

CHAPTER 24

Archaeology of Asian Labour Migration at a Fraser River Salmon Cannery

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Introduction

Very little historical archaeology has been conducted in the Lower Fraser River region, and post-contact period sites have a low profile as subjects of sophisticated problem-oriented research. This chapter summarizes my study of the everyday lives of Chinese and Japanese migrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century at the Ewen salmon cannery on Don and Lion Islands along the South Arm of the Fraser River in Richmond (Figure 1).

The nature of cultural persistence and change among Asian migrants is presented and discussed using an interpretive model rooted in related concepts of transnationalism and diaspora. In particular, it explores how processes of overseas migration affected the material lives and ethnic identities of Asian migrant communities in B.C. in unique ways in response to individual choices, structural constraints, and contemporary socio-economic and political circumstances in China, Japan, and Canada.

Previous Research

Historical archaeology in B.C. receives far less attention than pre-contact First Nations cultures, although there is a growing number of published and unpublished sources on historic sites in the province. Unfortunately, these studies vary widely in quality and relatively few were written by authors with expertise in historical archaeology. Furthermore, these works have never been formalized into an accessible bibliography, database, or literature review and the most complete bibliography of B.C. archaeology published to date (Fladmark 1997) explicitly excludes historic sites.

A more serious problem hindering historical archaeology is that the provincial Heritage Conservation Act fails to formally recognize the significance of terrestrial archaeological sites post-dating 1846, thereby excluding the vast majority of historic sites from automatic legal protection. Unless individually designated at the provincial or municipal levels or on lands protected by other legislation (e.g., national parks administered by Parks Canada), historic sites are subject to damage or complete destruction by public and private development, resource extraction, artifact collecting, and other activities. The eclectic body of research

that does exist has been conducted by a combination of museums, government agencies, professional or academic archaeologists under contract to these agencies or to private clients, and universities – primarily as individual graduate theses. Despite this growing body of largely descriptive and unpublished literature, few professional or academic archaeologists in B.C. are trained specifically in historical archaeology and long-term research program in the province with an explicit focus on historic sites are rare.

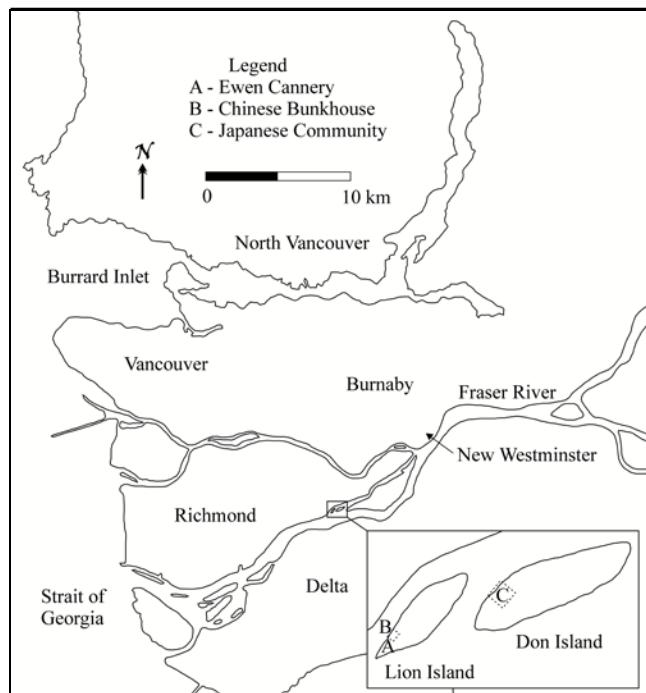


Figure 1. Map showing the location of Don and Lion Islands on the Fraser River delta.

