of the outside. Overall, like most postwar home kitchens, the kitchen placed the most emphasis on efficiency. For instance, metal kitchen countertops made with stainless steel or nickel were gaining newfound popularity at the time, as they required less care than traditional wooden ones. These new materials yielded more household efficiency with features like durability and easy cleaning. To match the slightly yellow tone of the nickel countertops, the Jue family chose cream-colored wooden cabinets and a yellow sink. This light color palette also reflected the trend among American families of using bright colors to reflect "prosperity and happiness" as opposed to dull and drab colors.[399] In addition, the linoleum floor had a yellow marble pattern. Linoleum's durability and availability in a variety of patterns and textures made it widely popular in the postwar period and into the 1960s. Although less authentic than real wood or stone, the synthetic kitchen materials that emerged out of new technologies were viewed as modern and low maintenance compared to natural materials.[400] These common features of American modern kitchens particularly suited the

[399] Simmons, "The Renovation of Post World War Two Ranch House Interiors," 127.
[400] Ibid, 108–111.

Jue family's traditional Chinese cooking, which was generally messier and more complex than most American home cooking because of cooking methods like stir-frying and deep-frying.

To accommodate traditional Chinese cooking methods, San Tong specially designed a wok gas range and placed it next to the regular American gas range. A wok, which provides even distribution of high heat, allows liquids to evaporate quickly into a thick gravy and helps develop a crust texture, which is ideal for Chinese stir-frying.[401] A common companion to a Chinese wok is a wok spatula, which is a trapezoidal blade on a long handle designed to serve multiple purposes as a spatula, a scraper, a spoon, and primarily a stirrer.[402] The Chinese wok and wok spatula are essential for Chinese cooking and eating, and thus were the center of the Jue family's life. Relying mainly on imports, woks were not widely available to individual households until the 1960s.[403] In fact, San Tong had his bracero farm laborers hammer the Chinese wok and the big wok spatula by hand.[404] Because the round-bottomed Chinese wok did not stay securely on their American gas range, he decided to put together a wok range according to the wok stove conventions in Chinese villages: the stovetop had a deep round cutout for the wok to sit right into and stay level.[405] While the stove ranges in Chinese villages were typically made with brick and used natural fire, San Tong made an adapted version using the leftover nickel from the kitchen

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[401] E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1988), 43–44, 151–152.
[402] Ibid, 150.
[403] Some Chinese immigrants brought woks to California in the 1800s, but established businesses that manufactured woks were still unavailable. Searches in the ProQuest Women's Magazine Archive revealed that early mentions of woks were from the 1960s. For example, "Advertisement: Walter Drake," *Better Homes and Gardens* 48, no. 1 (January, 1970): 93; Margaret Davidson, "Gift List for Cooks," *Ladies' Home Journal* (December, 1966): 66.
[404] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 8, 2019.
[405] Later, adapter ring or stand was invented for a stable placement of Chinese woks on regular American gas or electric ranges. "*Food from afar: China: Chinese Wok Cookery,*" *Better Homes and Gardens* 49, no. 10 (October 1971): 116.

countertops for a gas-powered wok range. By integrating modern gas technology with traditional Chinese stove designs, the Jue family kitchen was at once modern and culturally traditional. This efforts to make a custom Chinese wok range demonstrated San Tong's dedication to preserving traditional Chinese cooking, which was important to the Jue family's cultivation of cultural comfort through consuming traditional Chinese food.

Looking at the family room, dining room, and kitchen collectively, we can see that the construction and decoration of these rooms was carefully balanced between the family's Chinese tradition and their cultivation of American middle-class gentility. As architectural historian Didem Kiliçkiran notes about immigrant families, "home is not only about recovering a sense of continuity and stability, and reviving their 'roots', but also about expressing the changes they have experienced through their displacement and resettlement."[406] The Jue family's attachment to Chinese culinary traditions led them to use food spaces to materialize their Chinese identity, while they chose the living room to showcase their American middle-class identity. These intentional, tactical, and sometimes culturally conflicted arrangements of the different rooms, as well as the inhabitation of these spaces, complicates our understanding of the family's transcultural lifestyle. Overall, the main house demonstrated the family's increasingly hybrid identities that went beyond the boundaries of being Chinese and American.[407]

Chinese Embodied Culinary Rituals

In addition to Chinese imprints on the physical spaces, the Jue family also communicated their Chinese culinary tradition through intangible and embodied everyday dining rituals. A full

[406] Kiliçkiran, "Migrant Homes," 109.
[407] Lisa Lowe also emphasizes the "heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity" in the formation and representations of Chinese American identities. Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity," 28.

course family dinner usually included two vegetable or meat dishes plus tea and dessert. Traditional Chinese or Cantonese dishes were served, including bitter melon, mustard greens, tofu, squash, string beans, tomato beef, fermented bean, salted fish, and of course asparagus during its harvesting season, as well as the staple rice. For dessert, the family often consumed fruits like tangerines instead of typical American desserts.[408]

Additionally, the family followed traditional Chinese dining etiquette, preserving the cultural and family value of paying respect to one's elders. Soo-Yin used two charts to illustrate the family's seating arrangements in the formal dining room and informal family room. (figure 3.38 and figure 3.39). Although they varied to some degree, the hierarchical arrangement remained constant across the two seating charts.[409] San Tong and his mother Leong Shee, the authorities and eldest members of the family, always sat at the head of the table. Next to them were San Tong's elder children, with the boys on San Tong's side and the girls on Leong Shee's side. Further away were the younger children, then the youngest children, and lastly Ping on the opposite end of the table. Because Ping was responsible for bringing the food and serving the meals, she always had the most convenient access to the kitchen. Soo-Yin described the family hierarchy and relationship through the food serving order as follows:

> So our relationship, socialization, he [San Tong] taught us to always respect the grandmother and the elders you treat them always with honor, so she got served first. And then the man got served next, and they had the pickings of what they wanted for their food. Then came the daughters.[410]

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[408] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 8, 2019.
[409] It is worth noting that the hierarchical seating order at the dining table was also found among American families but at a much earlier time. Carson and Rice, *Ambitious Appetites*, 110–118; David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 301–303.
[410] Soo-Yin Jue, interviewed by author, May 8, 2019.

This rigid serving order was also thoroughly followed in the relaxed and informal family room. This further demonstrated the significance of dining rituals in reinforcing traditional Chinese values. Soo-Yin recalled her memories about the important cultural lessons she received at the dining table, "It was always a long dinner because he [San Tong] would start talking. He was always a quiet man at other times, but after the meals, this was our time he instilled Chinese culture and values."[411] San Tong's seating position ensured that he would have a commanding view of all family members, allowing him to conveniently give his American children their daily cultural education. These mundane culinary practices, though less evident compared to the Chinese decoration in the formal dining room, embodied important traditional Chinese values. As sociologist and Asian American scholar Yen Le Espiritu similarly argues, immigrant groups have expressed yearnings for homeland not only through physical reshaping of the built environment, but also through intangible practices.[412] The Jue family's everyday encounters with food were important cultural practices that were shaped by and reinforced their Chinese identity, helping the family recreate a culturally-specific dining ritual based on traditional values.

Summary

This chapter situates the Jue Joe Ranch within the social and political contexts of spatial exclusion in agriculture and suburbia, as well as the identity formation processes of the family. I argue that the history of the Ranch is both a symbol of resistance to white supremacy and a mediated entity based on the changing Chinese American identities of the family. Departing from the "negative history" of Chinese Americans, I aimed to convey immigrant agency within

[411] Ibid.
[412] Yen Le Espiritu, *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 2.

the parameters of unequal power structures. I highlighted not only their situated contexts of social and spatial exclusion along racial lines, but more importantly, I emphasized the agency of the Jue family in securing an elevated social position and making a home within these segregated geographies at four different scales.

On the community scale, the unlikely presence of the Jue Joe Ranch in rural Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley, a region that was founded and regulated through the lens of racial exclusion, made the Jue Joe Ranch a particular sign of resistance. On the ranch scale, the two eras of the Ranch embodied the changing identities of the family, marking a shift in emphasis from farming production to leisure-based family life. The new era reflected the shared sensibilities of the family as a member of the emerging American middle class by adopting the residential tastes and standards that were popular among white middle-class families. On the scale of individual buildings, I emphasized that forms and locations mattered in the production of specific identities. The stylistic choices on the exterior allowed the Jue family to tactically navigate the politics of exclusion, which contrasted with the hybrid interior arrangement created to accommodate their transcultural practices. Lastly and most importantly, my research underlined the importance of the human body in shaping the intangible but distinctive cultural meanings of the Jue Joe Ranch. These silent embodied experiences communicate important voices of resistance to spatial assimilation, which continue to redefine the meanings of home for immigrant communities in America today.

Conclusion

This dissertation moves beyond universal statements about Chinese American experiences to center on personal aspects of the past. It begins by suggesting that studies of the built environment, culinary material culture, and associated practices can provide new opportunities to uncover the agency of Chinese immigrants during the Exclusion Era and beyond. The preceding chapters have complicated our understanding of the different *tactics* that Chinese immigrants used to claim agency in middle- and upper-class American homes, Chinese restaurants, and Chinese homes. Despite their varying levels of ownership in these three settings, I argue that the agency of Chinese immigrants persisted through their tactical ways of designing and using everyday spaces. They harbored complex and layered identities, performing a delicate dance between what was expected and self-desired through tangible and intangible architectural and culinary practices. As their control over the spaces increased with upward mobility, they demonstrated increasingly materialized influences on the built environment. The foods they cooked, served, and consumed were important testimonies to their influences, challenging or deepening the existing physicality and experiences of the spaces.

Starting as humble servants, Chinese immigrants were boarders in American homes. Although my research does not indicate their intervention in the physical buildings, their ability to use service quarters to meet their personal and social needs contested the conventional meanings of service quarters as domains of laborious work and redefined them as liminal spaces of liberation. They successfully created marginal spaces of freedom by taking advantage of the domestic spatial hierarchy of middle- and upper-class American houses and the large demand for reliable domestic service in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My case studies also reveal the common mutual affection between Chinese servants and American employers,

which fundamentally shaped how Chinese servants interacted with the built environment and the culinary material culture of the homes. In comparison to the conventional understanding that servants were only expected to enter through back doors and remain hidden in service quarters, my research has shown that this was not always the case. Some Chinese servants had the liberty to stay present in the public front sections of the houses for social purposes outside of work. Chinese cooks contributed to the enhancement of middle-class gentility through their artistic western cooking and deployment of refined culinary artifacts. Beyond the homes, Chinese servants also potentially played a role in expanding the geographical and cultural comfort zones of white American families by taking them to the everyday social spaces of Chinese laborers.

As time went on, hard work in domestic service finally paid off and allowed some Chinese to start their own businesses. By studying four Chinese restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown, my research reveals that Chinese restaurant owners tactically employed different cultural imageries by creating an Oriental exterior and Chinese interior to attract white American diners and accommodate the needs of Chinese immigrants. The building exteriors communicated the owners' intentions to capitalize on cultural stereotypes and used them as forms of resistance to the racial hostility against Chinese immigrants while disrupting the city's plan to remove Chinatown. They successfully worked in collaboration with white property owners and architects to realize their vision. Meanwhile, Chinese restaurant owners had more control in making independent interior decisions as lessors of the buildings. The interiors retained a more regional identity through imported Chinese embellishments, family-style dining, and Taishanese food. The malleability of culinary practices allowed Chinese restaurant owners to modify the interiors based on occasions to tactfully accommodate the needs of white American diners. The design of the restaurant menus also reflected the owners' intention to captivate the attention of American

and Chinese diners, offering an opportunity to expand the culinary comfort zones of both. These seemingly paradoxical self-representations based on both racial stereotypes and Chinese traditions are important ways through which Chinese restaurant owners tactically negotiated for survivance, acceptance, and success.

Eventually, after accumulating enough capital, some Chinese entrepreneurs were able to own homes. My case study of the Jue Joe Ranch demonstrates that the homemaking practices on the Ranch embodied the Jue family's changing Chinese American identities, which were deliberate responses to the larger cultural and political processes in the Exclusion Era and early postwar years. At the community scale, the unexpected presence of the Jue Joe Ranch in a predominantly white suburban neighborhood made it a distinct sign of resistance against racial exclusion. At the Ranch scale, the two eras of the Ranch built by two generations of the family embodied their different aspirations, shifting from a primary focus on agricultural production to leisure activities. On the building scale, the new main house built in the postwar era showcases similar exterior and interior contrasts as the restaurants I discussed in chapter 2. The Jue family consciously chose to be American on the exterior and Chinese or hybrid in the interior. The stylistic choice of the main house was the family's strategy to shield the home from potential racial hostility and announce their American middle-class identity. The family also modified the uses of interior spaces to accommodate their transcultural lifestyle. Conventional formal spaces such as the dining room and the living room received the most decorative details, announcing their American middle-class status. The embellishments of the rooms also demonstrated deliberate cultural choices. The central role of food played in family life led them to reproduce familiar culinary practices that granted food spaces such as the kitchen, dining room, and family room a clear Chinese imprint. For example, the family decorated the dining room tastefully in a

Chinese fashion and used it only on formal occasions for performative needs. Daily culinary activities took place instead in the family room that opened directly to the kitchen. Overall, the homemaking practices on the Jue Joe Ranch went beyond racial stereotypes defined by others and attested to the family's agency in claiming genuine expressions of their Chinese and American identities. This departed from Chinese restaurants, where the owners partially relied on racial stereotypes to demonstrate cultural resistance.

In addition to tracking the shift from one setting to another, this study also provides an interesting observation of the similarities and differences between public and private domains by studying both Chinese restaurants and homes. Drawing on performance and ethnicity theories, I consider how people employed the built environment to perform based on social and cultural expectations. Chinese immigrants intentionally produced situational exteriors to meet the stylistic expectations of local contexts. Architectural historian Bernard Herman uses the term "material culture of sociability" to describe how house exteriors tend to assert regional architectural identities in eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic world.[413] My study enlists this term in a completely different time and place to expand its utility for scholars of the built environment. For Chinese restaurants, to be social meant to be familiar to American eyes, which further implied the exoticization of building exteriors as Chinese restaurants began to rely on white American clientele in the post-earthquake era.[414] The agency of Chinese restaurant owners resided in their ability to manipulate "conventional expectations" in "innovative ways" and to

[413] Herman, *Town House,* 33–117.
[414] Tonia Chao indicates that Chinese population dropped and post-earthquake restaurants were no longer able to rely on all-Chinese clientele. Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture, " 94.

create "invented traditions."[415] As for homes, echoing Herman, being social indicates being similar to neighboring houses. Only a vernacular-looking immigrant home would be granted that aspect of sociability by their American neighbors. As social and political theorist Jeff Weintraub puts it, "the public space of sociability emerges from a complex interplay of spatial and social arrangements," the making of the public face of a building is also a political process where *situations* matter.[416] What is at stake here is not only that the Jue Joe Ranch was located in a suburban neighborhood, but also the critical issues of race and ethnicity. As scholars have articulated, suburban landscapes promote "homogeneity, conformity, order and stability" and consider ethnic expressions to be "abnormal" and "undesirable."[417] Although not necessarily based on racist intentions, these standards and norms perpetuated the idea of residential exclusion based on race and class.[418] In his study of postwar suburbs in the American South, historian Andrew Wiese similarly reveals that the black middle class also adopted the residential standards that were popular among their white neighbors, using their homes to affirm their social position.[419] For these non-white homeowners living in white-dominated suburbs, the "material culture of sociability" meant mimicking expressions of whiteness on building exteriors. In addition to the Jue Joe Ranch, my field observations of a few other Chinese American homes built during the Exclusion Era indicate that very few families chose to employ potent expressions

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[415] Bauman, *Verbal Art As Performance*, 27–44; Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2.
[416] Jeff Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, eds. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 23.
[417] Lung-Amam, *Trespassers? Asian Americans and the Battle for Suburbia*, 7. Denise Lawremce-Zuniga used "aesthetic governmentality" to emphasize similar ideas. Lawrence-Zúñiga, "Bungalows and Mansions," 837.
[418] Lung-Amam, *Trespassers?,* 172–173.
[419] Wiese, *Places of Their Own*, 144

of ethnic identity through the exteriors.[420] These observations further affirm that building exteriors played a key role for Chinese immigrants in negotiating for acceptance in a racially exclusive environment.

Furthermore, I argue that the agency of Chinese immigrants cannot be explained by the physical qualities of buildings alone. From service to ownership, we can observe the deliberate choices of Chinese immigrants through their everyday embodied practices around food. Although artifacts alone can sometimes provide great insights into the social mindsets of people that words cannot, oral histories and Chinese first-person accounts remain critical to understanding Chinese American experiences in the Exclusion Era and early postwar years for two main reasons: First, Chinese American life did not originally center on material things. Most nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Chinese laborers from the Pearl River Delta had few possessions. The intricate embellishments and luxurious artifacts in the spaces they occupied, such as the decoration of Chinese restaurants and the formal rooms of the Jue main house, were in fact reflections of their acquired knowledge about the importance of focusing on material things to participate in American life. This might be attributed to Chinese entrepreneurs' early experiences working as domestic servants, where they were first exposed to the refined goods and the proper manners of middle- and upper-class American families, and sometimes participated in promoting gentility through culinary artifacts that were status symbols.[421] In contrast, material things are more important to the study of Victorian American life. As material

[420] One such example is Robert F. Lym's bungalow house, which was built in 1911 in Berkeley. Another example is Robert Yick's family home in San Francisco.

