Market Street Chinatown Feature 20
Ceramics and Glass

presented to Dr. Barbara Voss
CASA 203 – Laboratory Methods in Historical Archaeology

Liz Clevenger
Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology
Stanford University
March 16, 2004

Introduction

This paper examines the ceramic and glass assemblages from Feature 20 (85-31) of San José's Market Street Chinatown, in conjunction with my ongoing master's thesis research. The purpose of my thesis research is to undertake a holistic analysis of this feature and use the findings to evaluate the research potential of the entire Market Street collection. This will be accomplished by the accumulation of data, the exploration of problematic contextual issues like provenience, and comparison with assemblages from other urban Chinese sites in California. In addition to exploring those themes, this project also spawned a new set of research questions relating to the food practices of overseas Chinese and related material culture. These questions helped structure my analysis and interpretation efforts, and provided a clear focus for comparative research.

Chinese in San José and the Santa Clara Valley

It is against the larger background of economic opportunity, political discrimination, and tense race relations surrounding Chinese immigration that the Chinese population of the Santa Clara Valley, and their histories and experiences, must be viewed. The Chinese agricultural workers in Santa Clara held a variety of positions, from contracted day-laborers paid an average rate of one dollar per day, to sharecroppers who leased land from white owners but cultivated and tended their own crops (Young Yu 2001:9). Connie Young Yu posits that these agricultural workers shared a uniquely benevolent relationship with white agriculturalists, stating that "there was an understanding and a common language. There was the same worry over the weather, the exchange of information about horticulture, the sharing of tools, labor and land. On the

farm Chinese and whites worked the land, tended the crops and built cabins and barns together" (2001:9).

The same was largely not true, however, in the urban setting of San Jose, where the race tensions that plagued other urban Chinese communities were prevalent. The city's five successive Chinatowns provided an urban gathering point for the numerous agricultural laborers working on the farms and orchards in the Santa Clara valley hinterlands, in addition to sustaining a sizeable urban population (of as many as 532 people in 1870) (Young Yu 2001:19). These urban Chinatowns supported a variety of establishments and organizations that both community members and itinerant workers would have drawn on, including tenement houses, stores, laundries, restaurants, gambling houses, theaters, temples, tongs, and district associations. In short, San Jose's Chinatowns were the hub of social congregation, cultural activities and religious events for the Chinese population of the entire Santa Clara valley.

Market Street Chinatown

The Market Street Chinatown (1870s-1887) was built on the site of an earlier Chinatown (1860s-1870), bordering Market and San Fernando Streets near the Guadalupe River, in what is now downtown San Jose. This second Market Street Chinatown had stores, restaurants, a temple, a theater, gambling rooms, outdoor pork roasting furnaces, a washhouse, and tenement houses (Young Yu 2001:22). Both men and women lived in the Market Street community, including some married couples and couples with children (Young Yu 2001:24). Some members of the community were merchants and store owners, and would have been relatively wealthy in comparison to the "bachelor" worker population who resided in the tenement houses. Market Street was

destroyed by arson in 1887, following increased anti-Chinese sentiment in San Jose. The Chinese population split between the Woolen Mills Chinatown and Heinlenville, and the Market Street site was subsumed by development of the city center.

Excavation and Collection History

The Market Street Chinatown site was excavated by a cultural resource management firm in two major episodes during 1985 and 1986, during redevelopment of San Jose's city center. Archaeological Resource Services (ARS) was contracted by the City of San José Redevelopment Agency to do monitoring and rapid recovery excavation.

Excavation conditions on site were poor. Unfortunately, a number of features (85-31 features 3-9) appear to have been destroyed by construction activities beyond the control of the archaeologists (Flynn and Roop, personal communication). In order to expedite the excavation process and decrease on-site delays, burlap bags were filled with unsorted soil matrix, and trucked to the ARS lab off-site for screening.

Following excavation, the bags of matrix that had been removed from site were washed, sorted and partially cataloged by ARS at their lab in Novato. However, additional post-field archaeological research was hindered by monetary and legal problems. As a result, no thorough, systematic analysis of the entire assemblage was ever completed before the collection went into storage.

In 1989, ARS transferred the collection to the City of San José Redevelopment Agency, who subsequently put it in storage in a warehouse. During the 1990s, a small amount of work was done on the collections, including an inventory of the contents of the storage boxes, preliminary research designs, and a few other reports based on historical and documentary research (see [cite sources here]). In 2000, the City of San José

Redevelopment Agency transferred the collection to History San José, a local, non-profit historical museum.

The Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project

The Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project (MSCAP) is a joint educational/research venture between History San Jose, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, Past Forward, Inc., the Stanford University Archaeology Center, and the City of San Jose Redevelopment Agency. Conceived of by Alida Bray of History San José and Rebecca Allen of Past Forward, Inc., the goal of the project is to "catalog and analyze the collection and curate the materials in a way that they can once again be used for research and educational programs" (Voss et al. 2003:1-1).

The 2002-2003 school year was the pilot year of Stanford's participation in the project. A number of lines of research were undertaken, including cataloging and analysis of the 1985 collection and contextual research (collecting and organizing documents related to the excavation and collection). Student-generated papers included research on peck-marked ceramics, medicine-related artifacts, and opium paraphernalia. During the 2003-2004 school year, analysis and cataloging of materials from the 1986 collection commenced, and contextual research has continued.

Feature 20: Context and Assemblage

The feature I have chosen for analysis - Feature 20 from the 1985 (85-31) project - was a wood-lined pit measuring 2.6 by 1.8 meters. The historic cultural material extended about 0.9 meters below the modern asphalt and gravel surface layer, and was underlain by a deposit of culturally sterile sand and gleys (ARS 1993:13). Based on spatial analysis using Sanborn maps and ARS field maps, Feature 20 seems to have been

located nearly a known store structure (Michaels 2003). However, it is also in the vicinity of the community's temple and a number of tenement houses, so ascribing a single context to this feature is somewhat untenable.

Feature 20 contains over 300 catalog entries representing individual or batches of artifacts, making up about 5% of the 85-31 collection (based on relative number of catalog entries) (ARS 1993:22-23). Artifacts in the assemblage represent a cross-section of the entire collection, and include ceramics, glass, metal, faunal remains, organics (botanicals, leather, and textiles) and small finds (such as gaming pieces, opium paraphernalia, and toys).

This research project specifically addresses the ceramic and glass assemblages from Feature 20. Because one of my research questions focuses on food-related practices, analysis deals mostly with the food-related vessels; non-food and indefinitely classified artifacts are dealt with only summarily.

Research Design

As mentioned in the introduction, the goal of my thesis research is to evaluate the research potential of the Market Street collection. Because the history of the collection is one of poor management, rescue excavation, improper curation, and incomplete analysis, the research potential of the collection is debatable. For example, the MSCAP project commenced without knowing whether the artifacts had any provenience or associated contextual information. By conducting research on a small portion of the collection – a single feature – I hope to contribute to our understanding of the research value of this collection, including both possibilities of research we had not thought feasible as well as

any limitations in the data or contextual information.