Very little research has been conducted at historic sites in the Lower Fraser River region, the most extensive focusing on the fur trade sites of Fort Langley I and II (and nearby Derby town site), where archaeology began in the 1950s (e.g., Chism 1970; Francis et al. 2005; Langemann et al. 1984; Peeps 1958; Porter 1995, 1997; Quirolo 1996; Steer and Porter 1980). Also, Borden's 1950s investigations at the

historic Musqueam village of Stselax have recently been re-examined by Poulsen (2005). For other recent studies in this region see Chapters 7 and 15. Most closely related to this chapter are small-scale resource management projects conducted at Gulf of Georgia Cannery and Britannia Shipyards in Steveston that recovered small quantities of artifacts associated with Japanese cannery workers (Deva Heritage Consulting 1994; Heitzmann 1994; Wilson 1987), and a 1980s aerial reconnaissance survey of salmon canneries along the coast of B.C. (Newell 1987, 1991; Roberts and Higginbottom 1991).

The most substantial research is Muckle's long-term field school on Japanese logging camps in North Vancouver begun in 2000 (Muckle 2001, 2004, 2009). Work on Chinese sites includes recovery of disturbed assemblages of artifacts salvaged from urban construction sites in New Westminster, Ladner, and Vancouver's Chinatown (Hooper 1993a, b, 1996). More recently, Angelbeck and Hall (2008) surveyed a Chinese camp near Lytton in the mid-Fraser region possibly associated with railway construction or gold mining in the same part of the river where Kennedy and colleagues document a series of remnant placer mining sites (Kennedy 2009; Nelson and Kennedy 2012).

Beyond the Lower Fraser, the most significant Chinese diaspora archaeology has been conducted at the gold mining town of Barkerville and the surrounding North Cariboo District of the central interior, much of it led by researchers from SFU (Chen 2001; Hobler and Chen 1996; Irvine and Montgomery 1983; Koskitalo 1995). Sauer (2001) and Pasacreta (2005) have also investigated a Chinese mining community and associated burial ground at Wild Horse Creek Provincial Historic Site in southeastern B.C. French (1995) explored remains of the D'Arcy Island Chinese Leper Colony in the Gulf Islands, and Owens et al. (1997) and Vincent (2001) report on a small refuse dump associated with Chinese tannery workers or domestic labourers on Vancouver Island. Limited survey and testing on Japanese sites has been done at the McLean Mill near Port Alberni (Eldridge and Coates 1994) and the North Pacific Cannery near Prince Rupert (Archer 2000). Outside of B.C., excavations have been conducted at two salmon canneries in Oregon employing Asian labour, but no detailed inventories or analysis have been published (Gehr 1975; Fagan 1993). For a fuller discussion of Chinese archaeology in B.C. see Ross (2015).

In broader terms, very few Asian sites have been excavated anywhere in Canada, and few Japanese sites anywhere in North America. With the exception of Kraus-Friedberg's (2008) work on Asian cemeteries in Hawaii, no substantial attempt has been made to compare the lives of distinct communities of Asian migrants using an archaeological perspective. The typical practice at salmon canneries of employing a racially segregated, multiethnic labour force offers a unique opportunity to conduct such a comparative study among two contemporary groups of Asian migrants living and working in close proximity and under similar conditions.

Historical Background

Chinese and Japanese Migration

The first substantial numbers of Chinese in Canada arrived in 1858 with the Fraser Gold Rush, part of a broader pattern of international labour migration from southeast China in the nineteenth century in response to poverty, population pressure, political instability, and a need to support families back home. They established Chinese quarters in mining settlements and in larger towns and cities as social centres and sources of imported goods and services, often organized according to native place or clan affiliation. By the mid 1860s, gold deposits were becoming depleted and many sought work in other industries, such as railroads, logging, canning, and agriculture, or in urban laundries and restaurants.