[421] Many Chinese entrepreneurs once worked as cooks and servants. The service occupation provided Chinese laborers rare opportunities to learn English and get familiar with American customs. Di Vernon in her article describes a Chinese servant demanding his American employers, even their little child, to teach him English. Vernon, "The Chinese As House Servants," 20.

culture scholar Kenneth Ames argues, "…Americans have long been a materialistic people."[422] Therefore, in addition to artifactual evidence, it is critical to rely on both oral and personal accounts to uncover a fuller picture of Chinese American life. Second, most early Chinese immigrants did not leave many things behind for research. During my dissertation fieldwork, I have encountered many fascinating family histories and stories shared by Chinese American descendants, but when it came to physical records, very few were available. This could partially be attributed to the mindset of early Chinese immigrants that material things were not essential in addition to the need to move from place to place as migrant workers. In fact, when Philip Choy and Him Mark Lai put together *Outlines: History of the Chinese in America* for the first Chinese American History course, they relied extensively on door-to-door exchanges to collect oral histories.[423] For these reasons, first-person accounts and oral histories remain incredibly critical in writing about Chinese American history.

My focus on artifactual evidence, including possessions of both Chinese Americans and the people they interacted with, allowed me to reasonably speculate about possible practices that might have taken place when oral histories and Chinese first-person accounts were not available. When they were available, I conducted dialectical readings to reveal the deliberate choices Chinese immigrants made about buildings and objects.[424] For example, their choices made in relation to the prescribed uses of buildings and objects helped demonstrate their ability to break social expectations. Furthermore, we can still access artifactual evidence that resides in the hands of not just Chinese American descendants but others as well. For instance, my investigation of everyday life among Chinese domestic servants draws on extensive collections of well-

[422] Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*, 233.
[423] Brian Choy, interviewed by author, July 8, 2020.
[424] Lozanovska, *Migrant Housing,* 132.

documented historic house museums. The buildings and artifacts that belonged to American employers yielded important insights into the choices that Chinese servants made. In addition, the growing awareness of the importance of material things in American life propelled Chinese Americans to employ more of such items in daily practices. For example, Chinese entrepreneurs who operated restaurant and farming businesses had more liberty to employ selected material things because of their upward mobility. Therefore, in addition to personal accounts and oral histories, artifactual evidence from various parties remain crucial to studying the everyday life of Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The agency of Chinese immigrants becomes palpable when focusing on their embodied experiences in the built environment. As a result, this dissertation differs from the studies of historians and geographers, who tend to be less concerned with the physical spaces that Chinese immigrants occupied than their social and cultural histories. My historical focus on how Chinese immigrants reimagined, designed, and used their everyday spaces also charts a new path to think about immigrant integration today. The increased recognition of diversity and acceptance of immigrant populations in America over time has created new possibilities for Asian homeowners to express their cultural sensibilities in more physical forms. Notwithstanding a more racially tolerant climate, immigrant families' expressions of different aesthetics through the built environment can still lead to racial tensions. The fabric of suburban neighborhoods has often been associated with expressions of whiteness although people of color have been a part of these communities.[425] As a result, some contemporary Asian immigrant families still feel nervous about

[425] A few studies have debunked the widely accepted image of suburbia as homogeneous white and painted a variegated picture of suburban history by including the stories of people of color or working-class families. For example, Nicolaides, "Introduction: Asian American Suburban History," 5–17; Matthew D. Lassiter and Christopher Niedt, "Suburban Diversity in Postwar America," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 1 (January 2013): 3–14; Wiese, *Places of Their*

openly expressing their own cultural identities through the built environment. By centering research on people's everyday engagement with the built environment, my study alerts scholars to the critical issue of how the built environment continues to divide the American society based on racial lines.

More importantly, my study also reminds us that despite the unequal social power embedded in architectural regulations, we can always find immigrants' cultural resistance through a close investigation of their small-scale interior interventions. Future research should dedicate more attention to the everyday life of immigrant populations, especially how they adjust to different material conditions in America, including the challenges they face and how they navigate them. Understanding these experiences is crucial to creating alternative narratives of neighborhood history, repositioning immigrants as political agents actively striving for creative cultural expressions and better lives. This more holistic way of looking at the built environment is vital to dismantling the discriminative propaganda of right-wing politics. For instance, the America First Caucus, a group founded by conservative House of Representatives, announced in the infrastructure section of their policy platform that it will "work towards an infrastructure that reflects the architectural, engineering and aesthetic value that befits the progeny of European architecture, whereby public infrastructure must be utilitarian as well as stunningly, classically beautiful, befitting a world power and source of freedom."[426] Little do they know, the voices of

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Own; Michael Jones-Correa, "Reshaping the American Dream: Immigrants, Ethnic Minorities, and the Politics of the New Suburbs," in *The New Suburban History*, eds. Evid M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 161–182; Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[426] "America First Caucus Policy Platform," accessed August 31, 2021, https://punchbowl.news/wp-content/uploads/America-First-Caucus-Policy-Platform-FINAL-2.pdf.

resistance among racial and ethnic minorities lie not solely in physical forms, but also in intangible everyday bodily practices that can never be completely overwritten.

FIGURES

Figure 1.1. A short clip from *Bonanza*, showing Hop Sing scolding Hoss Cartwright in his Kitchen. "Hop Sing of the Ponderosa," YouTube video, 1:25, January 23, 2009, https://youtu.be/4EJebBY-Yk0.

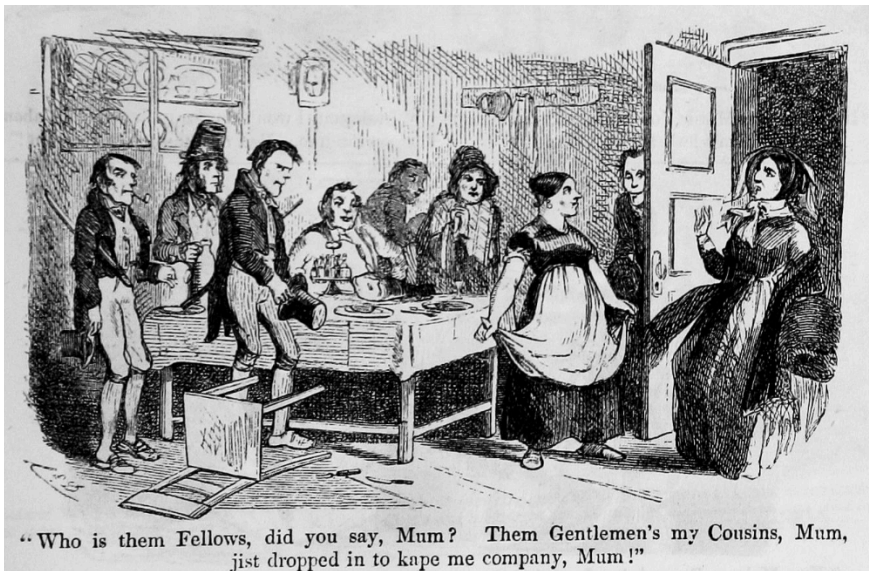


Figure 1.2. Cartoon from "The Miseries of Mistresses," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 13, no. 77 (October 1856): 717, quoted in Andrzejewski, *Building Power*, 127.

Figure 1.3. Portrait of Ah Quin and his family, 1899. Courtesy of San Diego History Center.

Figure 1.4. Camp Reynolds today, showing the living quarters of high-ranking officers on the slope, south of the parade grounds. “Camp Reynolds (aka West Garrison),” Angel Island Conservancy, accessed August 16, 2021. https://angelisland.org/history/camp-reynolds/.

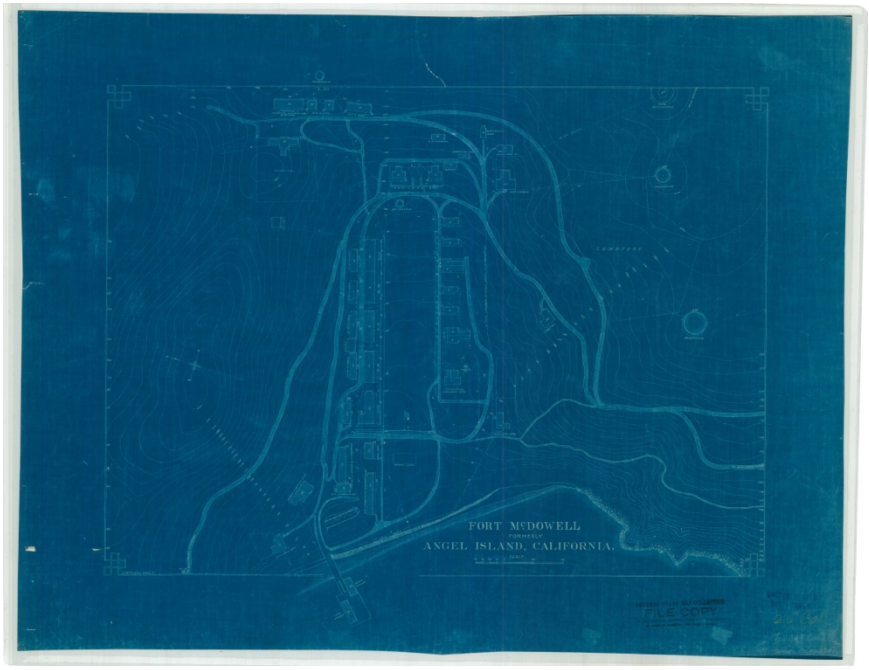


Figure 1.5. A site map of Camp Reynolds in 1906. Formerly known as the Angel Island, the War Department designated the entire island as Fort McDowell in 1900. Camp Reynolds, located on the west side of the island, therefore became known as West Garrison. "Fort McDowell, Formerly Angel Island, California," National Archive Catalog, accessed August 16, 2021, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/103396512.

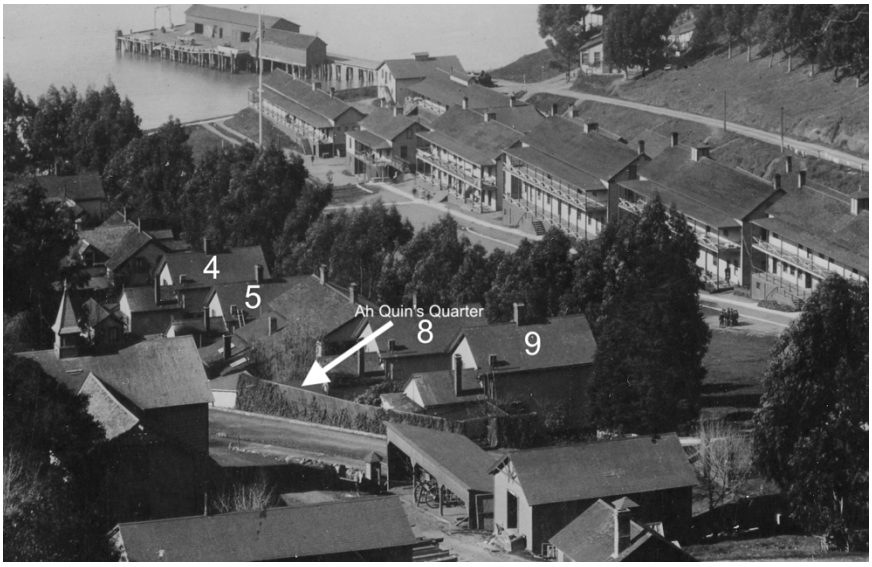


Figure 1.6. Detail of the officers' quarters located to the south of the parade grounds with arrowing noting Ah Quin's living quarters in the back of building no.8. This is a photograph taken from the hill on the east side. Photograph 111-SC-92853, Record Group 111, Series SC: Photographs of American Military Activities, ca. 1918--ca. 1981, Still Picture Branch, National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

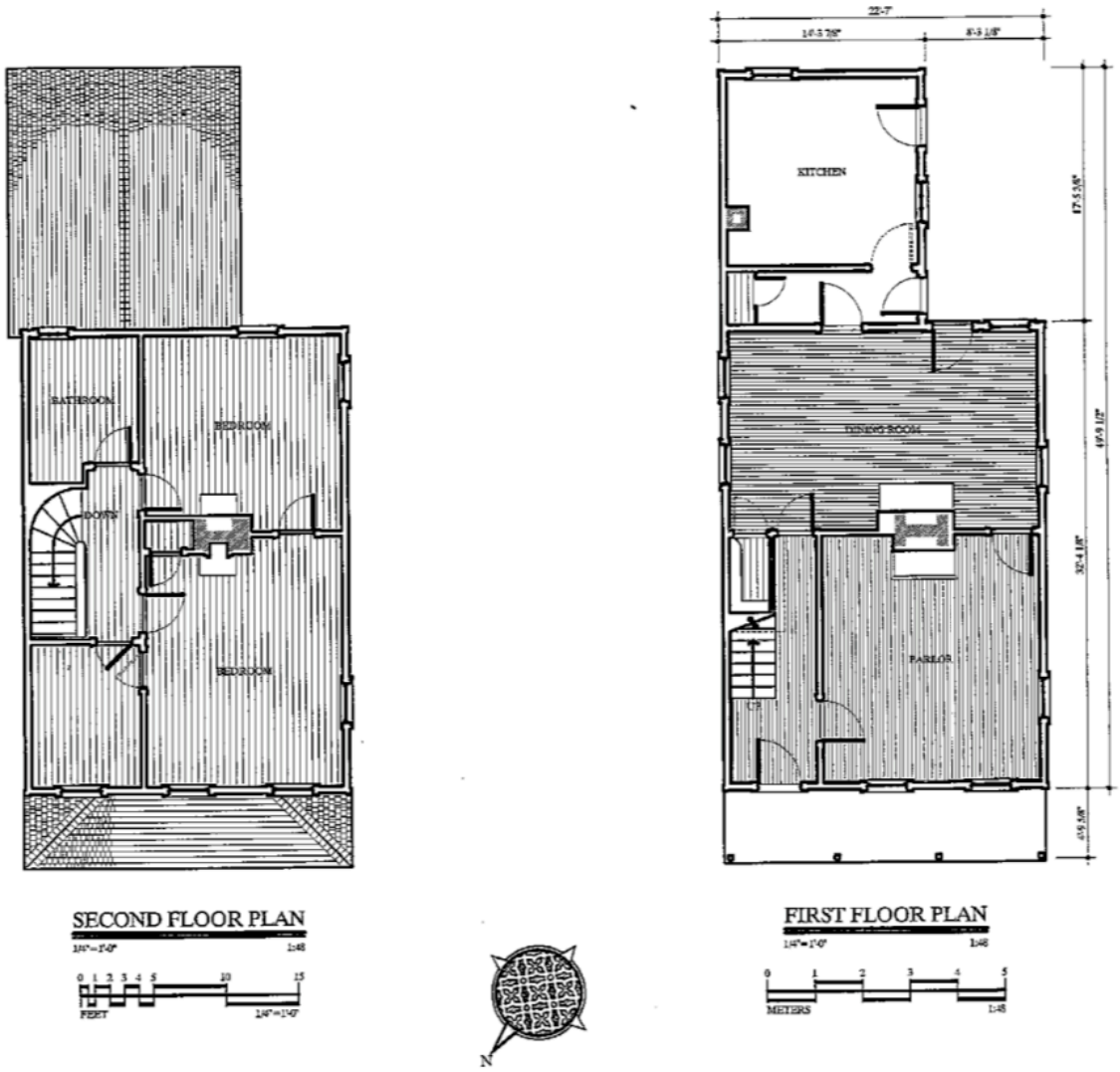


Figure 1.7. Floor plans of building no. 4 (current no. 46). The plans are nearly identical to building no.8, where Ah Quin worked. Historic American Building Survey CA-1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/.

Figure 1.8. Perspective view from the northwest. Photograph from Historic American Buildings Survey CA-1841-I, Creator, and Mark Schara, Rosenthal, James W, photographer, *Camp Reynolds, Officer's Quarters, Angel Island State Park, Angel Island, Marin County, CA*. Marin County Angel Island California, 1933, translated by Price, Virginia Barrettmitter Documentation Compiled After, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/item/ca3277/.

Figure 1.9. Elevation view of the northwest façade, same source as figure 1.8.

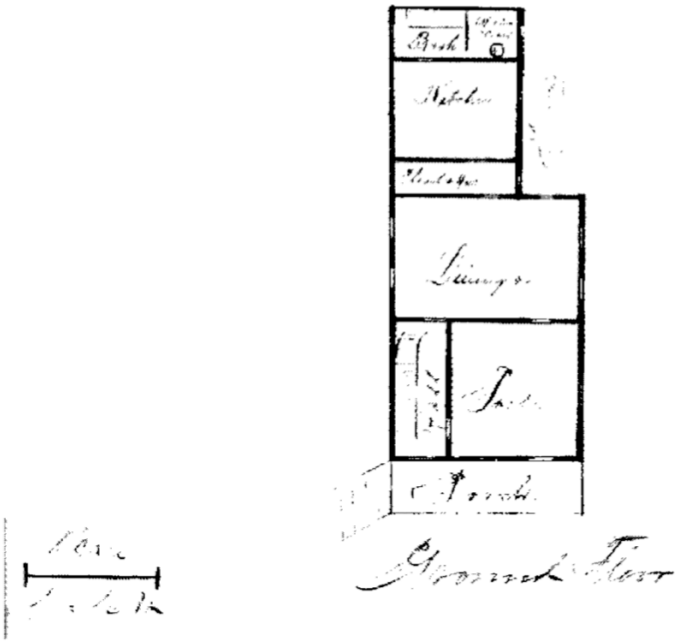


Figure 1.10. A first-floor plan of an officer's quarters included in the Enclosure to Special Sanitary Report, (30 June 1893), RG 112 - Office of the Surgeon General, Entry 41, Box 2, National Archives at Washington D.C., quoted in Historic American Building Survey CA1841-C, Library of Congress, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ca3246/.