Evaluating Research Potential: Feature 20

For the purposes of this project, I identified three crucial means for evaluating research potential. These are assessing the contextual information accompanying the artifact assemblage, determining what laboratory analysis will be practical and will yield useful information, and establishing the comparative value of the assemblage.

Context. Field notes, a few preliminary reports and letters from the 80s and 90s, and current discussions with the excavators have provided some general contextual information about the site, the excavation and previous lab work. The handwritten lab catalogs and documentation on bags and in boxes have provided a layer of contextualization closer to the artifacts themselves, including provenience documenting what feature(s) an artifact was found in, and in some cases, even basic intra-feature spatial information.

Laboratory Analysis. Both general and specialist lab analysis are relevant to the artifacts; in addition to quantification of basic data in the Stanford lab, faunal and botanical remains have been sent to external specialists for analysis. Botanical remains were retrieved during flotation of soil samples that had been saved during excavation; although results from the bot analysis are pending, the heavy fraction has already yielded a number of artifacts – tiny fish vertebrae, for example – not otherwise preserved in the collection.

Comparative Research. Using site reports from other California Chinatowns, I can compare the type and quantity of artifacts from Feature 20 with material remains from other sites. Noting similarities and differences will aid our interpretation of the

daily lives of the Market Street residents, but may also shed light on the post-depositional history of the site, and the effects of excavation and laboratory methods on the recovery of data.

Food Practices of Overseas Chinese

The topic of food-related practices of Chinese immigrants has helped structure my research in both analytical and interpretive ways. Questions relating to food storage, preparation, consumption, and discard are four main avenues for analysis of foodways. The glass and ceramic assemblages lent themselves to an analysis of food storage and food consumption in particular.

I am interested in questions such as how traditional Chinese and Euroamerican or non-Chinese artifacts were used in conjunction with each other; were non-Chinese artifacts were used to replace or enhance the Chinese assemblage? I am also interested in consumer choice ideas of how socio-economic, ethnic and cultural choices might be reflected in the ceramic and glass assemblages, and what economic scaling tells us about the occupants of Market Street whose possessions ended up in Feature 20.

Methodology

As part of the goal of evaluating research potential, amassing qualitative and especially manipulatable quantitative data was a crucial element in the research design. The following sections detail the collection and management of data analyzed in this project.

Data Collection

Data was collected in two main events. The first was the initial cataloging of

materials in 2003 and 2004 during Dr. Voss's course – CASA203: Laboratory Methods in Historical Archaeology. The 2003 class cataloged all of the ceramics from Feature 20, and the 2004 class catalogued the glass. Data collected and recorded during this process included material, description, decorative type, sherd count, weight, condition (whole/fragmented), minimum number of vessels (MNV), maker's mark, dates, and origin (where available). Data utilized from this process includes the basic classificatory scheme which is used throughout the MSCAP research projects (related to vessel waretype, decoration, and form/function), and sherd counts and weights.

The second data procurement event was a reassessment of artifact IDs and classification (with adjustments to sherd weight and count as necessary), and a recalculation of the MNV numbers. These recalculations were deemed necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the initial cataloging process was undertaken by a variety of people, many of whom were just learning how to analyze historical archaeological materials. This lead to a number instances where artifacts were mis- or under-identified. Furthermore, the cataloging system itself was adapted from another project, resulting in a number of cataloging difficulties. Secondly, certain measurements, MNV counts in particular, were likely to be overestimated because of the disjointed nature of the cataloging process. Examining the assemblages holistically allowed me to lump together sherds that were artificially separated during the cataloging process, reducing the overall MNV count. This effort focused on the food-related artifacts due to the time constraints of the project and the difficulty of establishing MNV counts for artifacts that are not positively identified. As a result, MNV data are not given for non-food and indefinite artifacts; sherd counts and sherd weights are used when comparing food, indefinite, and

non-food categories of artifacts. MNVs were calculated in a number of different ways. Where it was possible, the quantitative measures of rim or base percentage were used. Where this was not possible or conflicted with other observations, vessel form and decorative style were used to establish MNV counts. These methods are noted in the discussion of the ceramic and glass assemblages that follows.

Data Management

The data for this research project was managed in two ways. During cataloging, it was recorded on paper forms and in the computerized catalog used for the entire project. For the specific purposes of data manipulation, a number of MSExcel files were created, with tables representing queries of all Feature 20 artifacts, of glass and of ceramics, and subsets of these assemblages.

Ceramics

Non-Food and Indefinite Ceramic Artifacts

Ceramic artifacts not related to food fall into two categories: those which were either unidentified or of indefinite use, and those which were distinctly unrelated to food. Less than 10% of the total weight and sherd count of ceramics falls into these categories; approximately 2% for indefinite artifacts, and between 2-4% for non-food ceramics (Figure 1).

This latter category is comprised almost entirely of opium pipe tops. Thirteen pipe sherds are present in the collection, indicating perhaps as many as 13 vessels.[1] The total weight of these sherds is 130.8 grams. For a detailed analysis of opium-related

[1] MNV calculated during cataloging process, therefore likely inflates the number of minimum vessels present. MNVs for non-food and indefinite articles were not recalculated for this project.

artifacts and a discussion of opium use in the Market Street Chinatown, please see Bryn Williams's paper *Opium Pipe Tops at the Market Street Chinese Community in San Jose* (Williams 2003). One piece of ceramic hardware also exists; this is a drawer or door pull represented by a single sherd weighing 11.4 grams.

The indefinite artifacts consist of earthenware and stoneware sherds which come from unidentified objects. Two artifacts are distinct but as yet unidentified. These are a white ceramic which is probably some type of hardware, and a sherd molded in the form of a crab claw; it is unclear whether this second sherd comes from a solid figurine or from some sort of vessel that could have been food-related. The other sherds are robust hollow- and flatware fragments. They are much thicker and heavier even than the hardiest examples of Asian stoneware storage vessels. The total weight for the indefinite category is 181.3 grams, with a sherd count of 8.

Food-Related Ceramic Artifacts

The food-related represent the majority of the ceramic assemblage – over 90% by both sherd count (94%) and weight (96%) (Figure 1). They can be broken down into tableware and storage vessels by function, and Asian and Euro-American by origin. For the purposes of this project, three main categories are used: Asian storage vessels, Asian tablewares, and Euro-American tablewares. (See also Figure 2 and Figure 3.)

Storage Vessels. Asian stoneware storage vessels comprise 21% of the food-related ceramics from Feature 20 based on recalculated MNV counts (Figure 3). The 12 MNV represented include 4 spouted jars, 2 wide-mouthed jars, 2 hollowwares of indeterminate form, 1 large lid and 3 small lids (see Figure 6).

Spouted Jars. Artifacts were classified as spouted jars based on direct evidence of

a spout, or inferred by the diameter of the vessel opening, which is about half that of wide-mouthed jars. Rim percentage, base percentage and number of spouts were counted during MNV calculations; in this case, the MNV figure (4) returned by the number of spouts was most accurate.