Chinese migrants were increasingly subject to considerable hostility from Euro-Canadians, who accused them of stealing white jobs by working for low wages, introducing gambling, prostitution, drugs, and poor sanitation into local communities, and refusing to assimilate into society. Racism kept Chinese workers in the lowest paying jobs, and in 1885 the federal government instituted a head tax of \$50 on every Chinese person arriving in Canada (later raised to \$500), and in 1923 all but a few Chinese were excluded from entering Canada. Men vastly outnumbered women among early Chinese migrants, a result of frontier conditions, immigration restrictions, patriarchal traditions in China, and the head tax. Some men returned to China to visit wives or get married, while most eventually planning to return home permanently, although many never did (Hsu 2000; Li 1998; McKeown 1999; Roy 1989, 2003; Woon 2007).

The Japanese government did not permit emigration until the Meiji period (1868-1912), and large-scale overseas migration did not begin until the mid-1880s in response to population pressure, economic concerns, and a desire to ensure family stability and maintain social status. One of the earliest groups to reach Canada was sent to the coalmines in Cumberland, B.C. in 1889. Subsequently migrants, most of them poor farmers and fishermen, worked seasonally on railroads, as domestic servants, and in the logging, fishing, and agricultural industries. Japanese labour migration was restricted by Canada through quotas in 1908 and again in the 1920s.

Powell Street in Vancouver was the centre of the Japanese community in B.C., offering a variety of familiar goods and services, including boarding houses and labour contractors, with a secondary centre in the fishing community of Steveston. Like the Chinese, many migrants moved back and forth between Japan and Canada with plans for a permanent return, while others married picture brides and settled in Canada as citizens. Sex ratios remained imbalanced in favour of men but there were many more Japanese than Chinese women in Canada, a product of a variety of factors in home and host countries. Japanese were subject to similar racial discrimination as Chinese, but were not excluded by law from Canada because Japan willingly

agreed to limit emigration. Despite facing similar hostility from Euro-Canadians, Asians rarely banded together to contest this oppression, in part due to political and military antagonism between Japan and China (Adachi 1976; Ayukawa and Roy 1999; Fiset and Nomura 2005; Geiger 2006).

Salmon Canning in British Columbia

Salmon canneries were the earliest factories in B.C. and the greater Pacific Northwest, and dominated the entire West Coast fishing industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. British Columbia was the world's second largest canning region after Alaska, beginning in 1867 in New Westminster and expanding along the entire coast by the turn of the century. Japanese men came to dominate the salmon fishery, whereas Chinese men and Japanese women worked inside the canneries with Euro-Canadian men as owners and supervisors. Canning was a seasonal industry peaking in late summer and early autumn, with the industrial complex forming a cluster of buildings perched over the river on wooden pilings with adjacent work camps organized along racial/ethnic lines. Independent Chinese labour contractors organized and provisioned seasonal work crews, often under exploitative circumstances, who were housed in large bunkhouses adjacent to the cannery. Japanese fishermen typically lived in bunkhouses and single family homes near the cannery, organized by a Japanese boss under a similar contract system (Campbell 2004; Friday 1994; Meggs 1991; Newell 1988, 1991; Roy 1989, 2003).

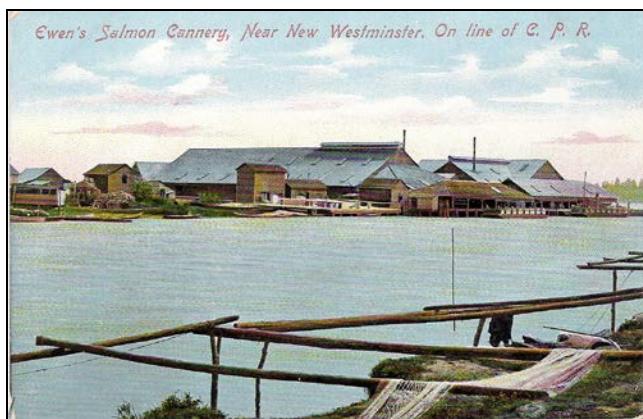


Figure 2. A ca. 1903 postcard showing view of Ewen Cannery on Lion Island, looking south.