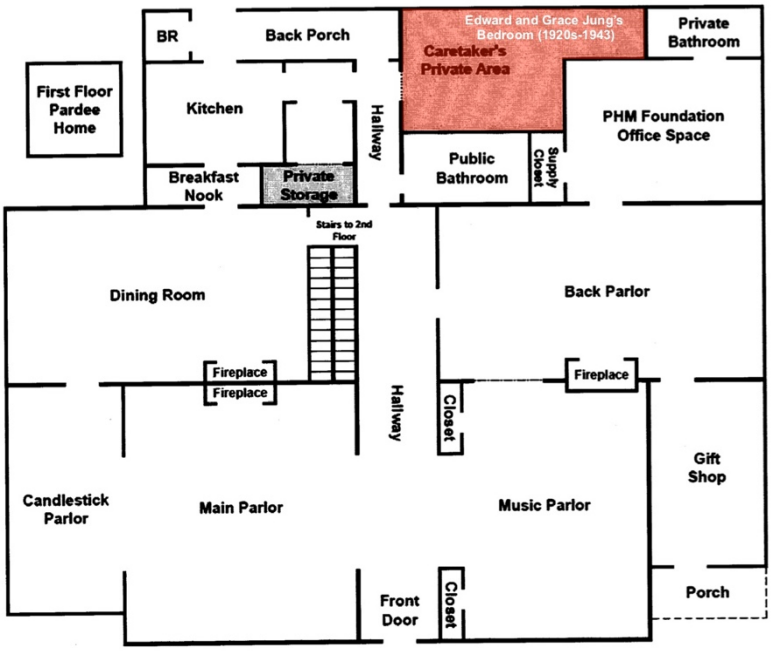


Figure 1.11. First-floor plan of the Pardee Home Museum with the servant's bedroom highlighted in red. Edward and Grace stayed in this bedroom. David Nicolai, *A Grand Tour of the Pardee Home*, 2014. Museum Collection. Courtesy the Pardee Home Museum.

Figure 1.12. Photograph of Edward Jung, the Pardees, and their friends celebrating Edward's retirement from the Pardee Home, 1943. Museum Collection. Courtesy of the Pardee Home Museum.

Figure 1.13. Chee Chong Waiting for Heney at the front steps of the house, 1909. BANC PIC 1989.068—PIC, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Figure 1.14. Portrait of Chinese laundryman Tom Wong. The Haas-Lilienthal House Collection. Courtesy of San Francisco Heritage.

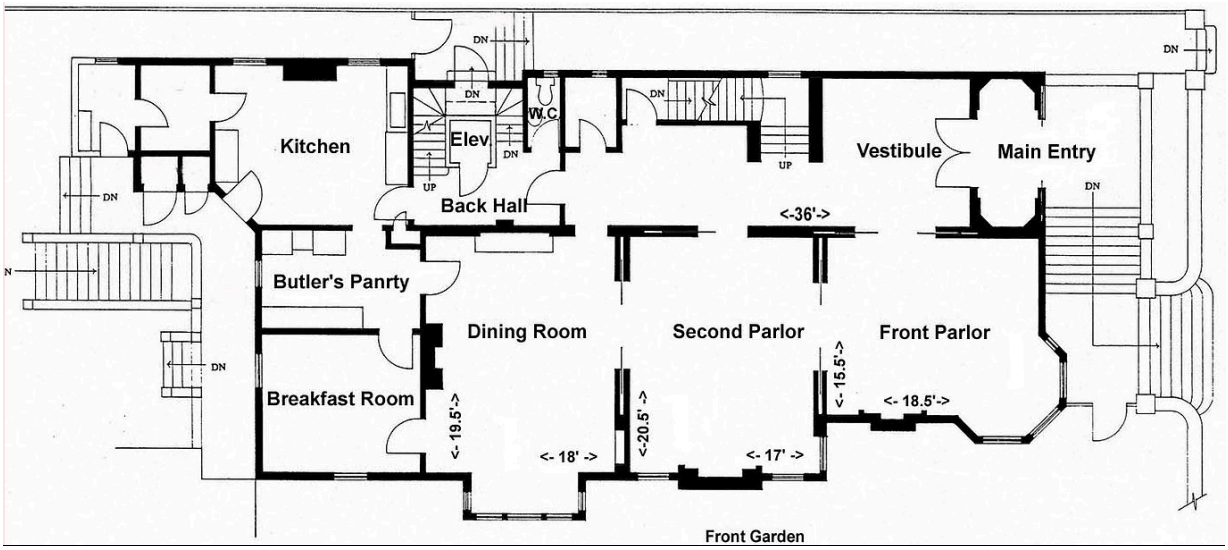


Figure 1.15. First-floor plan of the Haas-Lilienthal House. The Haas-Lilienthal House Collection. Courtesy of San Francisco Heritage.

Figure 1.16. Image showing the basement entrance at the back of the Haas-Lilienthal House. The Haas-Lilienthal House Collection. Courtesy of San Francisco Heritage.

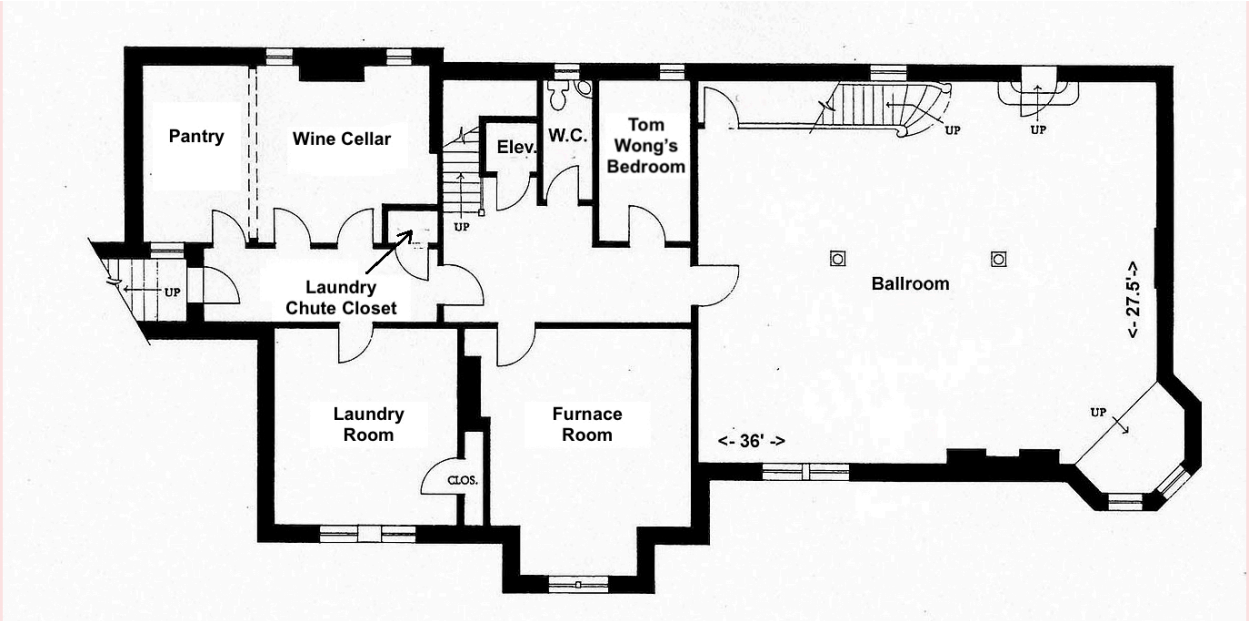


Figure 1.17. Basement floor plan of the Haas-Lilienthal House. Historical Uses of rooms were labeled based on the information from museum docent Carlo Caldanao and Frances Rothmann's memoir *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street*. Carlo Caldanao, email message to Hongyan Yang, August 23, 2021.

Figure 1.18. Photograph of Fong Gan and the Shinn child, 1915. Museum Collection. Courtesy of the Shinn Historical Park and Arboretum.

Figure 1.19. Sam adores Marion Cohen and called her “Baby Mally.” Family Photo Album. Courtesy of the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House.

Figure 1.20. Photograph of Sam Fong. Family Photo Album. Courtesy of the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House.

Figure. 1.21 Illustration of a table arrangement for formal dinner, quoted in *Fat Ming Zhong Xi Wen Chu Shu Bao Jian / Chinese and English Cook Book* (San Francisco: Fat Ming Co., 1918).

Figure 1.22. A Chinese doll with a queue. According to family descendant Patricia Donald, this doll was likely made in reference to Sam Fong and was a family favorite. Courtesy of the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland-Cohen Bray House.

Figure 1.23. Illustration of an ornamental frosted cake in *Fat Ming Zhong Xi Wen Chu Shu Bao Jian / Chinese and English Cook Book*, 852.

Figure 2.1. San Francisco's Chinatown with the Far East Cafe in the foreground, 2018. Photo by author.

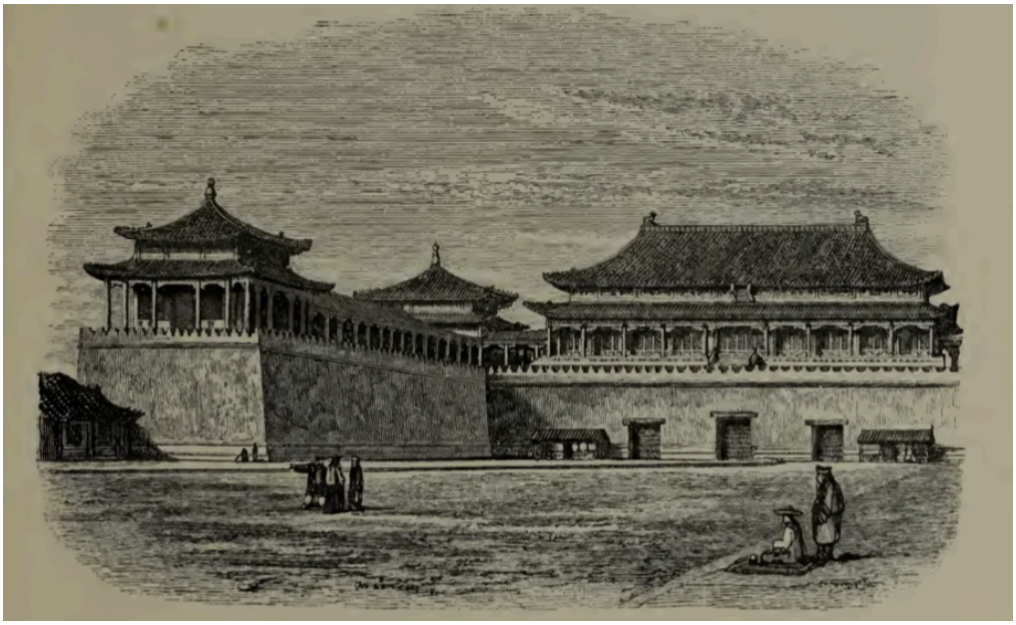


Figure 2.2. Illustration of the Winter Palace, Beijing in Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 707.

Figure 2.3. Viewing Dupont Street from the balcony of Hang Far Low. [S.F. Chinatown Ante 1910, General Street Scenes], Photo Collection, San Francisco, Box 009, SF-Chinatown--(1895-1906) Genthe, A., CHINATOWN--Ante 1910-(A-I), California Historical Society.

Figure 2.4. Photograph of Hang Far Low. [713-15 Grant Ave, Sacramento & Clay], Photo Collection, San Francisco, Box 009, SF-Chinatown--(1895-1906) Genthe, A., CHINATOWN--Ante 1910-(A-I), California Historical Society.

Figure 2.5. Photograph of Hang Far Low, circa 1894. Chinese in California, 1850-1925 Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Figure 2.6. Hang Far Low Interior, 1890s. [Hang Far Low interior on Grant St.], Photograph Collection, San Francisco Box 010 SF-Chinatown–Ante 1910 (M-Z), post 1910, California Historical Society.

THE ORIENT ENTERTAINING THE OCCIDENT

On the occasion of their annual banquet, the Yinn Yee Kong Sow Society invited the Supervisors of San Francisco and their lady friends to a banquet in the Hong Fer Low restaurant.

From a flashlight by Taber

Figure 2.7. The annual banquet of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Yinn Ye Kong Sow at Hang Far Low on February 20, 1897. [no. 9, page 9: The Orient Entertaining the Occident: On the occasion of their annual banquet, the Yinn Yee Kong Sow Society invited the Supervisors of San Francisco and their lady friends to a banquet in the Hong Fer Low restaurant], Chinese in California, 1850-1925 Collection, University of California Berkeley Digital Collections, accessed November 25, 2021, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/180342#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-567%2C0%2C2632%2C1411.

Figure 2.8. Woey Sin Low, circa 1890. [Chinese Restaurant, San Francisco, Calif.], Chinese in California, 1850-1925 Collection, University of California Berkeley Digital Collections, accessed November 25, 2021, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/179551?ln=en#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-837%2C0%2C2797%2C1499.

Figure 2.9. Woey Sin Low, circa 1890. [Balcony of the Chinese Restaurant, Dupont Street, San Francisco], Chinese in California, 1850-1925 Collection, University of California Berkeley Digital Collections, accessed November 25, 2021, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/178378?ln=en#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-761%2C0%2C2797%2C1499.

Figure 2.10. Woey Sun Low, circa 1888. The original record at the California Historical Society labelled the photo as Bun Sun Low, but according to my research on directories, this photo should be Woey Sun Low. Bun Sun Low was located on Jackson Street, not Dupont Street. This was also verified in Chao, "Communicating Through Architecture: San Francisco Chinese Restaurants as Cultural Intersections, 1849-1984," 63. [Bun Sun Low?], Photograph Collection, San Francisco Box 010 SF-Chinatown–Ante 1910 (M-Z), post 1910, California Historical Society.

Figure 2.11. Woey Sun Low, circa 1882. [Grand Dining Room of the Chinese Restaurant, Dupont Street, San Francisco], Chinese in California, 1850-1925 Collection, University of California Berkeley Digital Collections, accessed November 25, 2021, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/178383?ln=en#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-484%2C0%2C2466%2C1322.

Figure 2.12. Illustration of Far East Cafe in 1910 in "Some of the Work of WM. H. Crim, Jr. and Earl B. Scott, Architects," 42.

Figure 2.13. Far East Cafe, circa 1950. Courtesy of Herbert Chu.

Figure 2.14. Sun Hung Heung, Washington Street elevation. Courtesy of Jimmy Quan.

Figure 2.15. Washington Street and Hung Heung Chop Suey Cafe, circa 1948. “Washington& Grant, 1948,” digital image, OpenSFHistory / wnp14.11971, accessed Nov 24, 2021. https://opensfhistory.org/Display/wnp14.11971.jpg/.

Figure 2.16. Sun Hung Heung Restaurant postcard. “Sun Hung Heung Restaurant,” digital image, CardCow Vintage Postcards, accessed Nov 24, 2021, https://www.cardcow.com/627643/san-francisco-california-sun-hung-heung-restaurant/.