Wide-mouthed Jars. Wide-mouthed jars were classified solely on the diameter of the vessel opening. Rim and base percentages were recorded during the MNV count, both of which yielded a maximum of 1 MNV. However, this figure was adjusted to 2 MNV in light of the observation of the vessel profiles from rim to shoulder. One large sherd has a noticeably straight, vertical neck and sharp inflection at the shoulder, in contrast to other examples which have a more sloping neck and gradual transition from rim to body.

Lids. Lids represent one third of the total storage vessels (4 MNV). One lid is large with a concave surface; this type of lid is known to have covered huge stoneware "barrel jars". The literature repeatedly cites these lids being reused as cooking vessels by inverting them over a heat source, or as serving dishes for prepared food (cf. Greenwood et al. 2002:148); these particular sherds show no evidence of burning. Three lids are much smaller (weighing only about 20 grams when complete), and would have covered wide-mouthed jars, sealed to the vessel opening with plaster. Several of the sherds have some plaster remaining on them.

Non-diagnostic and Unidentified Storage Vessel Sherds. The remaining storage vessel sherds are unidentified rim sherds and non-diagnostic body and base sherds. These non-diagnostic sherds have a total count of 89 and a weight of 1255 grams. The MNV can be calculated one of two ways, with the same result (2 MNV). The first is that

there are two rim sherds in this sub-category. They are noticeably different, and therefore must represent at least two vessels (see Figure 6). Alternatively, a count based on a combination of sherd thickness and base form can be used. The bases, while not diagnostic to a specific vessel form, are representative of the type either wide-mouthed or spouted jars would have. This, combined with the fact that some sherds are quite thin whereas others are quite thick indicates that the minimum number of vessels is at least two. The small bases and thin sherds must have come from one of the range of smaller storage vessels, whereas the thick sherds must have come from a barrel or large globular jar. There is actually a relatively continuous range of thickness from thin to thick in the sherds; however, based on vessel descriptions and images from other archaeological reports, it seems fair to conclude that at least two vessels contributed to the non-diagnostic hollowware sherds.

Asian Porcelains. Porcelain tablewares of Asian origin make up 64% of the food-related ceramics from Feature 20, based on recalculated MNV counts (Figure 3). Decorative styles include Bamboo, Celadon, Four Seasons and related floral styles, Sweet Pea, and a hand-painted blue floral motif. Vessel forms include large bowls (probably serving vessels), medium bowls (probably individual bowls that were eaten out of), small bowls (handleless cups), tiny cups (for liquor consumption), medium plates, and small plates (probably for condiments). For a data about the vessel forms for all tablewares from Feature 20, see Figure 2, and for a photograph of various vessels, see Figure 7.

Bamboo. Vessels decorated with the Bamboo pattern make up 12% of the total tableware assemblage from Feature 20, representing 7 vessels. MNV counts were determined by base percentage; resulting counts correspond with other diagnostic

features such as vessel profile and decoration. Five of these vessels are medium bowls, with diameters of 14-15 centimeters. The other two are indeterminate size bowls (maximum diameter uncalculatable). Based on the similarities in between these bases and those of known medium bowls, and on evidence that the Bamboo pattern is only found on this size bowl (Greenwood et al. 1996:70; Sando and Felton 1993:155, Table 25), I am confident in inferring that these two indefinite vessels are probably also medium bowls. With the exception of these latter vessels, the Bamboo bowls are all over 50% complete, though broken into multiple fragments.

Celadon. Celadon vessels make up 14% of the tableware assemblage with a total of 8 vessels. The vessel forms cluster in two groups: small bowls of approximately an 8 cm diameter, and medium bowls of about a 14-15 cm diameter. There are 4 small bowls, based on rim percentage. There are 4 medium bowls, based on a combination of rim percentage and vessel form. One sherd has a drastically different profile and a slightly smaller diameter (11-12 cm) than the rest and was therefore counted as a separate vessel; the remaining three share basically identical profiles and diameters. Most of the bases have false reign marks in blue glaze (Figure 8). The Celadon vessels are more fragmented than the Bamboo. As a result, 9 sherds (34.9 g) were non-diagnostic and not included in the MNV data.

Four Flowers. Four Flowers vessels are the most diverse of the tableware collection, with a great variety of vessel forms (Figure 9). Four Flowers and related floral designs make up 29% of the tableware – the highest of any single grouping – with 17 vessels. Two of these are spoons, represented by two handles and a fragment of the spoon well. Two small plates and two medium plates are present. Both of these MNVs

are based on subjective observations. For the small plates, rim percentage would indicate that there is only one vessel, yet the two pieces cannot cross mend to form one vessel, therefore there must be two. Likewise, the MNV for medium plates was based on decorative style. There is one small bowl and one medium bowl, based on rim percentages. Five large bowls are present, and the two additional bowls of indeterminate size are likely large bowls based on vessel profile. Since their maximum diameter could not be calculated and there are no other lines of evidence as with the Bamboo bowls, I am not confident in lumping them with the positively identified large bowls. Finally, there are three tiny cups which have either Four Flowers or a similar floral design. Further research may indicate that these represent distinct decorative styles, but for the purposes of this paper they were lumped under the Four Flowers category.

Sweet Pea. One sherd from a decanter has the pattern known as "Sweet Pea." This piece compares favorably with those illustrated in Greenwood et al. (1996:70, Figure 4.1) and Sando and Felton (1993:158, Figure 30).

Other Asian Tableware. Other Asian tablewares fall into two vessel groups: a single, octagonal small bowl, and three teapot lids. The octagonal bowl is separated out because of its distinct form; it compares favorably with examples from Praetzellis and Praetzellis (1997:176, Figure 44).

The teapot lids were previously identified as small plates, although they are quite different in form from the one Four Flowers small plate in the assemblage (Figure 10). Research indicates that they are in fact teapot lids (cf. Greenwood et al. 1996: Plate 4). Two of these are undecorated and one (missing its rim) has a hand-painted blue flower in the center of the lid. Interestingly, there are no identified tea pots in the Feature 20

assemblage, although at least one undecorated teapot exists elsewhere in the collection. This begs the question of reuse – could these have, in fact, been used as small plates or some function not intended in their manufacture?

Euro-American Ceramics. Euro-American ceramic artifacts comprise 16% of the food-related ceramics based on recalculated MNV counts (Figure 3). There is one vessel each of creamware, redware, and porcelain, 3 whiteware vessels and 3 improved whiteware vessels. A noticeable aspect of the Euro-American assemblage is that very few sherds exist (17 sherds, only 5% of the total food-related ceramic assemblage by sherd count); additionally, many vessels are represented by only one or two sherds.

Creamware. The creamware vessel is represented by only one non-diagnostic body sherd weighing 2.1 grams; vessel form is impossible to determine.

Redware. The redware vessel is a flatware, represented by one rim piece weighing 0.9 grams. The rim is slightly lipped, and its interior edge is painted with a blue stripe. This vessel's paste is distinctly pink in comparison with the other Euro-American vessels in the assemblage.