Don and Lion Islands

Don and Lion Islands and the Ewen Cannery are located along the south arm of the Fraser River in Richmond (Figures 1 to 3). They are small (ca. 600-800 m long by 100 m wide) channel bars along the south edge of Lulu Island, approximately 7 km downstream from New Westminster. Their long-term geologic and human history is unknown, although they appear on an 1827 map. Alexander Ewen, a pioneer salmon canner in nearby New Westminster, purchased the islands in 1885 for his second cannery at a

time when Richmond was low-lying and marshy and its eastern half largely uninhabited. The Ewen Cannery on Lion Island became the largest cannery on the Fraser by the 1890s but closed in 1930 (Figure 2). A two-story, L-shaped Chinese bunkhouse was constructed just east of the cannery that could accommodate up to one hundred men, and a Japanese fishing camp was built on Don Island at the turn of twentieth century.

Well into the 1970s Lion Island continued to be used as a fish camp for other canneries and as a marine gas station, although most of original buildings were removed between the 1940s and 1960s and both islands were extensively logged between the late 1960s and late 1970s. In 1995, they were acquired by Metro Vancouver as part of the Fraser Islands Reserve and today are home to freshwater marsh and riparian woodland plant communities (Hayes 2005:17, 19, 23; Lyons 1969; Pullem 1975; Ralston 2005).



Figure 3. Present-day view of remains of Ewen Cannery on Lion Island, looking northeast.

The Japanese fishing settlement on adjacent Don Island was established by an immigrant entrepreneur named Jinsaburo Oikawa, who arrived in Canada in 1896 and set up a small fishing community of migrants from his home prefecture of Miyagi in Sunbury on the south shore of the Fraser opposite the islands. In 1901 the community moved to unoccupied Don Island, owned by Ewen, to fish for his salmon cannery. The island settlement and its population gradually increased from about thirty in 1902 to between 70 and 100 by mid-decade, including a number of families, peaking during the cannery season. It included an all-male bunkhouse and single family houses, a community hall for recreation and communal meals, and various work and storage buildings.

Besides fishing, residents exported salted salmon and roe to Japan and produced sake, soy sauce, miso, and fresh produce for their own use and for sale in local markets. In 1903 the community split and part of the population moved to the east end of Lion Island away from the cannery. After the cannery closed in 1930 the settlement was gradually abandoned, although some families remained until they were interned in 1942 (Nitta 1998; Sulz 2003a, b; Suzuki 1973; Suzuki and Suzuki 1978; Ross 2013a).

Archaeology on Don and Lion Islands

Archaeological fieldwork conducted on Don and Lion Islands in 2005 and 2006 focused on recovering and comparing remains of everyday life from the Chinese bunkhouse on Lion Island and Don Island Japanese settlement. Surface survey and mapping, shovel testing, and focused excavations were conducted at both sites, with over 14,000 artifacts catalogued for the Chinese camp and over 10,000 for the Japanese camp. All former buildings are gone, and the only visible structural remains are wooden pilings set in the intertidal zone that once supported the main buildings, wharves, and walkways of the industrial complex and Japanese camp (Figure 3).

At the cannery, other historic remains include discarded steam boilers, bricks, metal hardware and tools, ceramics, glass and other domestic refuse, and rusted scraps of metal from the can-making process. The Chinese bunkhouse and Japanese fishing camp environs are overgrown with vegetation and marked primarily by surface scatters of artifacts.