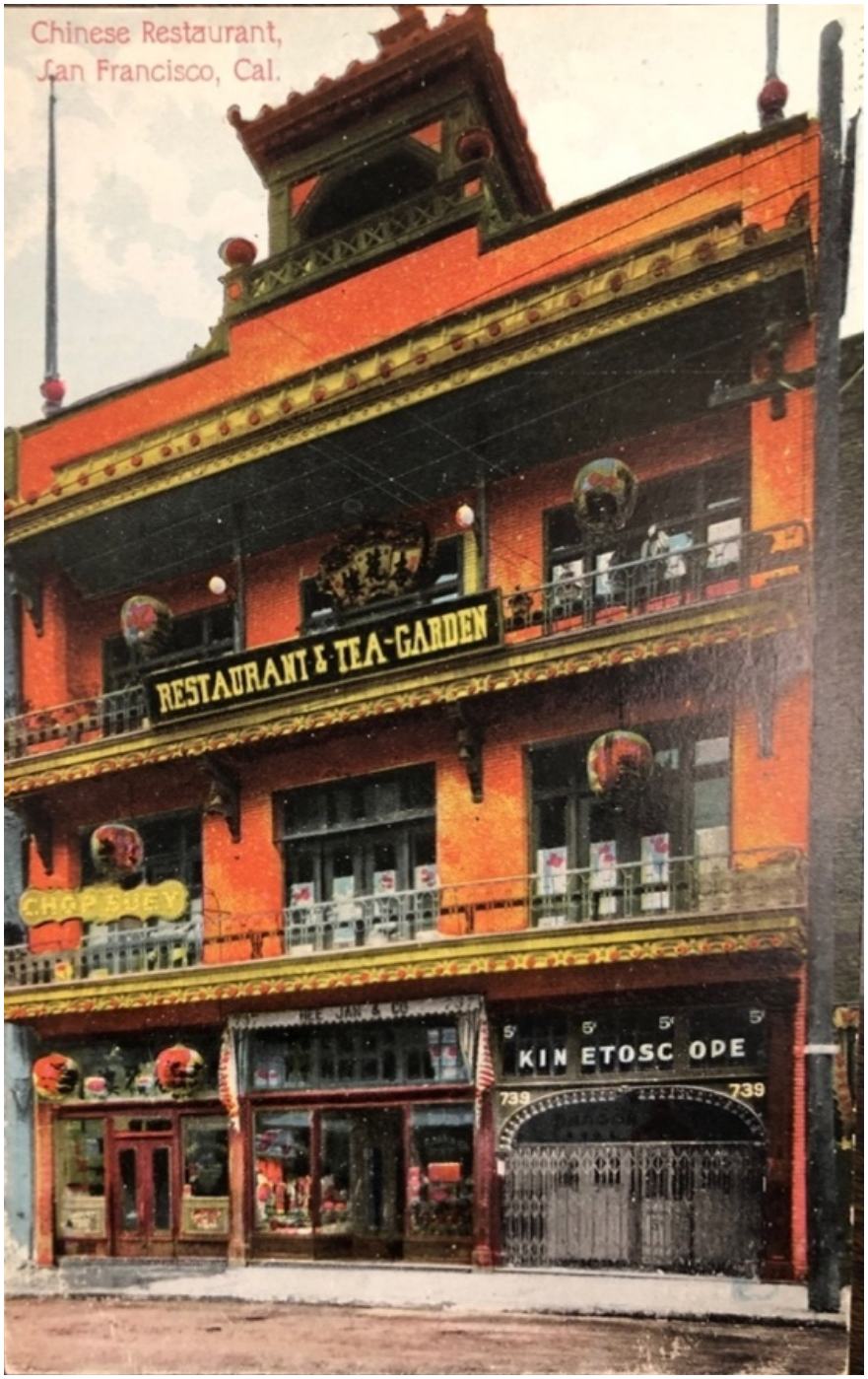


Figure 2.17. Hang Far Low Postcard, 1992. [Grant Ave, Sacramento to Clay], Photo Collection, San Francisco, Streets—Grant, SF: Box 116, California Historical Society.

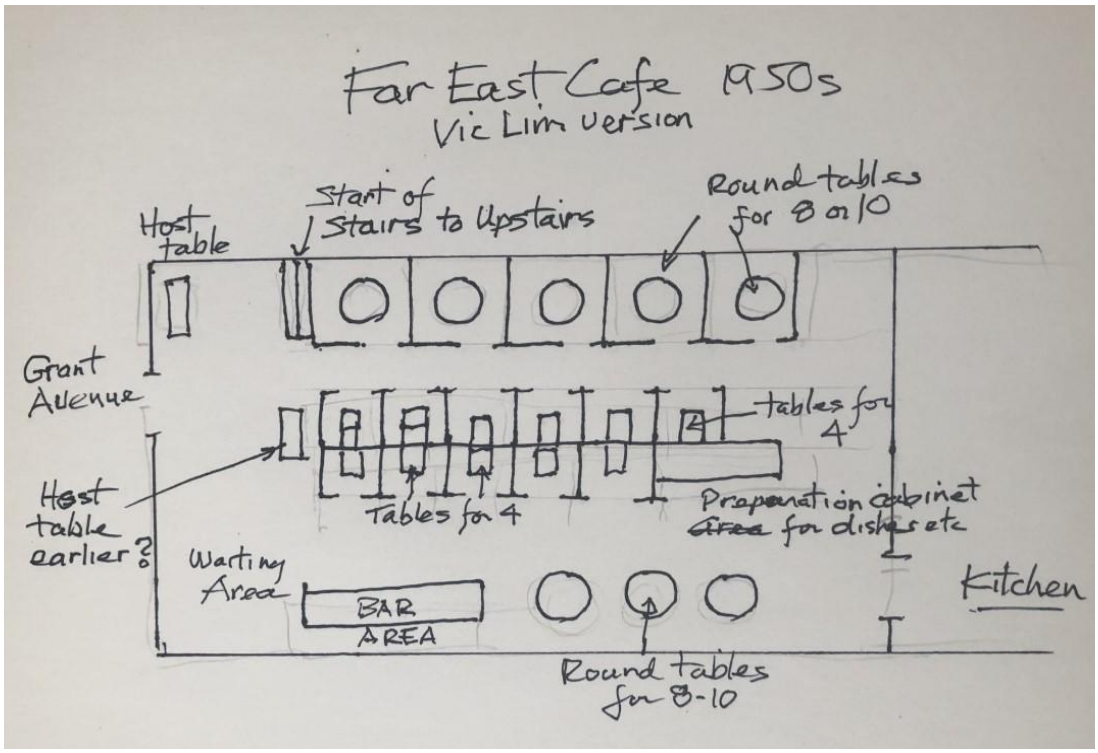


Figure 2.18. First-floor plan of the Far East Cafe, circa 1950s. Drawn by Victor Lim.

Figure 2.19. Original private booths at Far East Cafe, 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 2.20. Lim family and their friends dining inside a private booth, 1950s. Courtesy of Victor Lim.

Figure 2.21. Original indicator board for the private booths, 2020. Photo by author.

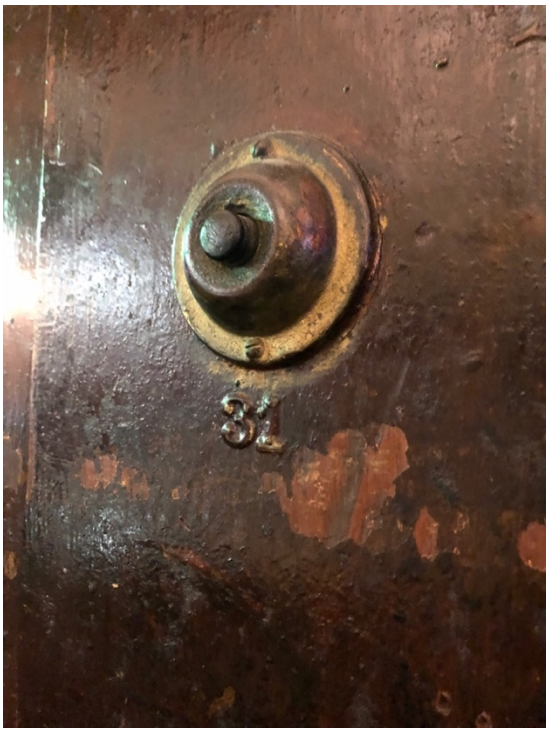


Figure 2.22. A booth buzzer, 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 2.23. Original wooden archway, 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 2.24. Family portrait of Herbert Chu with his parents by the Chinese archway inside the Far East Cafe, circa 1950. Courtesy of Herbert Chu.

Figure 2.25. Kingfisher lantern at Far East Cafe, 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 2.26. Closeup of a kingfisher lantern, 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 2.27. Chinese lantern and painting at the Far East Cafe, 2020. The painting portrays the Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall in Canton. Photo by author.

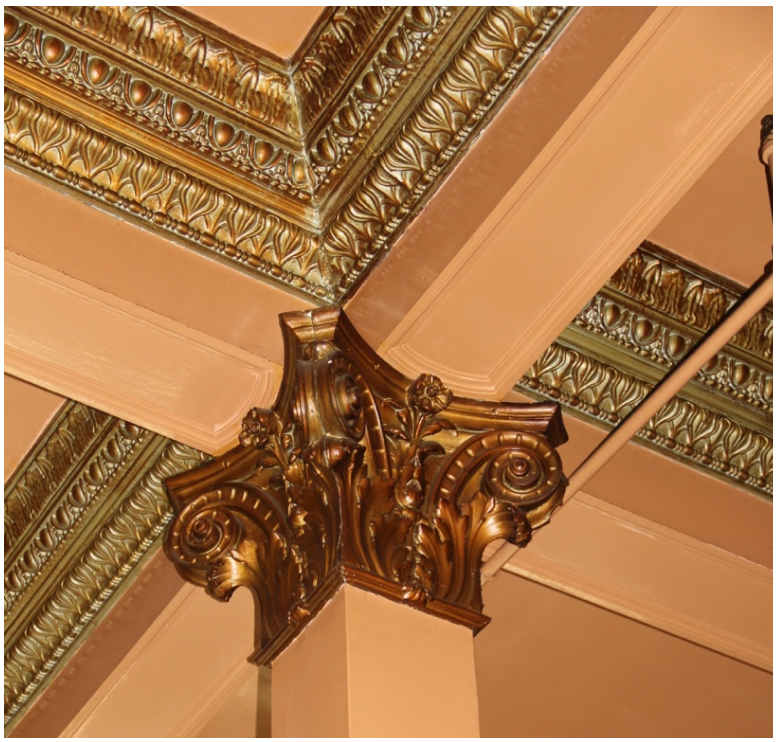


Figure 2.28. Cornices and capitals inside the Far East Cafe, 2020. Photo by author.

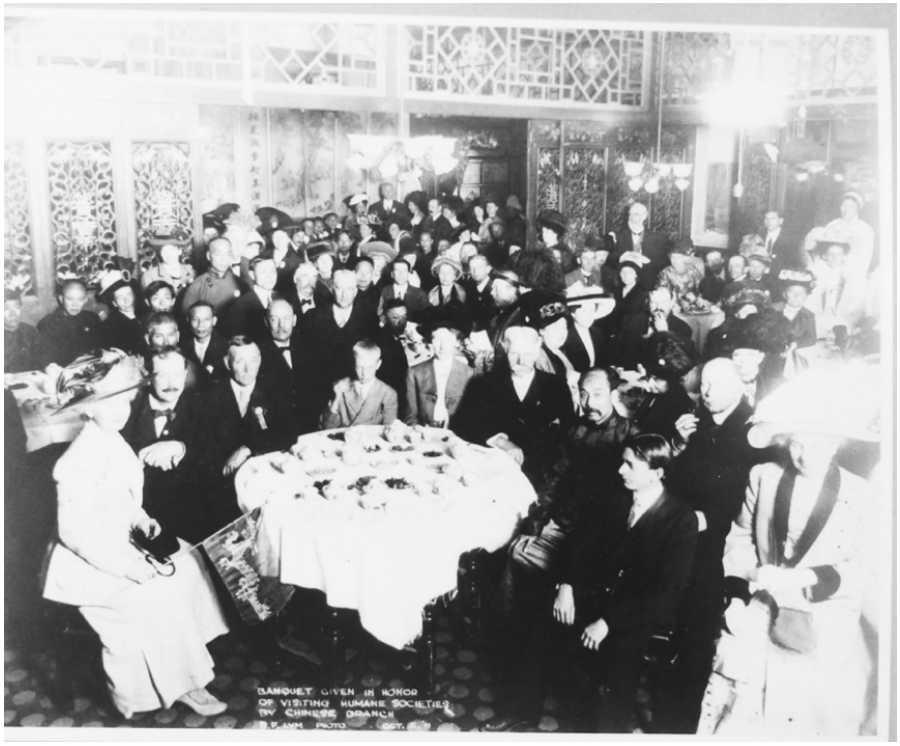


Figure 2.29. Banquet given in honor of Visiting Humane Society, 1911. Photograph by R. F. Lym. Courtesy of Brian Choy.

Figure 2.30. Hang Far Low interior, circa 1912. Courtesy of Bruce Quan, Jr.

Figure 2.31. Cover page of the menu of the Far East Cafe, circa 1930s. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.

Bill of Fare

Page 1

CHOP SUEY 雜碎

All Chop Sueys Served with Boiled Rice

Plain Chop Suey .....35 大行雜
Chinese Mushrooms, Bean Sprouts, Onions, Celery, Pork, or Beef.

Tai Yat Chop Suey ....45 第一雜
Same as above with Water Chestnuts, extra fine.

Chop Kam Chop Suey .50 什錦雜
Extra fine cut Chicken Meat, Broiled Pork and Green Peppers, as above.

Shrimp Chop Suey ....45 蝦肉雜

Crab Chop Suey .....55 蟹肉雜

Li Hong Chong Chop Suey .....60 李鴻章
Pork, Chicken Meat, Chinese Mushrooms, Bean Sprouts, Onion, Celery, Water Chestnut, Bamboo Shoots.

Chicken Chop Suey ....80 嫩鷄雜
Same as above with extra Chicken, Broiled Pork and White Mushrooms.

Mushroom Chicken Chop Suey .....1.25 毛菰鷄雜
Same as above, extra fine, cut Chicken cooked together.

Almond Chicken Chop Suey .....1.25 杏仁鷄雜
Chicken Chop Suey, same as above with Almonds.

Pineapple Chicken Chop Suey .....1.25 波蘿鷄雜
Same as above with Pineapple.

BOILED NOODLES 麵

(In Soup)

Yako Min .....20 淨 麵
Noodles with Roast Pork and Egg.

Chop Suey Min .....35 雜碎麵
Noodles with Chop Suey.

Chicken Noodle .....30 鷄 麵
Noodles with fine cut Chicken Meat.

Duck Noodle .....30 鴨腿麵
Noodles with Broiled Duck.

Gai Woh Min .....60 鷄窩麵
Noodles with Chicken and Broiled Pork, Water Chestnut, Bamboo Shoots and Chinese Mushrooms.

EGGS 蛋

Chop Suey Dun .....45 雜碎蛋
Omelette with mixture of Meat and Vegetables.

Foo Young Dun .....40 芙蓉蛋
Omelette with Onion and Bamboo Shoots.

Cha Siu Dun .....45 叉燒蛋
Omelette with Broiled Meat.

Foyung Ha .....50 芙蓉蝦
Omelette with Shrimps.

Foyung Hai .....55 芙蓉蟹
Omelette with Crab.

Foyung Gai .....65 芙蓉鷄
Omelette with Chicken.

RICE 晏仔

Plain Rice .....10 大 晏
" " " Small ..05 細 晏

Fried Rice .....35 炒冷飯
Rice fried with Broiled Pork, Green Onion and Egg.

Shrimp Fried Rice ....45 炒蝦肉飯
Same as above, extra Shrimps.

Chicken Fried Rice ....55 炒鷄絲飯
Same as above, and Chicken.

Positively no service less than 20c.

Figure 2.32. Frist page of the menu of the Far East Cafe, circa 1930s. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.

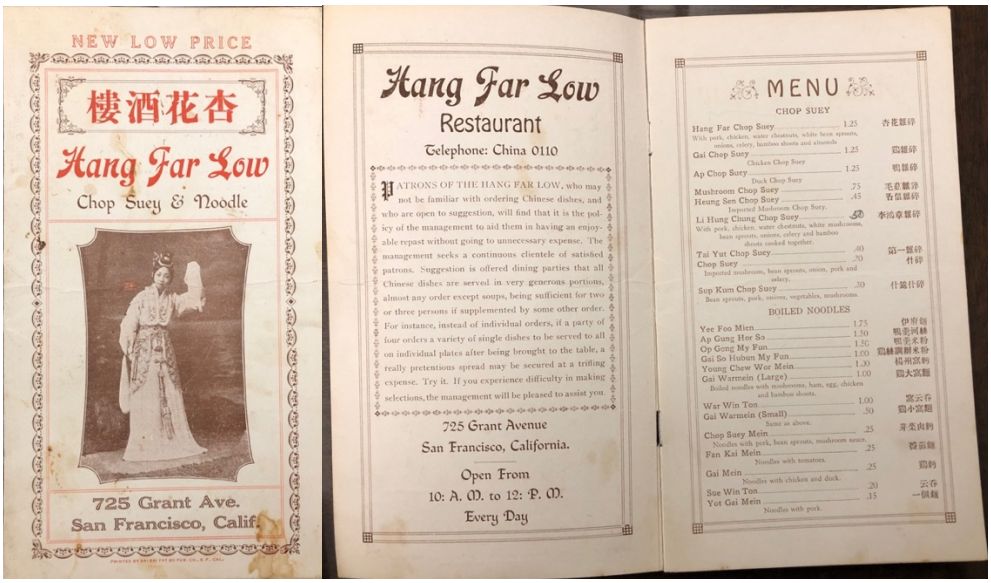


Figure 2.33. Hang Far Low menu, 1939. California Menu Collection (San Francisco), D-Hov, California Historical Society.

Figure 2.34. American dishes listed in the Far East Cafe's menu, American Dishes, circa 1930s. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.