Porcelain. The porcelain vessel is a fluted hollowware represented by one rim fragment weighing 3.6 grams. The sherd has an unusual, metallic purple appliqué on the exterior surface (Figure 11).

MNVs for the preceding three waretypes were calculated by sherd number; each represents 11% of the total Euro-American assemblage.

Whiteware. The whiteware MNV count was probably the most subjective of all MNV calculations, as the decorative styles of the sherds were used as the diagnostic feature. Three of the sherds are undecorated, and five are decorated; it was determined

that the undecorated sherds could not be validly separated from any of the decorated vessels, thus they were not considered in MNV calculations. Of the decorated sherds, three are blue transfer print, one is black transfer print and one is hand painted (Figure 12). The latter two categories each represent one MNV. The three blue transfer print pieces were more difficult. Each has a significantly different design – a floral motif, a scenic motif, and stippling – yet each sherd is so small that it could easily be a part of a large vessel with a complex design incorporating a number of different decorative elements. Thus I felt that the least common denominator – the appropriate measure when calculating MNVs – was the general decorative style of blue transfer print, for a total of one MNV. Whitewares make up 33% of the Euro-American assemblage, by MNV count.

Improved Whiteware. There are a minimum of three improved whiteware vessels in the assemblage: a black transfer print, handled cup (1 sherd, 6.1 g), an undecorated hollowware (1 sherd, 10.9 g), and a large edgeware plate. There are four sherds in the collection (125.7 g) which come from plates or other flatware, all of these could be associated with this large edgeware plate. One of these sherds, which should by no means necessarily be associated with the blue edgeware plate, has a maker's mark.[2] The mark, which is a lion with a crest over the manufacturer's information, attributes the sherd to the British company James Edwards and Son, of Dale Hall, Burslem, Staffordshire Potteries (Godden 1991:230-231). The dates of this mark run from 1851 to 1882, but no other information is available (for example, what waretypes, vessel forms, or decorative styles the company used) (Godden 1991:230-231). Improved whitewares

[2] It is important that although the edgeware sherd and maker's mark sherd are attributed to one MNV based on vessel form, they should not necessarily be associated with each other (i.e. actually from the same vessel). This is particularly important because extra information gleaned from these two diagnostic features do not clarify the sherds' relationship at all.

make up 33% of the Euro-American assemblage by MNV count.

Glass

Non-Food and Indefinite Glass Artifacts

Glass artifacts not related to food fall into two categories: those which are distinctly unrelated to food and those which are either unidentified or of indefinite use. Dissimilar to the ceramic assemblage, these categories make up as much as 40-50% of the glass assemblage by sherd count and weight (Figure 4).

The known non-food glass artifacts are medicine bottles, opium pipe lamps, and window glass. There are five sherds of medicine bottles, most of which represent a significant portion of the original vessel (50% or more). There is one fragment of an opium lamp, and numerous fragments of flat window glass.

The 'indefinite artifacts' category largely consists of objects that have not been positively identified. There are two hollow tubes which may be hardware of some sort, or may be the necks of crude bottles. A number of fragments may represent hollow tableware, or parts of electrical furnishings or opium lamps. Finally, there are five bottle fragments whose contents have not been identified.

Food-Related Glass Artifacts

Unlike the food-related ceramic artifacts, food-related glass artifacts make up only about half of the glass assemblage (49% by sherd count and 60% by sherd weight). Most of these food-related artifacts are alcoholic beverage bottles; there is one example each of a tumbler and a hollow tableware. See Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Alcoholic Beverage Bottles. Euro-American glass bottles which contained alcohol make up 75% of the food-related glass artifacts by MNV count. There are six

vessels: one black glass bottle, one amber colored bottle, and four green bottles. The black glass bottle is represented only by a fragment of its finish. Portions of the neck and body remain from the amber bottle. The four green bottles are of varying degrees of fragmentation, with a total 32 sherds weighing 578 g. Since they represent the most numerous element, necks were used to determine the MNV (except in the case of the black glass sherd) (Figure 13). Color variations, except for the most basic colorless/amber/aqua/green/black distinctions, were ignored in this analysis because they are highly subjective.

Tumbler. There is one sherd of a tumbler with molded fluting on the exterior of the vessel body (cf. Jones and Sullivan 1989:143, Figure 119); part of the vessel's (plain) rim is also present. This sherd represents a very small portion of the entire tumbler (less than 25%), and no other glassware in the assemblage has recognizable fluting that would link it to this vessel. This tumbler accounts for 13% of the food-related glass.

Tableware. Five sherds cross-mend to form a glass tableware of indeterminate form and function which has a flared, scalloped rim. This single vessel represents 13% of the food-related glass artifacts.

Interpretation

The Nature of Alcohol Consumption

One interesting question that arose while analyzing the food-related ceramics and glass is what exactly we mean by "food." In particular, is the consumption of alcohol an event that should be subsumed under the general category of food practices, or is it somewhere outside of this, a social or illicit pastime to be examined separately? The answer, of course, probably lies somewhere between either extreme. We know Asian

liquors and wines were consumed as a part of the meal (Greenwood et al. 1996:69), but the stereotype of alcohol as a "social drug" is equally prevalent (cf. Allen et al. 2002).

MSCAP's cataloging scheme actually mirrors this paradox, placing Euro-American alcoholic beverage bottles in a hierarchy relating to personal effects and social drug use, but placing tiny ("wine") cups used to consume Asian liquor in a completely different domestic-tableware category. Without venturing into the biases that created this cataloging disparity, I would like to problematize the assignation of alcohol to a drug-related, non-food practice. I purposefully chose to circumvent this stigma by including alcoholic beverage bottles in the food-related glass assemblage and in doing so arrived at some conclusions I might not have otherwise realized.

Of particular note is that no Asian stoneware liquor bottles exist in the Feature 20 assemblage, despite the fact that the tiny cups used to consume such alcohol are present (making up 7% of the food-related ceramic assemblage). The only alcohol containers in the Feature 20 assemblage are the six Euro-American glass bottles discussed above. In contrast, at other sites 14-30% of the alcohol containers were Asian stoneware liquor bottles (Allen et al. 2002:181).

The contrast in the Feature 20 assemblage between Euro-American storage containers and Asian consumption vessel leads to an interesting speculation about cultural substitutions. If the liquor in the bottles was in fact of American or European origin, could it have been consumed in place of traditional Asian alcohols in traditional Chinese liquor cups? Another possibility is bottle reuse, where the original contents (Euro-American alcohol) were replaced by other substances (Asian liquor being only one of many possibilities). And finally, we must consider the context of these artifacts'

deposition: Feature 20 is a trash pit, and it is highly likely that such refuse pits could have been used by any member of the community passing by.

Economic Scaling

The socioeconomic status of the Market Street residents is an interesting question, as it has often been inferred that this urban Chinese population was more well-to-do than the agricultural population (cf. Young Yu 2001:22-24). Investigating the prices of the ceramics from Feature 20 provided a way to interpret the buying power of the Market Street community.