The Chinese bunkhouse, east of the industrial complex on Lion Island was located on flat, low-lying hummocky terrain, with a steep, irregular riverbank dropping 1 m to the intertidal zone (Figure 4). The entire area floods during peak tides. Surface artifacts include fragments of Chinese ceramics, broken bottle glass, and brick, plus remains of a metal barrel set in the ground with a vertical pipe protruding that may have been used to capture rain water or for some other purpose. Many surface artifacts were collected from the intertidal zone, indicating significant erosion and use of the river foreshore as a trash dump. Furthermore, the quantity of surface material, combined with the mounds and depressions, suggest recent site disturbance caused by artifact collectors. Shovel testing at 5 m intervals across the site revealed two major concentrations of domestic artifacts, referred to as the east and west middens, with the east midden being adjacent to the largest concentration of surface brick.

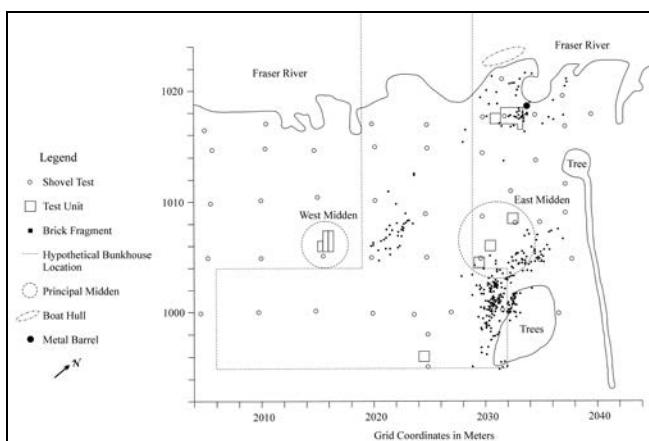


Figure 4. Map showing location of excavations conducted at the Chinese bunkhouse on Lion Island.

A series of 1 m² and 0.5 x 1 m units were excavated in the two principal middens and elsewhere across the site in lesser artifact concentrations, using 10 cm thick levels because of a lack of identifiable stratigraphy. Artifacts recovered from the east midden link it primarily with food preparation and consumption activities (ceramics, bottles, fauna), whereas the west midden has a greater proportion of objects associated with social activities like alcohol consumption (glass bottles), smoking (opium pipe bowls), and gambling (gaming pieces).