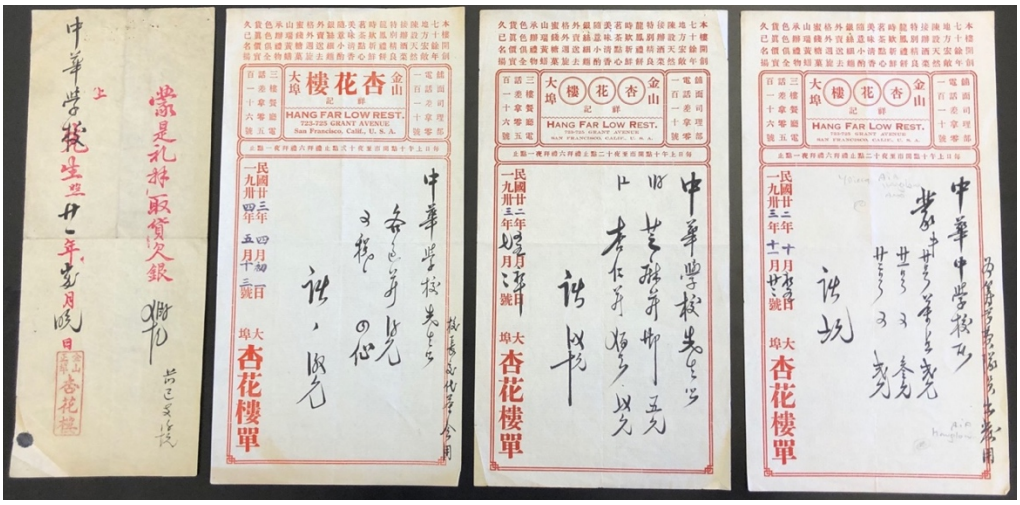
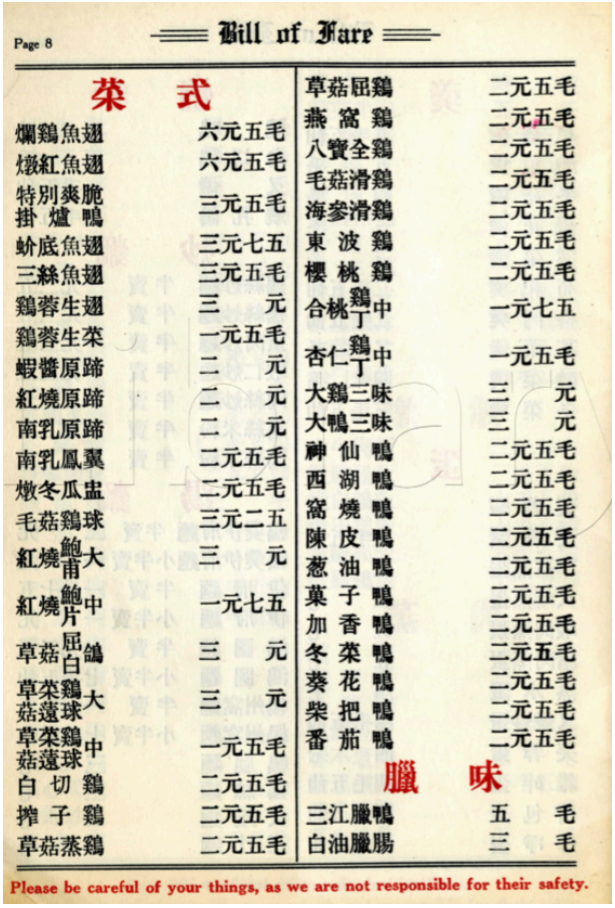


Figure 2.35. Hang Far Low Restaurant receipts, 1933-1934. [BANC MSS 2004/472 c], Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Page 8

Bill of Fare

菜式

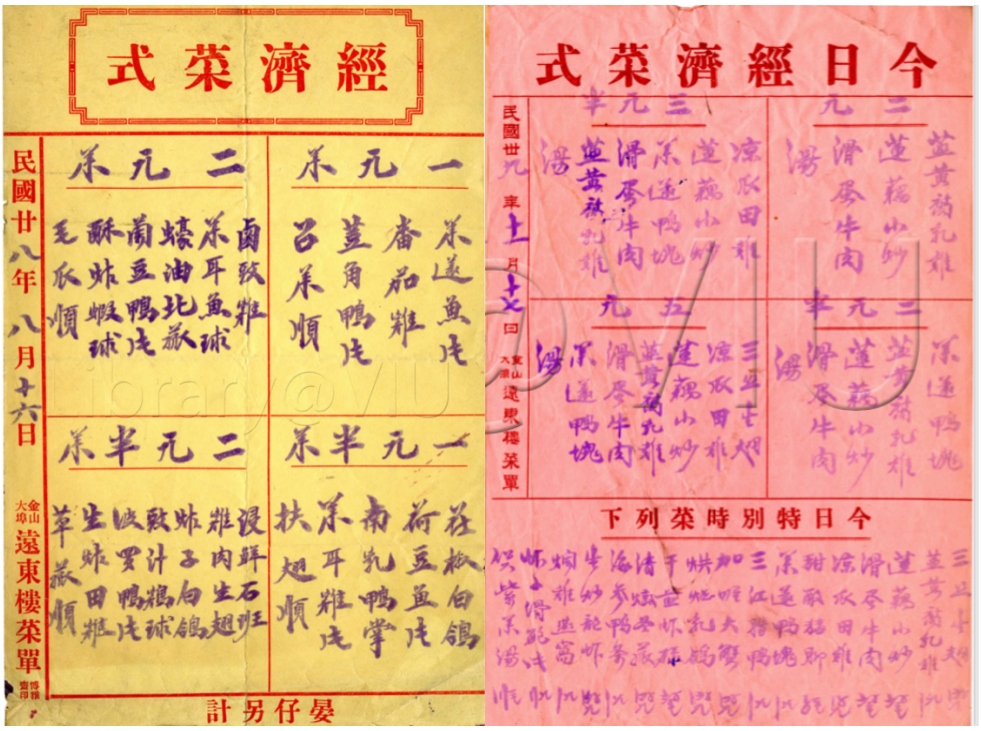
爛鷄魚翅	六元五毛
燉紅魚翅	六元五毛
特別爽脆掛爐鴨	三元五毛
蚧底魚翅	三元七五
三絲魚翅	三元五毛
鷄蓉生翅	三　元
鷄蓉生菜	一元五毛
蝦醬原蹄	二　元
紅燒原蹄	二　元
南乳原蹄	二　元
南乳鳳翼	二元五毛
燉冬瓜盅	二元五毛
毛菇鷄球	三元二五
紅燒大鮑甫	三　元
紅燒中鮑片	一元七五
草菇屈白鴿	三　元
草菜菇蕩鷄球大	三　元
草菜菇蕩鷄球中	一元五毛
白切鷄	二元五毛
搾子鷄	二元五毛
草菇蒸鷄	二元五毛
草菇屈鷄	二元五毛
燕窩鷄	二元五毛
八寶全鷄	二元五毛
毛菇滑鷄	二元五毛
海參滑鷄	二元五毛
東波鷄	二元五毛
櫻桃鷄	二元五毛
合桃鷄丁中	一元七五
杏仁鷄丁中	一元五毛
大鷄三味	三　元
大鴨三味	三　元
神仙鴨	二元五毛
西湖鴨	二元五毛
窩燒鴨	二元五毛
陳皮油鴨	二元五毛
葱油鴨	二元五毛
菓子鴨	二元五毛
加香鴨	二元五毛
冬菜鴨	二元五毛
葵花鴨	二元五毛
柴把鴨	二元五毛
番茄鴨	二元五毛

臘味

三江臘鴨	五　毛
白油臘腸	三　毛

Please be careful of your things, as we are not responsible for their safety.

Figure 2.36. The section on featured dishes (菜式) of the Far East Cafe's menu, circa 1930s. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.



Figures 2.37. and 2.38. Chinese daily special menu (family style) of the Far East Cafe, 1939 and 1950. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.

Figure 2.39. English daily special menu of the Far East Cafe (family style) of the Far East Cafe, 1950. Imogene Lim Restaurant Menu Collection.

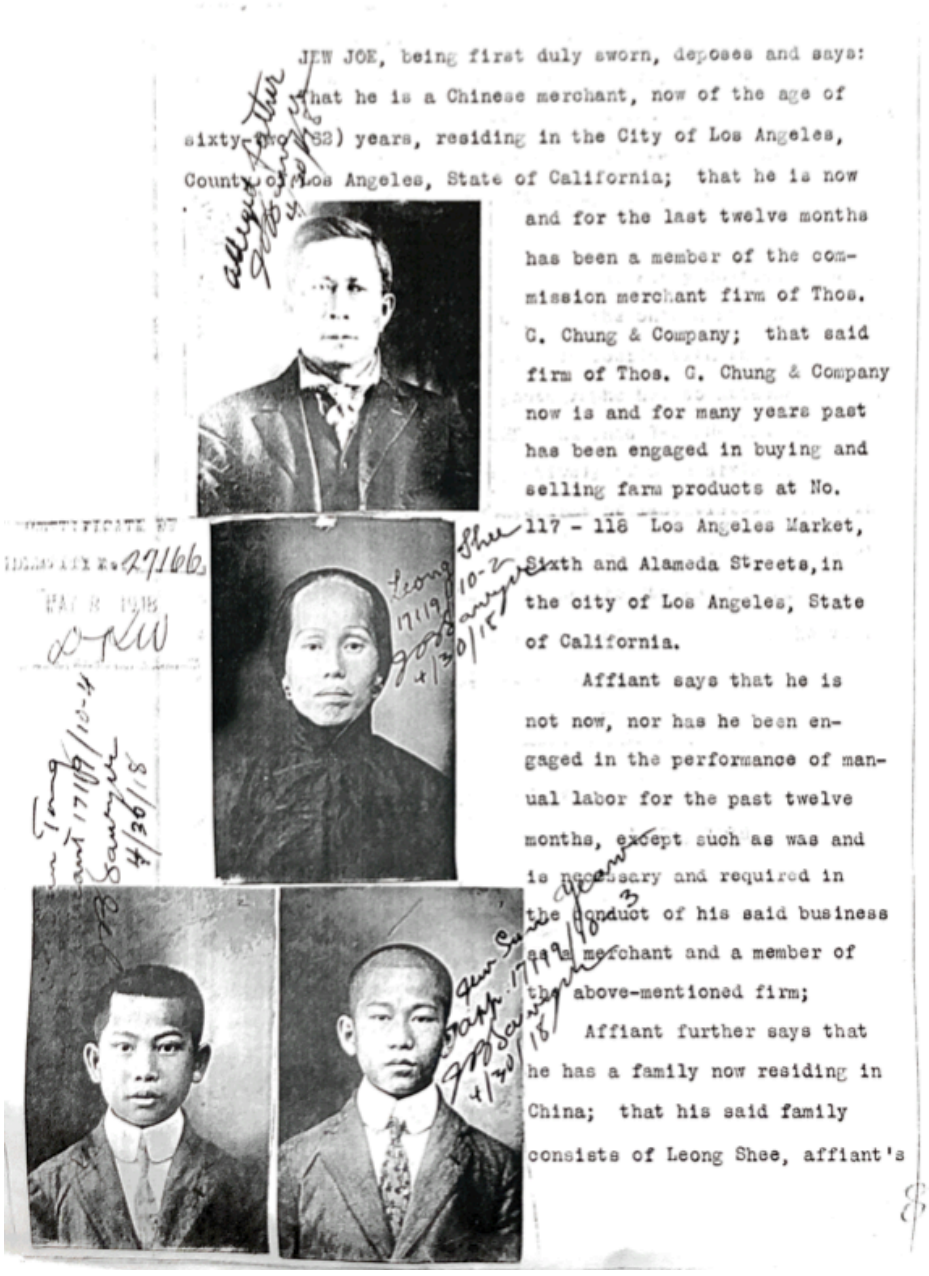
Figure 3.1. Portrait of Jue Joe. Jue Family Collection. Courtesy of Soo-Yin Jue.

Partnership List of
THOMAS G. CHUNG & CO.,
778 Central Ave.,
Los Angeles, Cal.

Name in English.	Signature in Chinese.	Am't of Interest.	Date of Acquisition.	Present Occupation and Location.
Thomas G. Chung		One third	July, 1911.	Silent Partner. Now in China.
Gage Wong.	黃才公	One third	July, 1914.	Manager of said business; address, 520 N. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, Cal.
Jew Joe	趙左	One third	September, 1916.	Buyer and Salesman for said firm. Address, 765 N. Alameda St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Gage Wong.
Manager.

Figure 3.2. Partnership list of Thomas G. Chung & Co. Leong Shee, Chinese Exclusion Act Case File no. 17119, The National Archives at San Francisco.



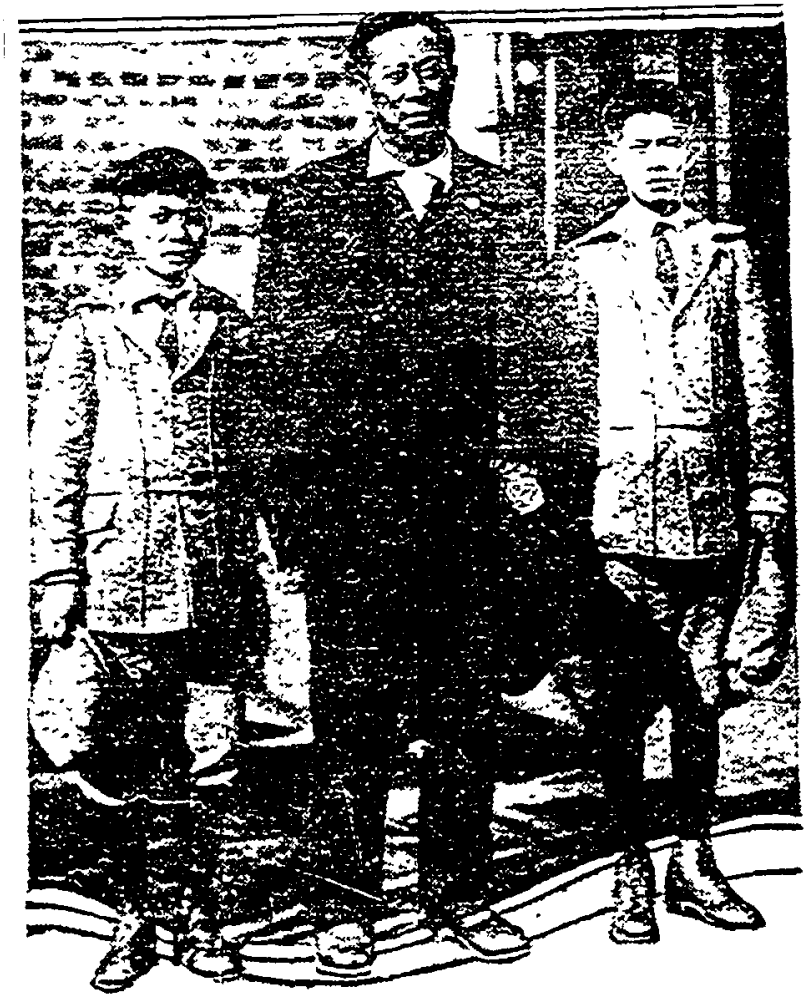
JEW JOE, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: that he is a Chinese merchant, now of the age of sixty-two (62) years, residing in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California; that he is now and for the last twelve months has been a member of the commission merchant firm of Thos. C. Chung & Company; that said firm of Thos. C. Chung & Company now is and for many years past has been engaged in buying and selling farm products at No. 117 - 118 Los Angeles Market, Sixth and Alameda Streets, in the city of Los Angeles, State of California.

Affiant says that he is not now, nor has he been engaged in the performance of manual labor for the past twelve months, except such as was and is necessary and required in the conduct of his said business as a merchant and a member of the above-mentioned firm;

Affiant further says that he has a family now residing in China; that his said family consists of Leong Shee, affiant's

Figure 3.3. Documentation of Leong Shee, San Tong, and San You entering America, 1918. With merchant status, Jue Joe was able to sponsor his family to come to America. Leong Shee Chinese Exclusion Act Case File, no.17119, The National Archives at San Francisco.

An Oriental Reunion in the Occident.



Jue Joe (center) and his two sons.

They are: left, Jue Sun Tong, 13 years of age, and right, Jue Sun You, 15.

After Many Years.

DADDY WELCOMES FAMILY FROM ACROSS THE SEAS.

Figure 3.4. Portrait of Jue Joe and his two sons in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1918, II2.