This investigation of economic scaling was made possible by Ruth Ann Sando and David L. Felton's article *Inventory Records of Ceramics and Opium from a Nineteenth Century Chinese Store in California* (Sando and Felton 1993). In it they discuss ceramic inventories from the Kwong Tai Wo Company, a general store in northern California; these inventories date from 1871 to 1896 (Sando and Felton 1993:152). Useful data include the relative amounts of different waretypes and vessel forms that were being sold in addition to the price of such objects. Based on the average annual value per vessel for "rice bowls,"[3] they argue that Four Flowers and true Celadon ("winter green") are expensive wares, costing between 6.5 and 8.7 cents per bowl, and Bamboo bowls are cheap, costing between 2 and 5 cents per vessel (Sando and Felton 1993:163). The authors also make a generalization about the distribution of decorative types by site, mentioning that, "the cheaper Bamboo bowls constitute up to 80 percent of the Chinese tableware on a 1880s railroad camp and other… rural construction and mining sites (e.g., Briggs, 1974), while the Winter Green (Celadon) vessels are more

[3] Sando and Felton's "rice bowls" are the equivalent of MSCAP's "medium bowl" category.

common on many… village and urban sites" (Sando and Felton 1993:165).

One would expect that the Market Street Chinatown reflects a predominance of Celadon and Four Flowers vessels because of the affluence of its residents. By MNV count, Four Flowers and Celadon make up 51% of the Asian ceramics from Feature 20, and Bamboo makes up just 14% . Thus the ratio of expensive to inexpensive Asian ceramics is 3.6 to 1. In contrast, at the Woolen Mills Chinatown over half of the medium-sized Asian bowls were Bamboo, and less than half were Four Flowers or Celadon (Allen et al. 2002:136). This seems to confirm known information: that the Market Street community was a relatively well-off community of merchants and families, and the Woolen Mills community was a bachelor community whose assemblage, despite the urban location, is made up of inexpensive wares and is more similar to rural labor campsites.

Aside from being a general marker of the affluence of the community, it is hard to make other assumptions based on this small amount of data. In the future, doing similar calculations for other features within the site will allow some intra-site interpretation of economic patterning to be developed. The data is too limited at this point to make any further speculations about nature of this particular deposit or the consumer profile of people who might have used these ceramics.

Describing the Assemblage – A Comparative Look

Reading site reports and historiographies was a good way to establish comparisons and contrasts between the Market Street assemblage (insofar as it is represented by Feature 20) and other archaeological or historical examples of overseas Chinese food-related objects. The information in these documents enabled me to reflect

on the nature of the Feature 20 assemblage in a more nuanced way than if I had simple considered it alone. In fact, these comparative observations led to the two previous interpretations presented here, on alcohol use and economic scaling.

Beyond this, however, qualitative comparative research indicates that the general nature of the ceramic assemblage in Feature 20 is quite similar to those of other sites. Simply put, nothing extraordinary or greatly unprecedented was found in the assemblage. At sites like the Woolen Mills Chinatown (Allen et al. 2002), the Los Angeles Chinatown (Greenwood et al. 1996), and the Riverside Chinatown (The Great Basin Foundation 1987), Asian ceramics in the Four Flowers, Celadon, and Bamboo types make up a large portion of the ceramic tablewares. A number of other Asian decorative types are typically present – although in Feature 20 these are limited to Sweet Pea, floral designs related to Four Flowers, and a hand-painted floral motif. (Though this lack of diversity is insignificant, in my opinion, as the entire Market Street collection seems to have a greater diversity of decorative styles, and one would except that such unique designs are underrepresented in the assemblage of any single feature.) Brown-glazed stoneware storage vessels are ubiquitous. Euro-American ceramics repeatedly show up on urban Chinese sites, and typically form a very small portion of the assemblage.

A wide range of vessel forms, as described in the literature, is present in Feature 20. Certain gaps do occur, such as the absence of Asian liquor bottles, teapots, and high-footed serving vessels, but these again may be due to the necessarily narrow view of the site's assemblage that a single feature gives. The medium bowl is the most common vessel form in the Feature 20 assemblage (22% of the total tableware); this is similar to the inventory reports from the Kwong Tai Wo Company (Sando and Felton 1993:155,

Table 25), but diverges from the expected archaeological pattern (Greenwood et al. 1996:69, Table 4.1; Allen et al. 2002:137-142, Table 16).

Despite some differences between the Feature 20 assemblage and the data from published site reports and store inventories, this qualitative comparison allows us to say one important thing: artifacts in the Market Street Chinatown are more or less similar to those in other urban overseas Chinese sites. Although this seems like a relatively unexciting conclusion, it allows us to make some important inferences about the impact of the excavation and earlier processing on artifact recovery. Namely that recovery practices, despite the problems the plagued excavation and processing, probably did not greatly alter or skew the general profile of the assemblage. This conclusion, in turn, helps us assess the research potential of this collection.

Further Research Directions

The analysis presented in this paper is by no means an exhaustive study of the ceramics and glass from Feature 20. Additional research is needed on the artifacts themselves, on their stratigraphic context, and on their relationship to the entire Feature 20 assemblage. Further comparison with other urban overseas Chinese sites will hopefully help to clarify problems of artifact identification and classification mentioned in this paper.[4] Economic scaling of the Euro-American ceramics, following George Miller's *Classification and Economic Scaling of 19th Century Ceramics* (1980), would enhance our knowledge of the cost of ceramics in the assemblage and possibly lead us to

[4] It must be noted that comparing the assemblage from a single feature to the published data from entire sites is not unproblematic; the differences inherent in the two must be kept in mind during such comparisons.

reevaluate conclusions that have been made in this paper. A stratigraphic analysis of the materials is desirable in order to assess the research value of the "upper" and "lower" level distinctions within Feature 20; does this distinction allow us to say anything meaningful about the depositional history of the feature?

Finally, analysis of the other categories of artifacts from Feature 20 will enable us to understand the assemblage as a whole. Work on the metal and small finds artifacts are the next stages of my thesis research, and I am also currently awaiting results from specialists analyzing the faunal and botanical artifacts. These data will be incorporated into my interpretation of the Feature 20 deposit, and the preliminary speculations I have made here will be reevaluated in light of the new data.

Conclusion

In concluding this paper, it is important to reexamine the underlying goal which has driven the data collection, analysis, and interpretations during this project. Evaluating the research potential of the Feature 20 assemblage and extrapolating that to the entire collection has been subsumed by other questions in the course of this research. However, a few concluding remarks specifically addressing the research potential demonstrated during this project are necessary.

Perplexing questions about the Feature 20 assemblage remain unanswered. Why is it that only one sherd of a porcelain tableware, or of a huge glass bottle, remain? These single-vessel, single-sherd occurrences call into question the deposition of the feature, the post-depositional history of the site, and the recovery of artifacts during excavation and processing. These questions remain unanswered for the present, although research on

other features may clarify what factors have contributed to the incomplete nature of some of the artifacts in the collection.