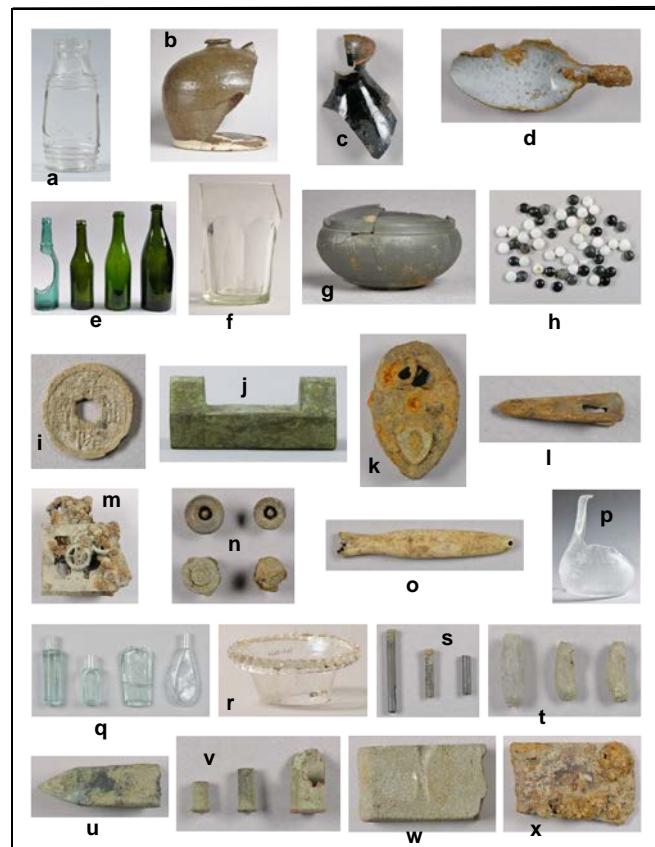


Figure 5. Selected artifacts from Lion Island. From top left: (a): mustard bottle; (b): Chinese spouted jar; (c): Chinese liquor bottle; (d): enamel spoon; (e): beverage bottles; (f): glass tumbler; (g): Chinese opium pipe bowl; (h): Chinese gaming pieces; (i): Chinese/Vietnamese coin; (j): Chinese lock; (k): padlock; (l): Chinese bone book/box closure; (m): alarm clock; (n): clothing buttons; (o): bone toothbrush handle; (p): perfume atomizer; (q): Chinese medicine bottles; (r): partial oil lamp chimney; (s): carbon rods for dry cell batteries; (t): fishing net weights; (u): soldering iron copper tip; (v): rifle cartridge casings; (w): whetstone; (x): hatchet head.

Other artifacts include buttons, ammunition, tools, and lamp chimneys (Figure 5). Adjacent to the river bank and metal barrel, excavation uncovered remains of a rectangular brick platform three courses deep and 1.7 x 1.3 m in horizontal plan whose precise function remains unclear. The overall distribution of artifacts offers clues to the bunkhouse location. For example, the east midden and associated concentration of surface brick are likely remains of an

exterior brick fireplace inside a one-story lean-to marked on archival plans which Meggs (1991:25) identifies as a standard bunkhouse kitchen. Extrapolation of bunkhouse measurements taken from archival sources places the west midden in the open space between its two wings, and together the two middens define distinct cooking and recreational/social activity areas on the site. This extrapolation places the north end of the bunkhouse well into the river, indicating that several metres of shoreline have eroded away since the bunkhouse was constructed.

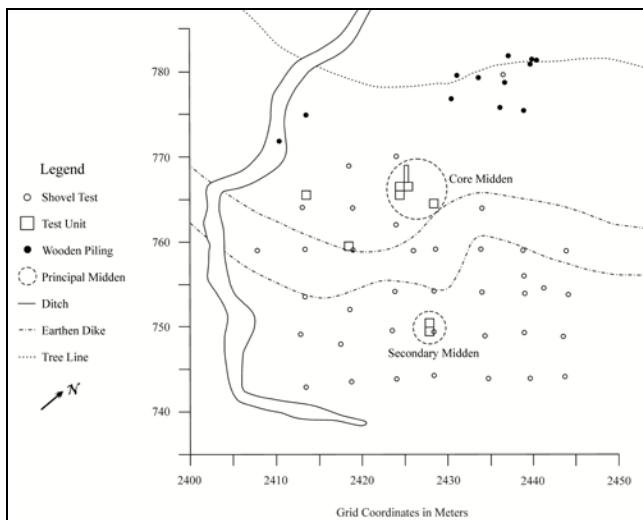


Figure 6. Map showing the location of excavations conducted at the Japanese fishing camp on Don Island.

The former Japanese fishing settlement on Don Island occupied a flat topography fronted by a broad, gently sloping intertidal zone. Since it is at a slightly lower elevation than the Chinese bunkhouse, it is more prone to flooding at high tides. Archival sources show structures spread out along the entire north shore of the island, with a cluster of buildings including the bunkhouse, community hall, and Oikawa's home near its western end that are now marked only by remnant pilings (Figure 6). This cluster was the focus of detailed archaeological testing. Important cultural landscape features in this location include heavily eroded remains of an earthen dike encircling the perimeter of the island, and a narrow drainage or irrigation ditch snaking inland from the intertidal zone. There is little evidence of post-abandonment disturbance in this area, and surface collection and shovel testing at 5 m intervals produced relatively few artifacts, except in two small areas referred to as the core and secondary middens.