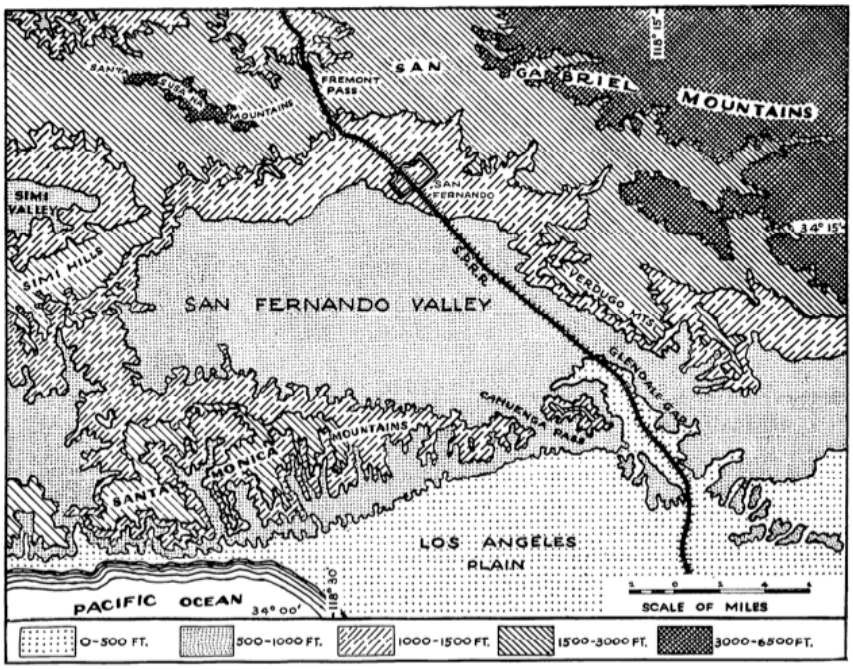
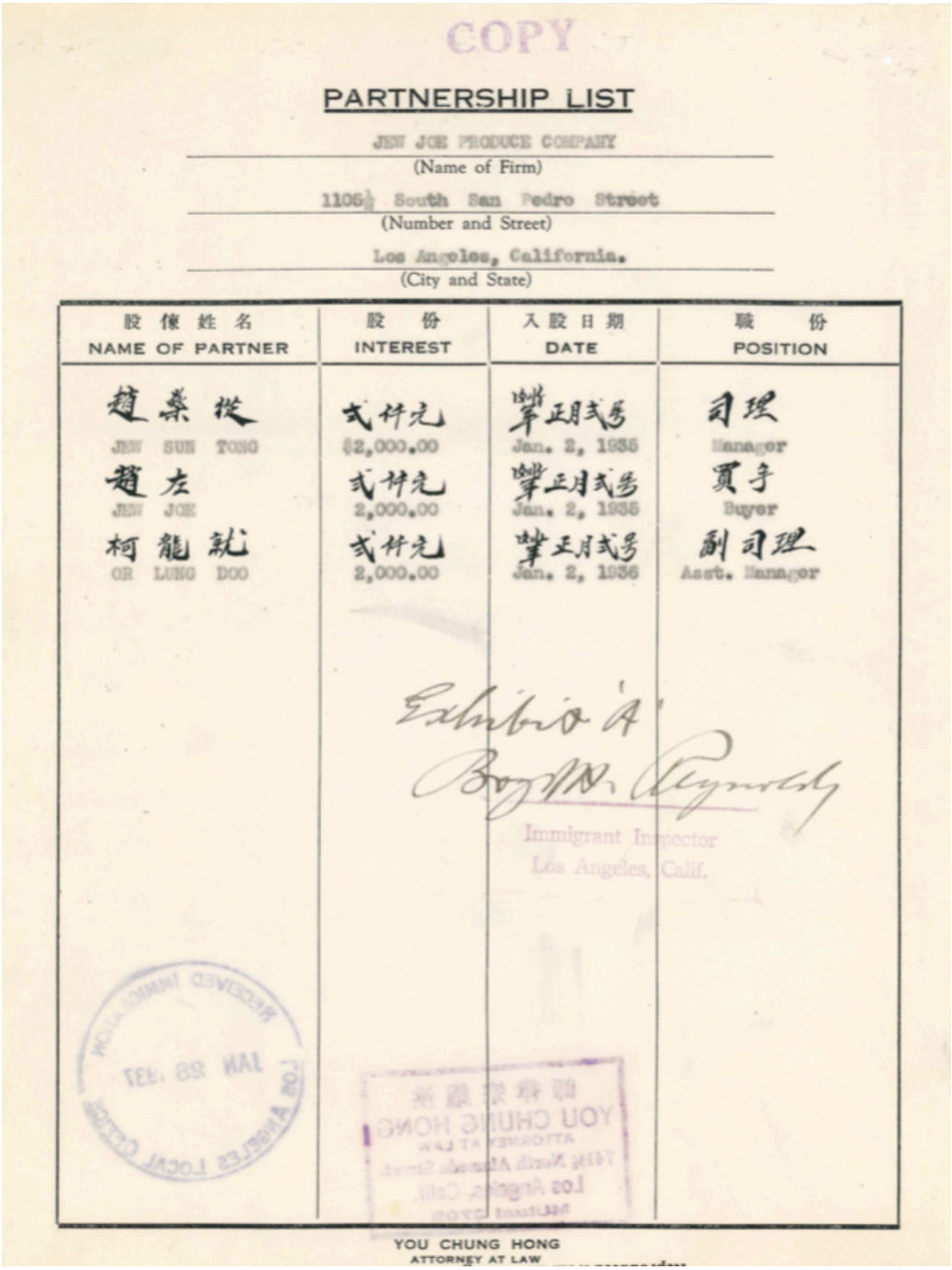


Figure 3.5. The San Fernando Valley in relation to the surrounding major physiographic features in Zierer, "San Fernando—A Type of Southern California Town," 2.

Figure 3.6. Jue Joe Company's universal no.1 logo. Jue Family Collection. Courtesy of Soo-Yin Jue.



COPY

PARTNERSHIP LIST

JEW JOE PRODUCE COMPANY
(Name of Firm)

1105½ South San Pedro Street
(Number and Street)

Los Angeles, California.
(City and State)

股像姓名 NAME OF PARTNER	股份 INTEREST	入股日期 DATE	職份 POSITION
趙桑從 JEW SUN TONG	式仟元 $2,000.00	肇正月式号 Jan. 2, 1935	司理 Manager
趙左 JEW JOE	式仟元 2,000.00	肇正月式号 Jan. 2, 1935	買手 Buyer
柯龍就 OR LUNG DOO	式仟元 2,000.00	肇正月式号 Jan. 2, 1936	副司理 Asst. Manager

Exhibit 'A'

Immigrant Inspector
Los Angeles, Calif.

RECEIVED IMMIGRATION
JAN 28 1937
LOS ANGELES LOCAL OFFICE

YOU CHUNG HONG
ATTORNEY AT LAW

YOU CHUNG HONG
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Figure 3.7. Jew Joe Company partnership list. Jew Sun Tong Chinese Exclusion Act Case File, no. 14036, The National Archives at Riverside.

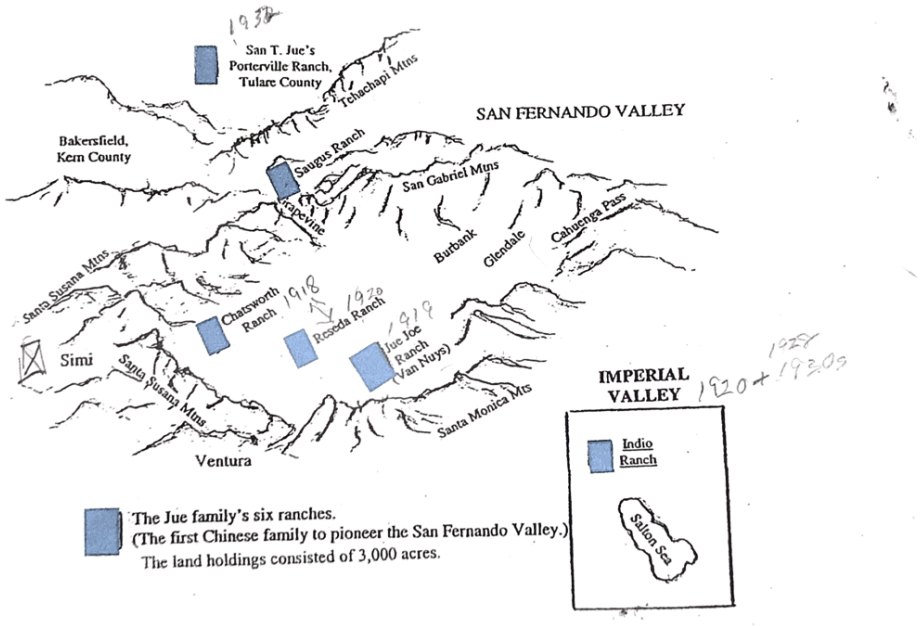


Figure 3.8 The six ranches the Jue family operated. Jue Family Collection. Courtesy of Soo-Yin Jue.

Figure 3.9. 1928 aerial photograph of Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley. The Jue Joe Ranch is highlighted in red. Annotated by author, Map Collection, California State University, Northridge.

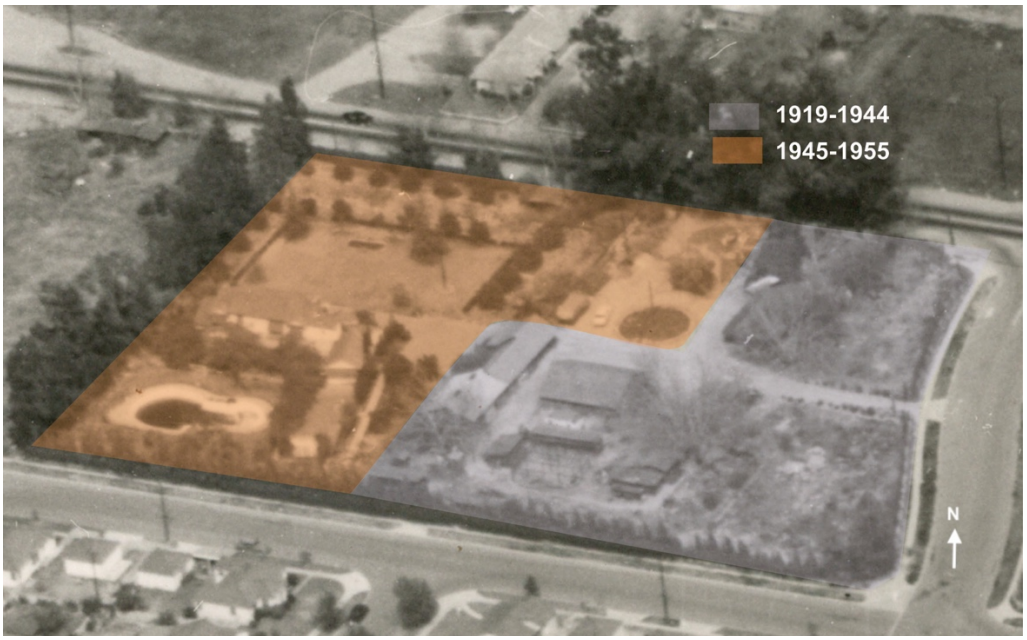


Figure 3.10. Jue Joe Ranch Homestead's two eras. Annotated by author based on a 1955 aerial photograph. Map Collection, California State University, Northridge.

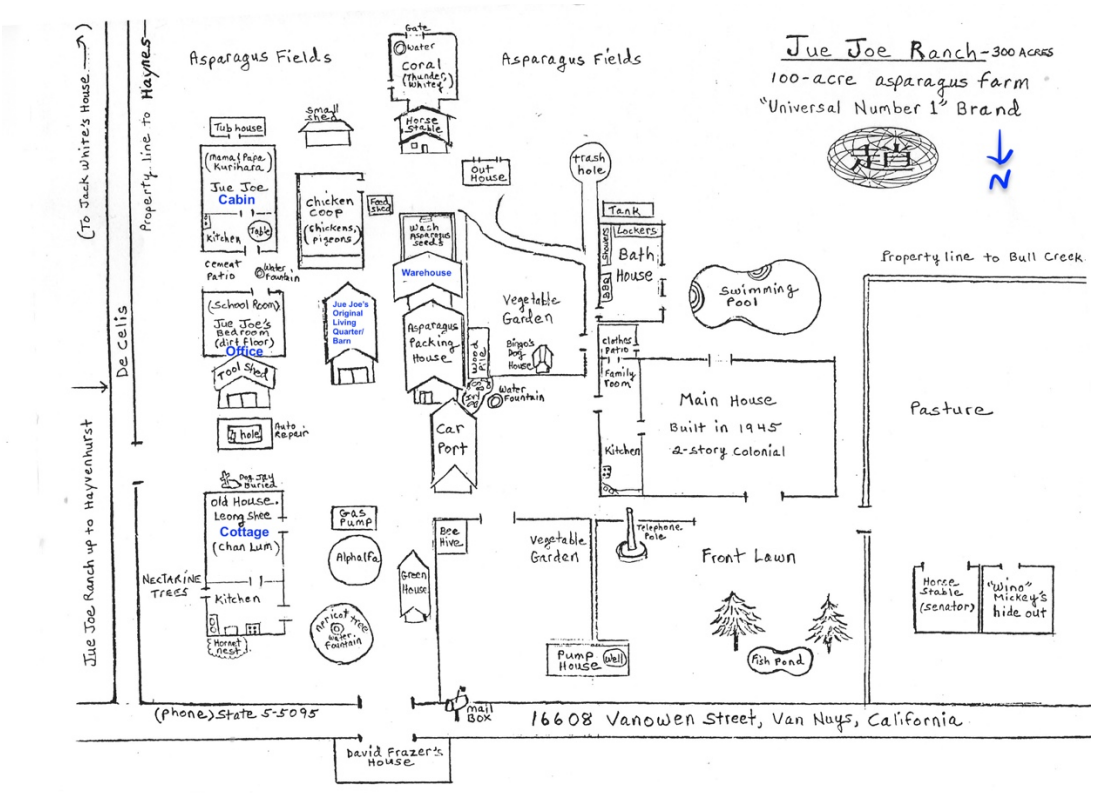


Figure 3.11. Site plan of the Jue Joe Ranch homestead in Van Nuys in the 1950s. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.12. The main house and other structures on the Jue Joe Ranch, including a swimming pool, a bath house in the foreground, as well as Leong Shee's cottage, the horse barn, and the asparagus packing house in the back, circa 1947. Courtesy of Jack Jue, Jr. Jue Family Collection.

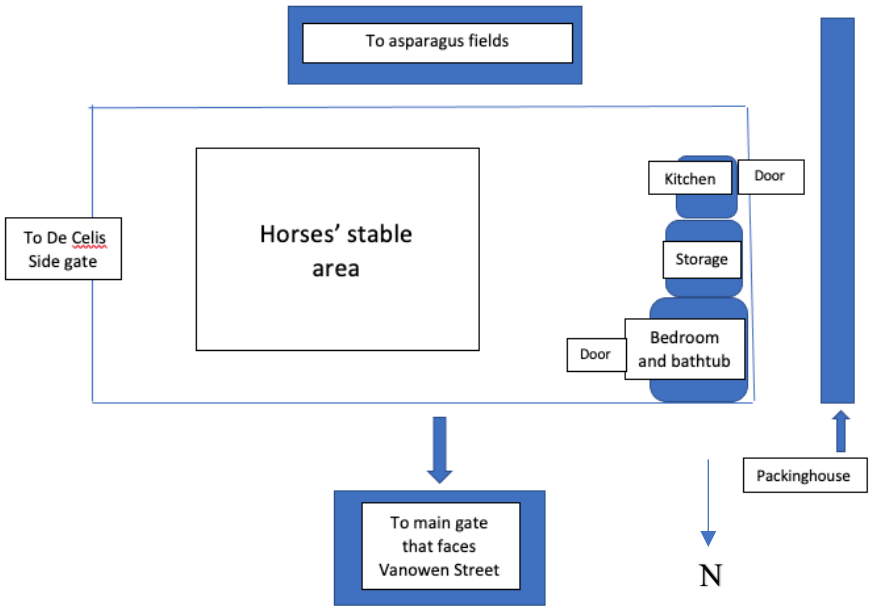


Figure 3.13. The floor plan of the horse barn / Jue Joe's original living quarter. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

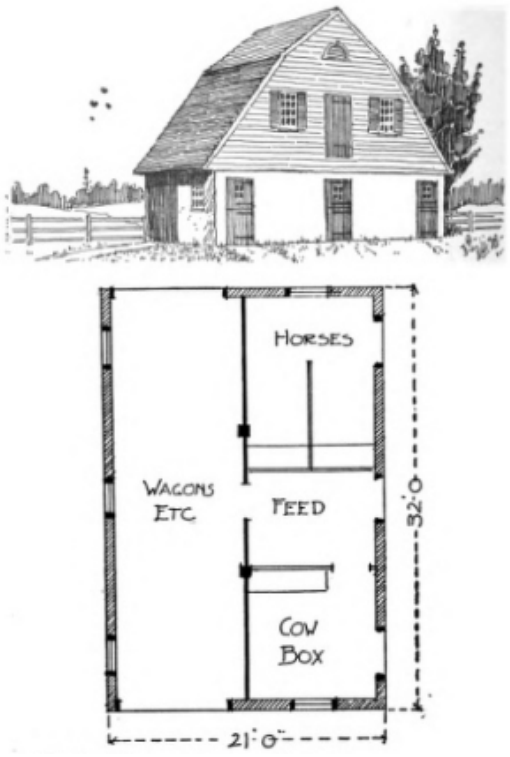


Figure 3.14. A drawing and floor plan of a small barn, quoted in Brinckloe, *The Small Home*, 210.

Figure 3.15. Jue Joe Compound in San Gong Village, Sunwui, Guangdong Province, China, 2019. Photo by author.