Provenience problems plague a number of artifacts which have been mistakenly identified as coming from either Feature 19 or Feature 20, a recordation error which occurred some time during the excavation or previous laboratory processing. This error may be present in other parts of the collection as well. Such artifacts are not totally useless, but it will depend on each individual research designs and investigators' choice as to whether or not they are used in future research. For the purposes of my thesis, I have decided not to include such artifacts except to mention them in passing, as their incorporation would create a complex data management situation and make drawing meaningful interpretations from the data too complicated an endeavor.

Twenty years post-excavation there are, of course, a number of inconsistencies and vagaries that problematize the extant contextual information. One main concern for my research was attempting to understand exactly what the stratigraphic notations in the original lab catalog meant – if anything. By examining the recordation and conversing with the excavators, it appears as though the vertical provenience is relevant to increasing our understanding of the site, if only to give us a relative sense of depositional history. However, the horizontal provenience within features is arbitrary, and does not indicate any meaningful spatial information about the feature.[5] As discussed above, analysis which looks at the vertical distribution of artifacts will help determine if they provide useful information about the depositional history of Feature 20.

[5] Except if/where the horizontal distinctions are specifically noted as reflecting some archaeologically-meaningful facet of the deposit.

On a positive note, a number of concerns about the condition of the collection have been answered: artifact preservation is generally quite good; artifacts are numerous, identifiable, and represent a wide variety of objects; and not only does provenience that links artifacts to specific features exist (this was unknown at the start of the MSCAP project), but as mentioned, stratigraphic information within features is also extant, increasing our potential for understanding the depositional history of the site. These factors will allow meaningful questions to be asked and answered of the entire collection or any subsets thereof. Furthermore, the comparative research done here demonstrates that the artifact assemblage resembles that of other urban Chinese sites in California. This is reassuring in assessing the impact that excavation and previous processing had on the collection; the integrity of data is higher than was previously thought. Overall, the research potential for the collection appears to be good. Certain specific problems aside, the condition and quality of artifacts and contextual information is such that significant data may be generated for both intra- and inter-site research designs.

Bibliography

Allen, Rebecca and Mark Hylkema (2002) *Life along the Guadalupe River – an Archaeological and Historical Journey*. Friends of Guadalupe River Parks and Gardens: San Jose, California.

Allen, Rebecca, R. Scott Baxter, Anmarie Medin, Julia G. Costello, and Connie Young Yu (2002) *Excavation of the Woolen Mills Chinatown (CA-SCL-807H), San Jose*. Report prepared for the California Department of Transportation, District 4, Oakland. Past Forward, Inc.: San Jose, California.

ARS (1985) *Field notes from ARS excavations*. Observations from the field excavations in San Jose in 1985. San Jose, California.

ARS (1991) (Proposal for) *Analysis of Artifact Collections from San Jose's First Chinatown*. November 1991. Proposal including methodology for various artifact categories.

ARS (1993) *Archaeological Features in the Fairmont Hotel Parcel, San Jose, California*. November 09, 1993. Report prepared for Basin Research Associates.

Busch, Jane (1987) "Second Time Around: A Look at Bottle Reuse." *Historical Archaeology* **21**(1):67-80

Godden, Geoffrey A. (1991) *Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks*. Barrie and Jenkins: London.

(The) Great Basin Foundation, eds. (1987) *Wong Ho Leun: An American Chinatown*. The Great Basin Foundation: San Diego, California.

Greenwood, Roberta S., with contributions by Margie Akin, Ronald C. Egan, Lothar von Falkenhausen, Lynn C. Kronzek, and Mark A. Roeder (1996) *Down by the Station: Los Angeles Chinatown, 1880-1933*. Monumenta Archaeologica 18. Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles: Los Angeles, California.

Jones, Olive R. and Catherine Sullivan (1989) *The Parks Canada Glass Glossary for the Description of Containers, Tableware, Flat Glass, and Closures*. Canadian Parks Service: Quebec.

Lorrain, Dessamae (1968) "An Archaeologist's Guide to Nineteenth Century American Glass." *Historical Archaeology* **2**(1):35-44.

Michaels, Gina (2003) "A Mark of Meaning: Archaeological Interpretations of Peck Marked Vessels from a 19th Century Chinatown" in Voss et al. (2003) *Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project: 2002-2003 Progress Report*. Stanford

Archaeology Center and Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology: Stanford, California.

Miller, George (1980) "Classification and Economic Scaling of 19th Century Ceramics." *Historical Archaeology* **14**:1-40.

Praetzellis, Mary and Adrian Praetzellis (1997) *Historical Archaeology of an Overseas Chinese Community in Sacramento, California*. Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University Academic Foundation, Inc.: Rohnert Park, California.

Rice, Prudence M. (1987) *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.

Ross, Alice (1993) "Health and Diet in 19th-Century America: A Food Historian's Point of View." *Historical archaeology* **27**(2):42-56.

Sando, Ruth Ann and David L. Felton (1993) "Inventory Records of Ceramics and Opium from a Nineteenth Century Chinese Store in California" in Wegars, Priscilla, ed. (1993) *Hidden Heritage: Historical Archaeology of the Overseas Chinese*. Baywood Publishing Company, Inc.: Amityville, New York.

Spier, Robert F. G. (1958) "Food Habits of Nineteenth-Century California Chinese." *California Historical Society Quarterly* **XXXVII**(1):79-84.

Voss, Barbara L., with contributions by Rebecca Allen, R. Scott Baxter, R. Ezra Erb, Lynsie Ishimaru, Gina Michaels, Stephanie Selover, and Bryn Williams (2003) *Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project: 2002-2003 Progress Report*. Stanford Archaeology Center and Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology: Stanford, California.

Williams, Bryn (2003) "Opium Pipe Tops at the Market Street Chinese Community in San Jose" in Voss et al. (2003) *Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project: 2002-2003 Progress Report*. Stanford Archaeology Center and Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology: Stanford, California.

Young Yu, Connie (2001) *Chinatown, San Jose, USA*. History San Jose: San Jose, California.