Excavations produced a large volume of domestic, industrial, and architectural artifacts from the core midden (the primary community trash dump), and a small amount of material dominated by beverage bottle glass from the secondary midden (Figure 7). Stratigraphy for the core midden consists of a basal deposit of sand into which an oval refuse pit 60 cm in diameter was dug. Above this basal stratum are two superimposed layers of mixed sand and clay

and a surface deposit of sandy silt mixed with decomposing organic matter that are all densely packed with artifacts. This indicates that once the refuse pit was full, it was allowed to overflow beyond its original horizontal boundaries. Ceramic fragment cross-mends across strata indicate considerable artifact movement between these waterlogged layers, and no discernible shifts in patterns of artifact use were identified between earliest and latest deposits.



Figure 7. Selection of artifacts from Don Island. From top left (a): Japanese mortar bowl; (b): glass bowl; (c): Curtice Brothers ketchup bottle; (d): spoon; (e): beverage bottles; (f): feeding bottle; (g): Japanese tobacco pipe mouthpiece; (h): ceramic buttons; (i): 1905 Dominion Fair pendant; (j): 1917 Canadian 5 cent piece; (k): men's comb; (l): women's hair comb; (m): glass "gemstone"; (n): pocket watch cover; (o): ink bottle; (p): eyeglass lenses; (q): toothbrush heads; (r): Japanese medicine bottle; (s): oil lamp chimney; (t): dry cell battery; (u): shotgun shell casings; (v): horseshoe; (w): fishhook; (x): fishing net mender bearing name Joseph Cundry & Co., Vancouver.

Overall, recovered artifacts confirm that both Chinese and Japanese camps were largely abandoned following the closure of the cannery in 1930, and Japanese residents who remained likely occupied individual homes east of the settlement core. Occupation date ranges for these two sites are from ca. 1885 to 1930 for the Chinese bunkhouse, and between 1901 and ca. 1930 for the Japanese settlement. Shovel testing and limited excavation was also conducted at the eastern end of Lion Island where the Japanese splinter

group settled in 1903, but relatively few artifacts were found and efforts there were abandoned.

Data Interpretation and Site Comparisons

Previous archaeological and historical research on sites occupied by Chinese and Japanese migrants in North America reveals they used or consumed a range of goods imported from their homelands plus Western-style goods available locally, demonstrating elements of cultural persistence and change. Details vary, however, depending on a range of factors rooted in both home and host countries, including cultural traditions, access and availability to food and other goods, individual and community choices, and economic and other structural constraints.

Don Island

In addition to activities mentioned above, archaeological data and a surviving 1905 tally book or ledger from the cannery store offer insight on the everyday material lives of the Japanese on Don Island. Entries in the tally book indicate Japanese fisherman purchased a range of Western style foods (including meat and dairy) and cooking implements, rice and Japanese tea, work clothes, commercial fishing supplies, and various household items on behalf of the community (Salome 1905).

Ceramic tableware and glass beverage bottles of both Euro-Canadian and Japanese manufacture comprise the largest categories of domestic artifacts recovered from the site. The vast majority of ceramics are Japanese domestic wares (NISP=1751, MNV=285), including rice/soup bowls, small shallow dishes, tea and sake cups, and teapots, plus stoneware mortar bowls and a coarse earthenware fry pan (Figure 8). NISP (number of identified specimens present) is the total number of fragments recovered, whereas MNV (minimum number of vessels) is an estimate of the number of whole vessels represented by the fragments. Ceramic vessel forms suggest residents ate traditional Japanese meals of rice, miso soup, and side dishes of pickled vegetables and fish. A smaller number (NISP=486, MNV=64) of Euro-American style ceramics, most undecorated semi-vitreous white earthenware, include plates, teacups and saucers, egg cups, teapots, a small bowl, and a pitcher, indicating they adopted some Euro-Canadian dining customs.

Other food-related items include glass canning jars, condiment and pickle bottles, drinking glasses, feeding bottles, metal cutlery and food cans, and enamel serving and dining wares. The modest faunal assemblage includes cattle, marine shellfish, and waterfowl, demonstrating use of both domestic (purchased) and wild (hunted) species. Botanical remains attest to a combination of domestic and wild fruits including watermelon, strawberry, wild cherry, peach, and salmonberry. For these and other artifact categories, see Ross (2013) for detailed quantitative data.