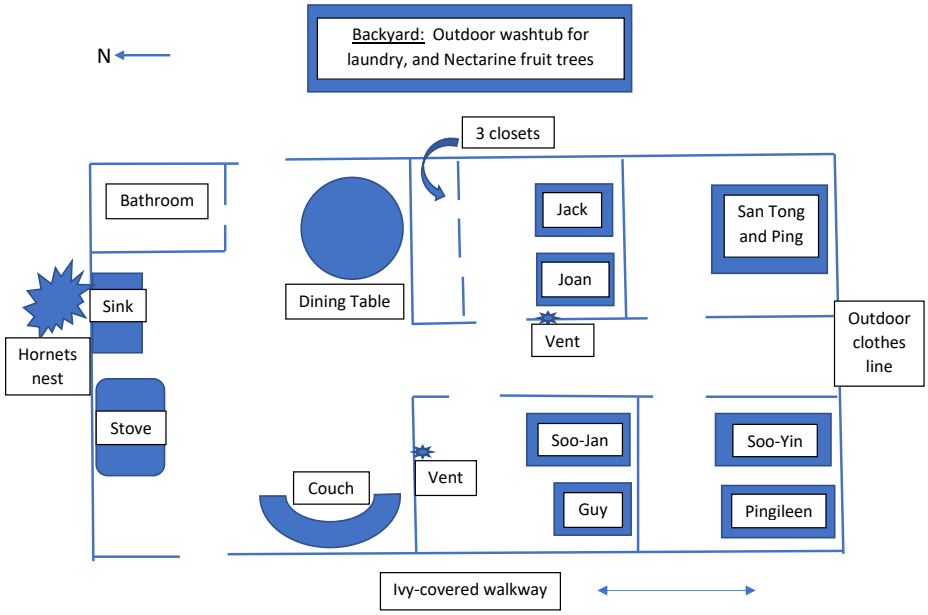


Figure 3.16. Floor plan of Leong Shee's Cottage. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

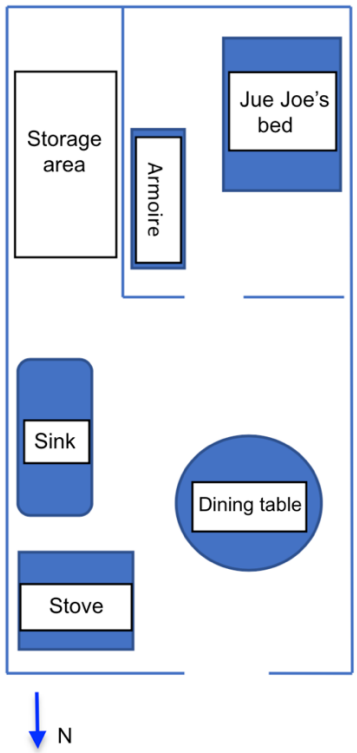


Figure 3.17. Jue Joe's Cabin. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.18. The main house on the Jue Joe Ranch, circa 1949. Courtesy Jack Jue, Jr.. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.19. George O. Chapman mentioned in *The Van Nuys News*, April 25, 1930, 13.

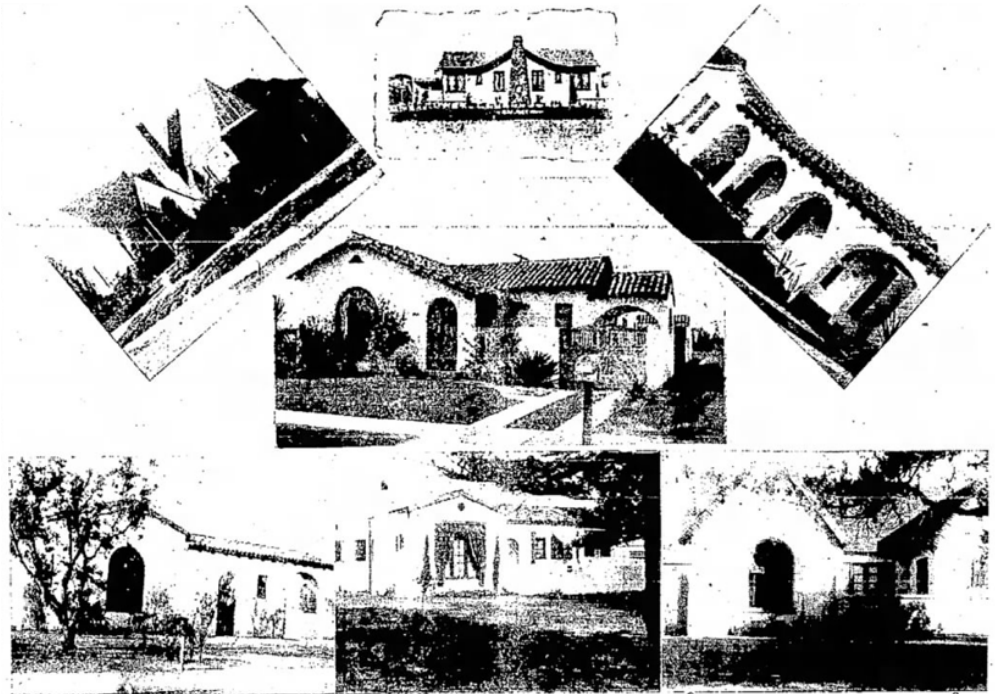


Figure 3.20. Ideal homes in Van Nuys promoted in *The Van Nuys News*, April 25, 1930, 12.

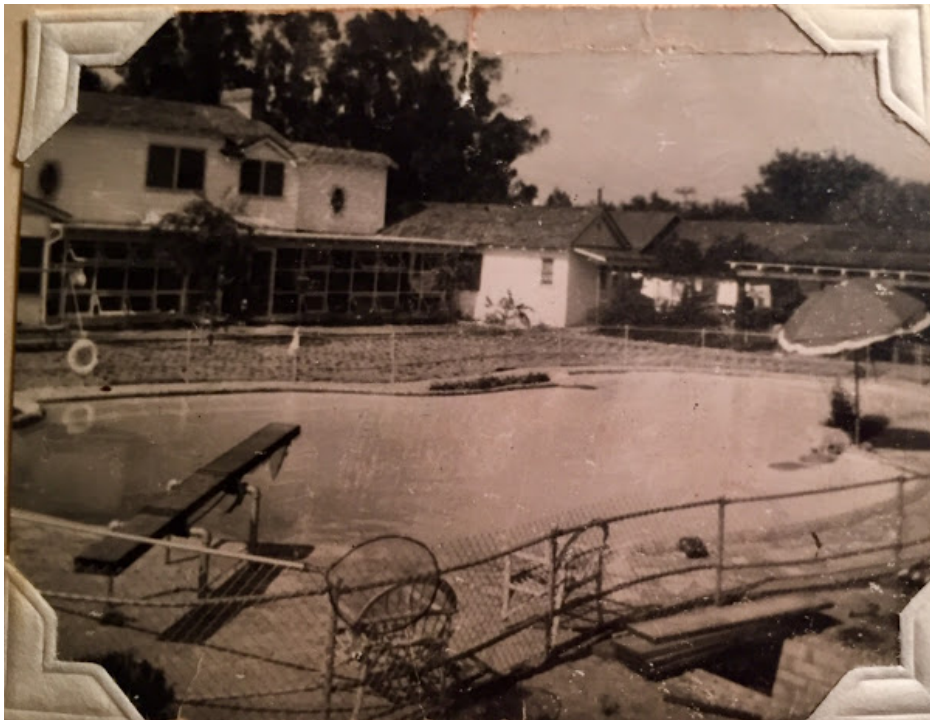


Figure 3.21. Swimming pool. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.22. Pool party in the back yard of the main house. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.23. Soo-Yin and Pingeleen Jue dancing as hula girls by the pool. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.24. Ping and her four children by the fish pond near Vanowen Street, standing facing the main house, early 1950s. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.25. Soo-Yin Jue posing in front of the fish pond, late 1950s. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.26. Joan Jue and her two children, Bob and Jenny, standing in front of the “Fook” engraved front door. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.27. A typical Fook banner in China. “对联如何区分左右，哪个是上联、下联，为什么,” Digital Image, 网易, Dec 31, 2020, assessed Nov 24, 2021, https://www.163.com/dy/article/FV6FIQBF0544AFUI.html.

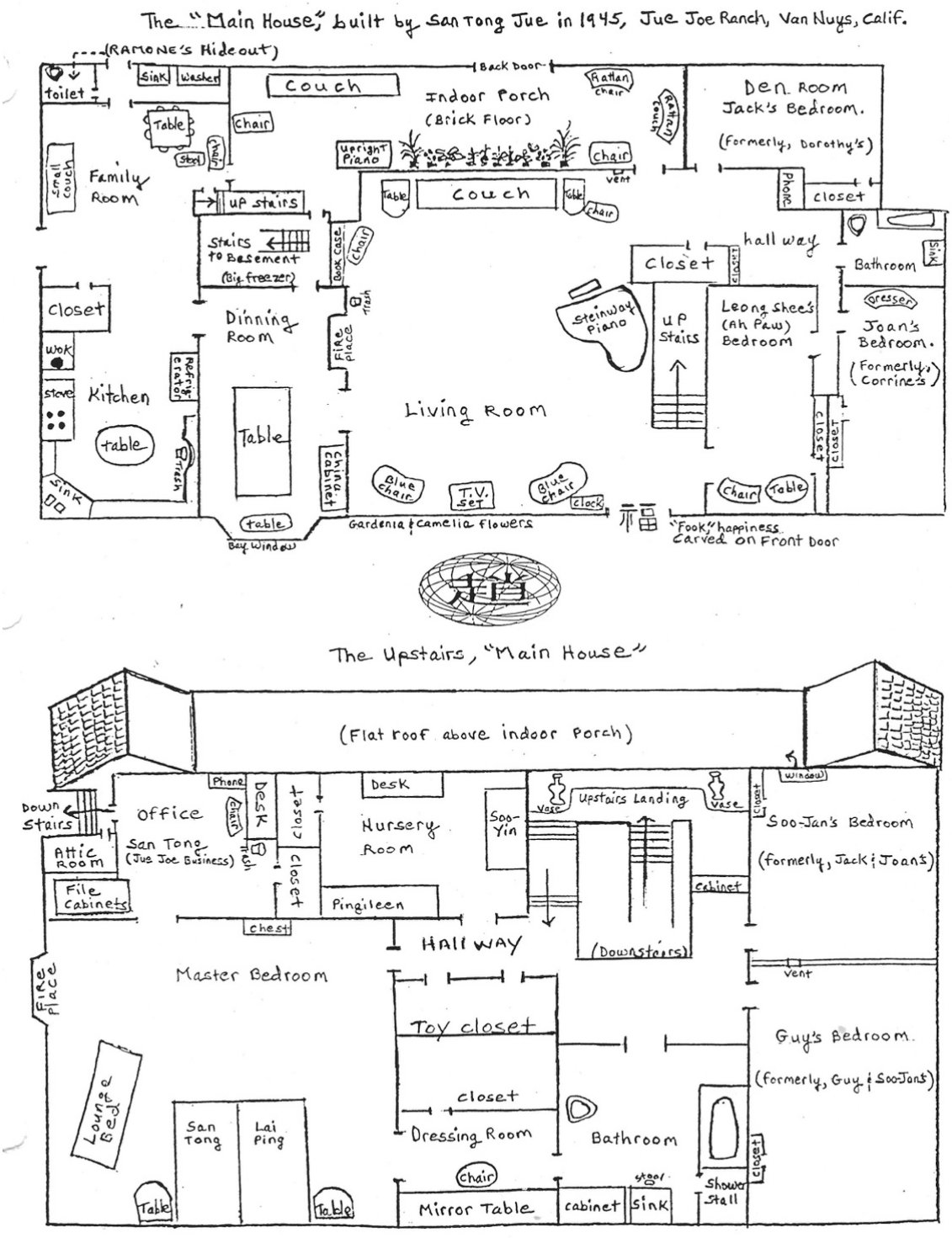


Figure 3.28. Floor plans of the main house with details. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.29. Tall 3-foot porcelain vase, originally displayed in upstairs' landing area. Courtesy of Soo-Jan Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.30. Daily eating in the family room. Jue Family Collection.

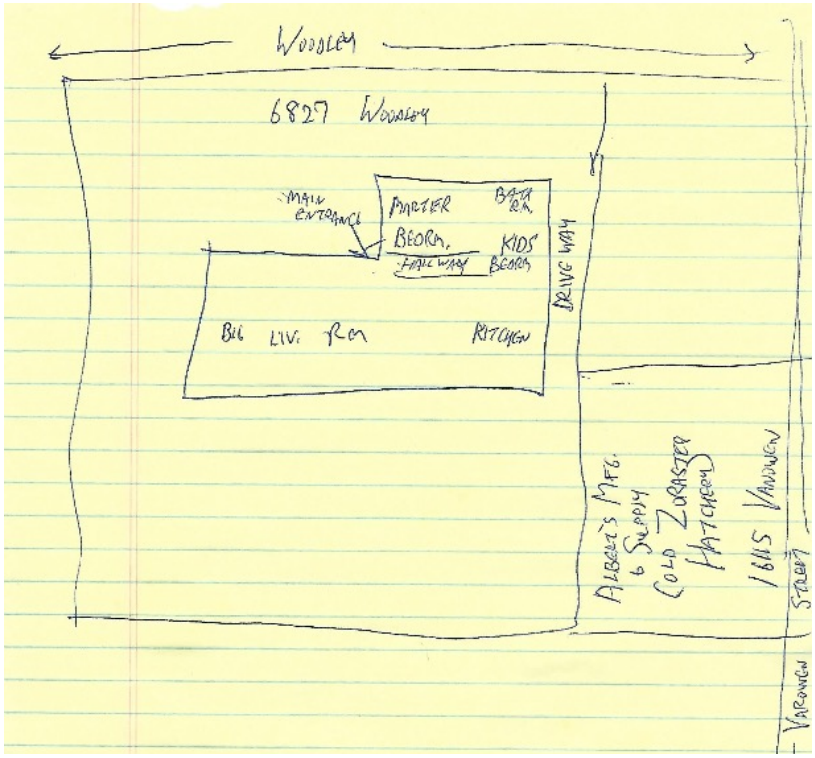


Figure 3.31. Floor plan of David Zoraster's house, also designed by George Chapman. Drawn by David Zoraster.

Figure 3.32. Living room during Christmas. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.33. Original Steinway & Sons piano bought by San Tong around 1950. Courtesy of Soo-Jan Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.34. Ping sitting by the front staircase. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.35. Porcelain “Goddess of Mercy” (Kwanyin) San Tong and Ping bought in San Francisco around 1938. Courtesy of Soo-Jan Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.36. Porcelain vase San Tong and Ping Brought from China in 1937. Courtesy of Soo-Jan Jue. Jue Family Collection.

Figure 3.37. A Chinese lantern, 2020. Photo by author.

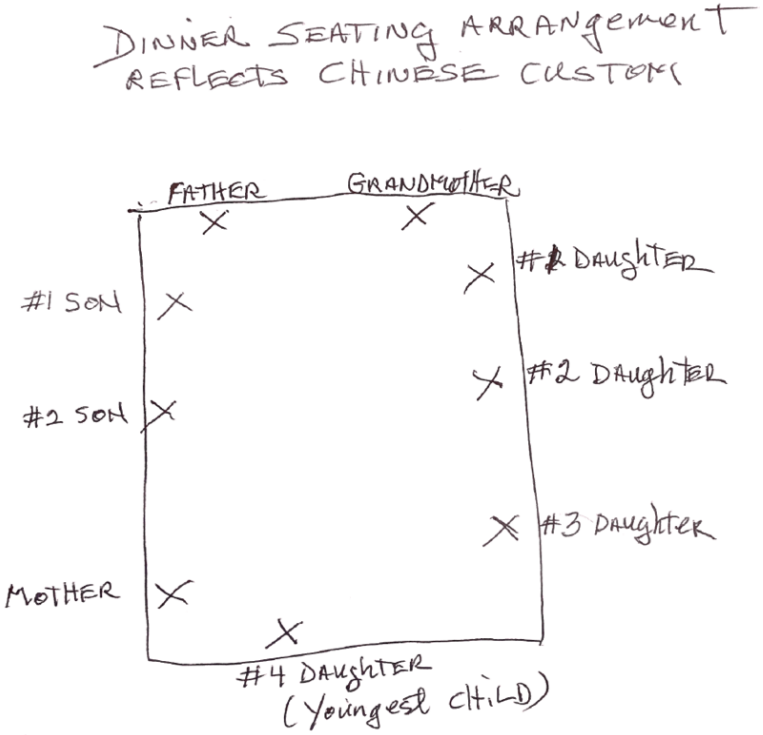


Figure 3.38. Dining seating chart in the family room. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