Figures

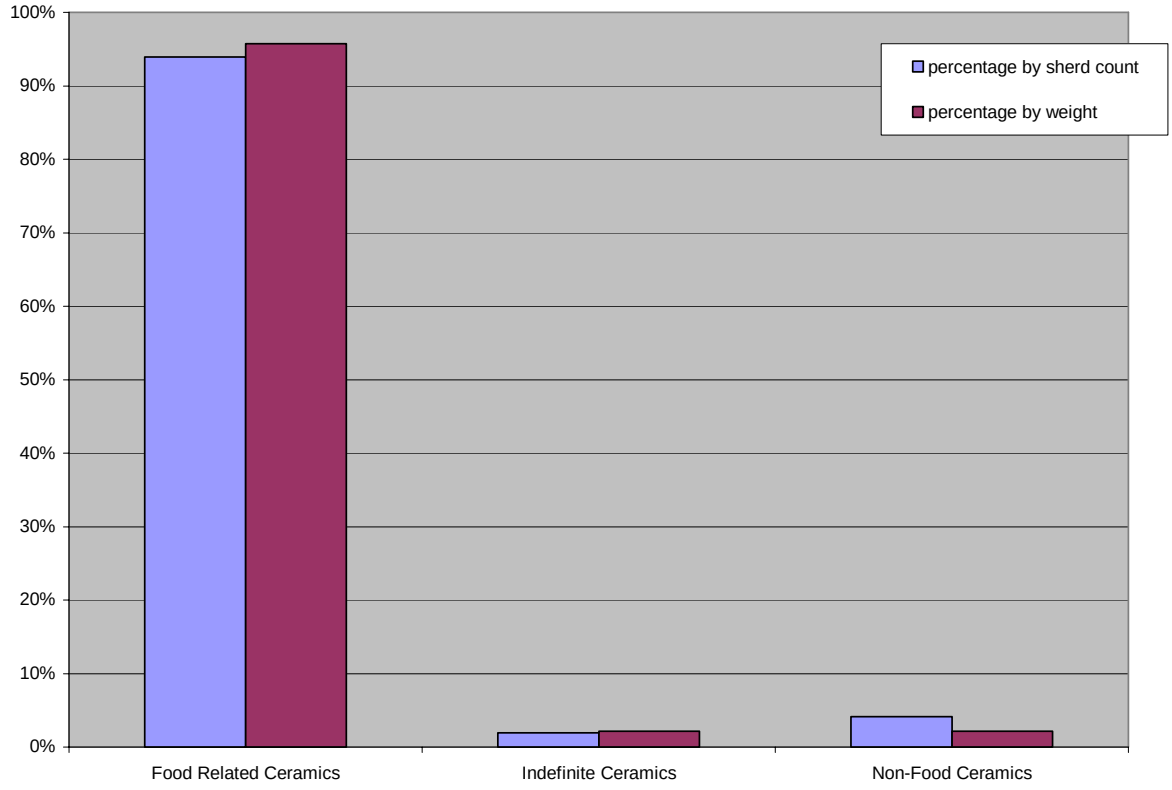

Figure 1: Feature 20 Ceramic Artifacts

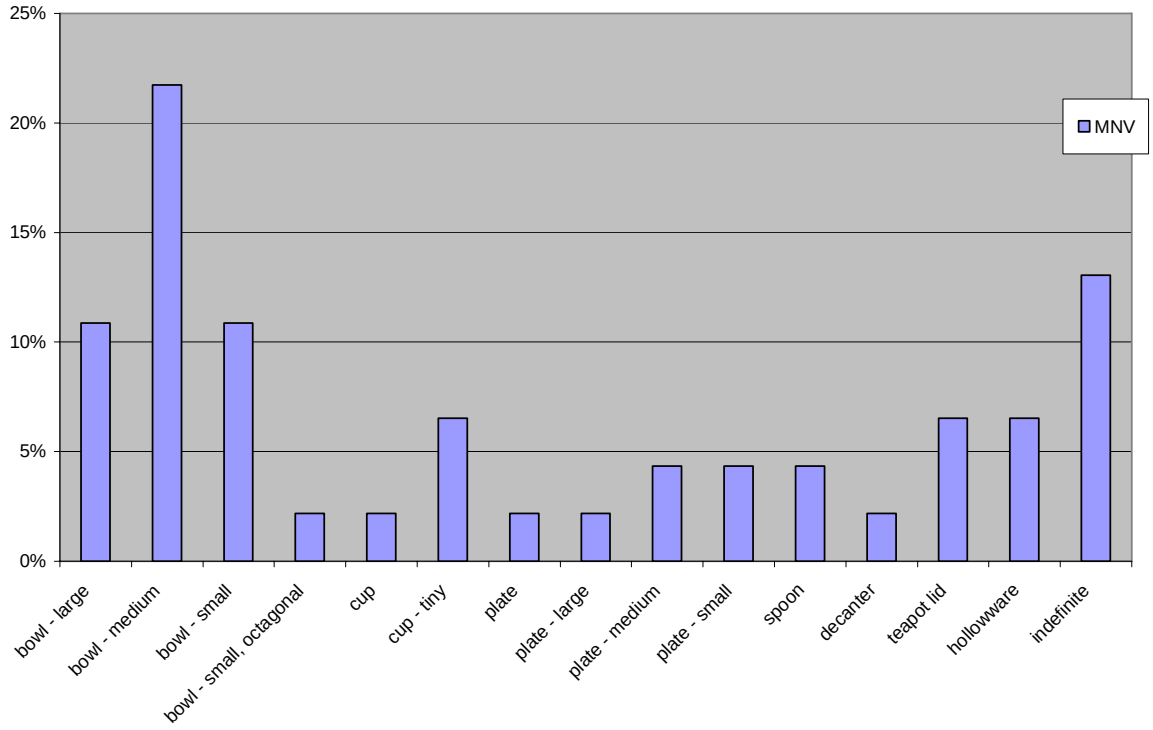

Figure 2: Food-Related Vessel Forms for Feature 20 Ceramic Artifacts

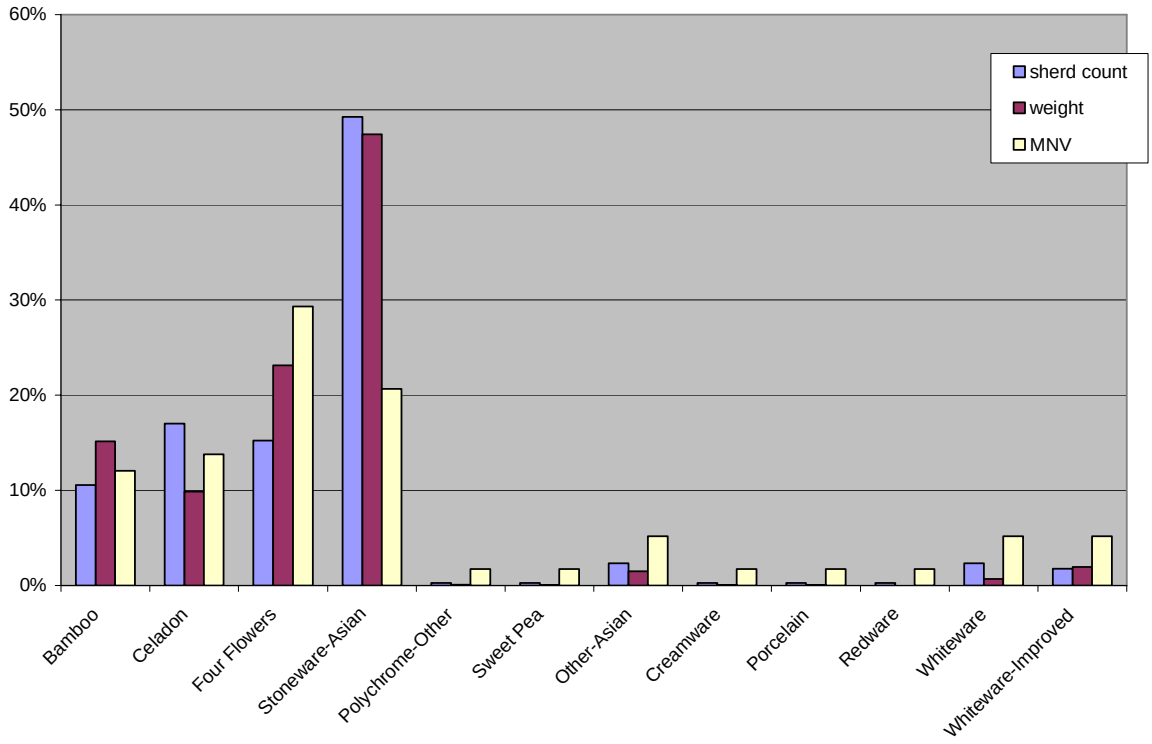

Figure 3: Food-Related Decorative Styles and Waretypes for Feature 20 Ceramic Artifacts

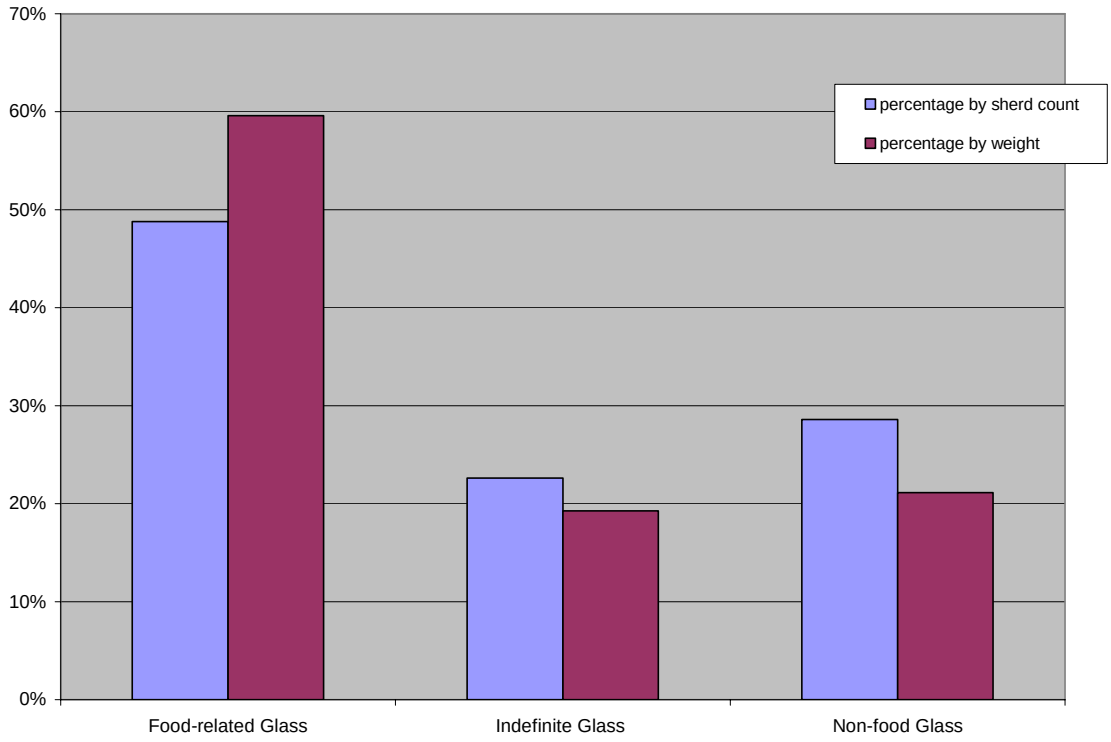

Figure 4: Feature 20 Glass Artifacts

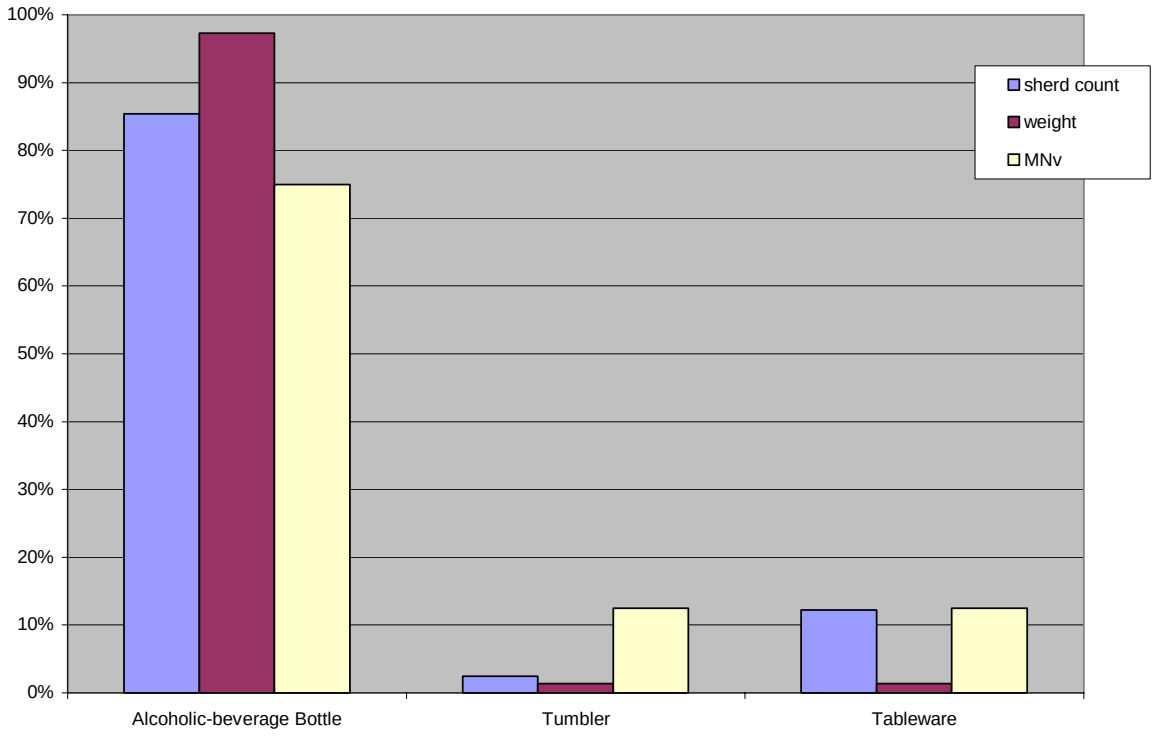

Figure 5: Food-Related Vessel Forms for Feature 20 Glass Artifacts

Figure 6: Representative brown-glazed, stoneware Asian storage vessels from Feature 20.

Figure 7: Representative Asian porcelain tablewares from Feature 20.

Figure 8: False reign marks on the bases of Celadon medium and small bowls from Feature 20.

Figure 9: Four Flowers tableware from Feature 20.

Figure 10: Teapot lids from Feature 20; the artifact on the left is flipped upside down to show glazed and unglazed surfaces.

Figure 11: Euro-American porcelain with purple appliqué from Feature 20.

Figure 12: Transfer print whitewares from Feature 20.

Figure 13: Alcoholic beverage bottle necks and finishes from Feature 20.