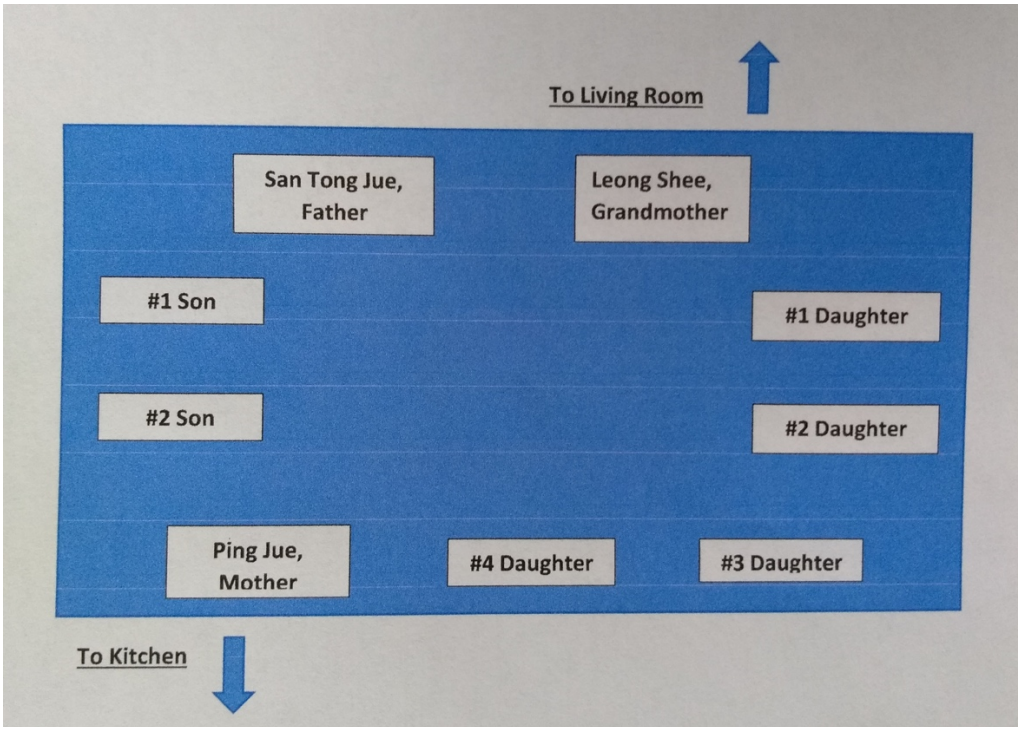


Figure 3.39. Dining seating chart in the formal dining room. Drawn by Soo-Yin Jue. Jue Family Collection.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

HONGYAN YANG

EDUCATION

PhD, **Architecture**, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, expected Dec 2021
Major: Racial Formation and Ethnic Landscapes in the United States
Minors: Anthropology of Foodways; Material Culture of Home in the U.S., 1800-1945
Dissertation: "Built for Food: The Resistance of Chinese Immigrants from Service to Ownership, 1889-1960"

MS, **Human Geography**, Beijing Normal University, 2013

BS, **Urban and Rural Planning & Resource Management**, East China Normal University, 2010

BA, **English**, East China Normal University, 2010

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Immigrant placemaking, global Asian architectural history, ethnic food landscapes
Asian American history, theories of race and ethnicity, foodways, material culture
Multidisciplinary methods, community-centered research

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant (part-time) 2021-Present
Department of History, University of California-Irvine

Lecturer 2020-Present
Department of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

ARCH 190: East Asian Architecture: A Global Perspective (Fall 2020 & 2021)
• Develop a fundamental understanding of the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary aspects of East Asian architecture in relation to Asian and Asian American histories

ARCH 190: Food and Architecture (Spring 2020)
• Examine food spaces from a wide array of fields such as Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, and Material Culture Studies

Teaching Assistant 2014-2018
Department of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

ARCH 305: Introduction to Building Technologies (Fall 2014)
ARCH 302: Architecture & Human Behavior (Spring 2015, Spring 2016)
ARCH 104: Architectural Thinking II (Spring 2018)
ARCH 102: Architectural Thinking I (Fall 2015, Fall 2016, Fall 2017)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapters

Yang, Hongyan. "Toy's Chinese Restaurants: Exploring the Political Dimension of Race through the Built Environment." In *American Chinese Restaurants: Society, Culture and Consumption*, edited by Jenny Banh and Haiming Liu, 285-300. New York: Routledge, 2020.

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Journal Articles

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Fang, Man and Hongyan Yang. "Developments in Emergency Industry and Industrialization in China." *Procedia Engineering* 43 (2012): 379-386.

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Kong, Xiang, Junjie Qian and Hongyan Yang. "The Exploration of the Influences of Local Cultures on Cultural and Creative Clusters: A Case Study of 798 and M50 Art Districts." *Commentary on Cultural Industry in China*, 15 (2011): 366-380.

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Yang, Hongyan. "Making Home in America: the Jue Joe Ranch in Southern California." In preparation for *Buildings & Landscapes*.

Yang, Hongyan. "Homemaking in Displacement: The Everyday Negotiations of Hmong Immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin." In preparation for *Space and Culture: International Journal of Social Spaces*.

Yang, Hongyan. "Building and Eating Chinese: A Comparative Study of Chinese Restaurants in Milwaukee and San Francisco." In preparation for *Journal of Asian American Studies*.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Yang, Hongyan. "Madison Roadhouse Legacy "The Wonder Bar" Could Still Be Saved." Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, https://wipreservation.org/news-historic-wisconsin/madison-roadhouse-legacy-the-wonder-bar-could-still-be-saved.

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Yang, Hongyan. "Mae's house" (a Hmong-American home). Picturing Milwaukee: The 2015 Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School—Washington Park Neighborhood, http://blcfieldschool2015.weebly.com/maes-abode-of-many-generations.html.

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Yang, Hongyan. "2118 Kenilworth Place." Picturing Milwaukee: 2013 Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School—Historic Water Tower Neighborhood, http://blcfieldschool.weebly.com/kenilworth-place.html.

Yang, Hongyan. "The Villa Terrace." Picturing Milwaukee: The 2013 Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School—Historic Water Tower Neighborhood, http://blcfieldschool.weebly.com/villa-terrace3.html.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

Chakraborty, Ranjani. Interview with Hongyan Yang. "The Surprising Reason behind Chinatown's Aesthetics" Vox Media *Missing Chapter*, May 10, 2021. https://youtu.be/EiX3hTPGoCg.

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Li, Portia. Interview with Hongyan Yang. "Efforts of Fundraising and Preserving 100 Year Old Chinese Artworks Ongoing to Save Far East Café," *Wind Newspaper*, Jan 12, 2021.

FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Diversity Scholarship, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2021

Gill Family Foundation Dissertation Research Fellowship, Society of Architectural Historians, 2019 ($5,000, nominated)

Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship 2018-19, UW-Milwaukee, 2018 ($16,500 stipend, $1,000 travel award, full tuition waiver)

Pamela H. Simpson Presenter's Fellowship, Vernacular Architecture Forum, 2016 ($500)

Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship 2013–14 (12 awardees university-wide), UW-Milwaukee, 2013 ($13,750 stipend, $1,000 travel award, full tuition waiver)

Continent Chinese Government Scholarship, China Scholarship Council, 2013 ($72,000, declined)

National Scholarship of China (2 awardees school-wide), Ministry of Education of China, 2013 (¥20,000)

Academic Competition Scholarship, Beijing Normal University, 2012

Graduate Student Fellowship 2010-13, Beijing Normal University (full tuition waiver and ¥12,600 stipend)

Distinguished Student Scholarship, East China Normal University, 2009 (¥2,000)

Distinguished Student Scholarship, East China Normal University, 2008 (¥1,500)

National Inspirational Scholarship, Ministry of Education of China, 2007 (¥5,000)

Distinguished Student Scholarship, East China Normal University, 2007 (¥1,500)

AWARDS AND HONORS

Chancellor's Graduate Student Award, Department of Architecture, UW-Milwaukee, 2021

The Emergency Student Fund Award, Institute of International Education, 2020 ($2,500)

Three Minute Thesis Competition, Finalist, UW-Milwaukee, 2018

The Sophie Coe Prize (the world's best prize for writing on food history), Honorable Mention (1 awardee), 2017

Ambassadors Award, Vernacular Architecture Forum, 2015 ($450)

Chancellor's Award, UW-Milwaukee, 2013 ($2,500)

University Commencement Honors (3 awardees schoolwide), Beijing Normal University, 2013

Committee Award for Excellence in Area Studies (1 awardee), Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, 2012 ($500)

Comprehensive Performance Award, Beijing Normal University, 2012

The 19th Scientific & Technological Competition, Third Prize, Beijing Normal University, 2011

National Higher Geography Education Field Work Competition of China, Second Prize, the Geographical Society of China, 2009 (¥2,000)

Undergraduate Honors Thesis (2 awardees department-wide), East China Normal University, 2009

The 17th Scientific & Technological Competition, Third Prize, East China Normal University, 2008

RESEARCH AND TRAVEL GRANTS FOR CONFERENCES

2021-2022 American Architecture and Landscape Field Trip Grant, co-author with the Chinese Historical Society of America, Society of Architectural Historians, 2021 ($5,000, in prep)

Virtual Conference Registration Grant, Gill Family Foundation, Society of Architectural Historians, 2020 ($100)

Ph.D. in Architecture Program Travel Grant, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UW-Milwaukee, 2019 ($450)

Graduate Student Travel Award, Graduate School, UW-Milwaukee, 2019 ($1,000)

Graduate Student Travel Award, Graduate School, UW-Milwaukee, 2016 ($1,000)

Ph.D. in Architecture Program Travel Grant, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UW-Milwaukee, 2016 ($200)

Ph.D. in Architecture Program Travel Grant, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UW-Milwaukee, 2015 ($200)

Student Travel Grants of the 76th Annual Meeting of Association of Pacific Coast Geographers (APCG), 2013 ($200)

Student Travel Grants of the 75th Annual Meeting of APCG, 2012 ($200)

Scientific Shop Fund Project 2008–09 (Principal Investigator), East China Normal University, 2008 (¥2,500)

INVITED TALKS

"A Chinese New Year Celebration: American Chinese Restaurants" for edited book *American Chinese Restaurants: Society, Culture and Consumption*, Chinese Historical Society of America, Virtual on Zoom, Feb 2021.

"Built for Food: Chinese Restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown," Talk Story, 1882 Foundation, Virtual on Zoom, Jan 2021.

"Preserving the Jue Joe Ranch," Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council, Virtual on Zoom, Oct 2020. "We Are What We Eat," The 5th Transcultural Dialogue, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam, Germany, Virtual on Zoom, May 2020.

"Introduction to East Asia: China: Long, Continuous & Uninterrupted Cultural Tradition", ARCH 102: Architectural Thinking I, Department of Architecture, UW-Milwaukee, Nov 2016.

"Introduction to East Asia: China: Long, Continuous & Uninterrupted Cultural Tradition", ARCH 102: Architectural Thinking I, Department of Architecture, UW-Milwaukee, Nov 2015.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Materializing Chineseness: Space, Architecture and Cultural Identity," A Joint Canadian Anthropology Society and American Anthropological Association conference, Vancouver, BC, Nov 2019.

"Building Otherness and Sameness: The Fluidity of Chinese Identities in the Built Environment," Transfers: Diffusions and Mobilities in the Built Landscapes of Asia and Beyond, Department of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong, China, May 2019.

"Toy's Chinese Restaurants: Exploring the Political Dimension of Chinese Identities through the Built Environment," The 9th International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, Vancouver, BC, Jul 2016.

"How Race Produces and Reproduces Domestic Homes: The Everyday Culinary Negotiations of Hmong Immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin," Annual Meeting of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, Durham, NC, Jun 2016.

"Exploring the Political Dimension of Race through Ethnic Restaurants," Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, CA, Apr 2016.

"Buildings as Activities: How Race Produced and Reproduced Domestic Landscapes: A Case Study of Working-Class Hmong Families in Milwaukee," Urban Studies Programs 21st Annual Student Research Forum, Milwaukee, WI, Apr 2016.

"Spatial Negotiations: Shifted Publicity and Privacy in Hmong's Everyday Domestic Landscapes," 2016 Landscape, Space, and Place Conference, Bloomington, IN, Mar 2016.

"Buildings Speak: An Incorporation of Oral History into Material Culture Studies," Oral History Association Annual Meeting, Madison, WI, Oct 2014.

"The Invisibility of the Service Spaces," The 76th Annual Meeting of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, Lake Tahoe, CA, Oct 2013.

"Art as Place and the Place as Art: Comparing the Beijing and Shanghai Art Districts," The 75th Annual Meeting of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, Olympia, WA, Oct 2012.

"Applying Place Theories to Cultural Heritage Tourism Studies," The 8th International Tourism Research Forum, Hangzhou, China, May 2012.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZING AND PANEL PARTICIPATION

Planning Committee, "Saving Wisconsin's Historic Theatres" workshop, Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, Hillside Home School, Taliesin, Spring Green, Sep 2021.

Panelist, National Impact Agenda Focus Group, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Virtual on Zoom, Jun 2021.

Co-chair with Wei Gan and Linda Wen, Symposium VIII, 1882 Foundation, Virtual on Zoom, Jun 2021.

Moderator, Focused Group Study "Stay Healthy by Eating Fish, Safely" (Studies on Asian American women), Wisconsin Department of Health Services, May 2021.

Co-chair with Aslihan Gunhan, Leslie Lodwick, Chelsea Wait and Vyta Pivo, Graduate Student Lightning Talks, Society of Architectural Historians, Virtual on Zoom, Apr 2021.

Co-chair with Kateryna Malaia, Graduate Student Lightning Talks Workshop "Architectural Epistemologies," Society of Architectural Historians, Virtual on Zoom, Mar 2021.

Panelist, Panel Discussion of the Tri-Course Collaboration and Washington Park Partnership, 21st Annual Student Research Forum, Urban Studies Program, UW-Milwaukee, Apr 2016.

FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

Chinese Restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown Aug 2018-July 2020
Examined the complex identities conveyed through the architectural details and culinary practices of four Chinese restaurants, including the Far East Café, Hang Far Low, Sing Hung Heung, and Woey Sin Low

Chinese American Homes in Los Angeles and China, 1900-1960 Mar 2018-May 2019
Studied the ranch homestead of pioneer Chinese American family—Jue family in the San Fernando Valley, California and their remittance home built in Sanjiang Village, Guangdong Province in China, exploring how the family materialized their negotiated identities through domestic architecture and food spaces as well as related spatial and culinary practices

Chinese Cooks in Middle- and Upper American Homes, 1880-1940 Sep 2017-Dec 2019
Researched the culinary and spatial practices of Chinese cooks and servants through studying an officer's quarter in Camp Reynolds, Angel Island, the Haas-Lilienthal House in San Francisco, and the Pardee Home Museum and Cohen-Bray House in Oakland

Hmong Food Landscapes and Culinary Practices in Milwaukee May 2015-May 2016
Examined three Hmong-American homes, the Hmong American Friendship Association, and the C&S Vliet Hmong Supermarket to explore how culinary practices and cultural traditions shaped the materiality and uses of the spaces

Charlie Toy's Chinese Restaurants in Milwaukee, 1913-1992 Sep 2014-Dec 2014
Explored the significance of three Chinese restaurants that were owned by the Toy family in communicating complex identities through the built environment

The American Foursquare Jan 2014-May 2014
Researched the "American Foursquare" vernacular building type in relation to architects' practices through a building designed by Milwaukee architect Charles Lesser

Seen, Unseen and the Scene: The Service Quarter May 2013-Aug 2013
Studied the spatial and architectural hierarchies between the service quarters and family living spaces of three houses in the Historic Water Tower Neighborhood, Milwaukee

Urban Migrants in Beijing (National Science Foundation of China) Oct 2009-Dec 2011
Surveyed the living, working and social conditions of urban migrants in Haidian District in Beijing to explore the impacts of migration and community on migrant identities

CREATIVE WORK AND EXHIBITIONS

"This is Washington Park. This is Milwaukee." A theatrical production based on the research by students in the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Field School. Directed by Alvaro Saar Rios. Peck School of Arts Theatre, UW-Milwaukee, Oct 12-16, 2016.

"Picturing Milwaukee: Washington Park." Exhibition curated by Arijit Sen. Artists Working in Education, Inc., Milwaukee, WI, Jul 24, 2015.

"Picturing Milwaukee: Historic Water Tower Neighborhood." Exhibition curated by Arijit Sen. Edith S. Hefter Conference Center, Milwaukee, WI, Jul 26, 2013.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CERTIFICATES

Online and Blended Teaching Certificate, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UW-Milwaukee, 2021 ($400 award).

Think About It: Graduate Students, UW-Milwaukee, 2017.

Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UW-Milwaukee, 2016.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Active Learning Certificate, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UW-Milwaukee, 2016.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATES

Successfully Navigating Section 106 Review, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

What is Section 106, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

Successfully Navigating Section 106 Review, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

Coordinating NEPA and Section 106, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

Basics of NEPA and Section 106 Integration, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

What Now? Protecting Historic Properties in Disaster Response, The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2020.

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Architectural Historian 2021-Present
Preserve, LLC. Milwaukee, WI.

Senior Researcher 2020-2021
Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation. Milwaukee, WI.

Research Assistant 2017-2018
Department of History, UW-Milwaukee.

GIS Mapping Assistant 2016
State Historic Preservation Office of Wisconsin. Madison, WI.

Natural & Cultural Resources Specialist 2013
Ministry of Land and Resources of Beijing. China.

Planner 2009-2010
Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning & Design Institute. China.

UNIVERSITY & PUBLIC SERVICE

Committee Member 2021-Present
Strategic Planning Committee, Society of Architectural Historians.

Co-founder 2017-Present
Graduate Student Resource Network, UW-Milwaukee.

Voting Member 2020-2021
Graduate Faculty Committee, Graduate School, UW-Milwaukee.

Voting Member 2017-2018
Graduate School Representative Committee, UW-Milwaukee.

LANGUAGES

Mandarin: Native fluency
English: Bilingual fluency
Cantonese: Advanced reading & intermediate speaking fluency

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Vernacular Architecture Forum
Society of Architectural Historians
Association for Asian American Studies
American Planning Association