Besides brewing homemade sake, community members purchased a range of Western-style alcohol and soda, including liquor, beer, and wine, plus smaller amounts of imported Japanese beer, soda, and sake (MNV=166). Beer

and liquor were by far the most common alcoholic beverages represented in the archaeological assemblage, including local brews from New Westminster and Vancouver, and imported Scotch whisky and Dutch gin. Beverage-related artifacts also include glass tumblers, a water glass, a shot glass, imported Japanese sake cups and decanters, and Chinese brown stoneware liquor bottles. Also recovered was one Japanese and one Western-style tobacco pipe, plus smoking paraphernalia listed in the 1905 tally book.



Figure 8. Ceramic tableware from Don Island. Item (a): Japanese small dish; (b): Japanese rice/soup bowl; (c): Japanese teacup; (d): Japanese teapot; (e): Japanese saké cup; (f): Chinese teacup; (g): Rockingham style pitcher; (h): Japanese teacup; (i): egg cup; (j): English saucer; (k): English bowl; (l): English tea/coffee pot; (m): Japanese teacup; (n): English plate.

Other items recovered include Western-style clothing, pharmaceuticals, grooming/hygiene products, and architectural and electrical materials and equipment. Along with food and beverages, smoking and hygiene artifacts demonstrate the complexities of disentangling aspects of cultural persistence and change. For example, tobacco, beer, and toothbrushes were all indigenized in Japan prior to overseas migration and all are represented archaeologically by both local and imported (Japanese) brands; the same is true for pharmaceuticals.

Lion Island

Unlike Don Island, there are no known written records on the everyday lives of Chinese bunkhouse residents on Lion Island. Ceramic tableware recovered archaeologically includes a combination of Chinese (NISP=420, MNV=73) and Euro-American (NISP=114, MNV=17) wares (Figure 9). Chinese ceramics are dominated by cheap Bamboo pattern rice bowls (NISP=354, MNV=54) plus a small number of tea and liquor cups, spoons, and teapots. English ceramics are relatively uncommon and are limited almost entirely to dinner plates (15 of 17 vessels), probably used as communal serving vessels for Chinese-style meals typically consumed from Bamboo bowls that served multiple purposes for a range of food and beverages.



Figure 9. Ceramic tableware from Lion Island. Item (a): English plate; (b): Chinese teapot; (c): Chinese liquor warmer; (d): Japanese teacup; (e): Chinese teacup; (f): Chinese liquor cup; (g): Chinese spoon; (h): English teacup; (i): Chinese rice/soup bowl.

An abundance of brown stoneware storage vessels (NISP=2899, MNV=111) that held a variety of preserved foods imported from China, confirm a heavy reliance on traditional foods and meals made up of mixed seasonal vegetables and meats (usually pork) served over rice. Adoption of some Western cooking practices is suggested by glass condiment bottles and an enamelware saucepan. Faunal remains confirm consumption of fresh pork, beef,

chicken, and fish. Botanicals include salmonberry and wild cherry. Based on historical accounts of cannery life, it is likely bunkhouse residents kept live pigs and chickens on site, and tended a small vegetable garden to supplement the preserved foods (Masson and Guimary 1981).

Among the most abundant artifacts from the bunkhouse are glass beverage bottles (MNV=116), including liquor, beer and soda (Japanese and Western), and wine, with liquor and beer being by far the most abundant. Chinese stoneware liquor bottles, porcelain liquor cups, and one liquor warmer were also recovered, along with glass tumblers and a metal bottle opener. Recreational beverage consumption was combined with opium smoking and gambling, both of which are represented by Chinese opium pipe bowl fragments and other paraphernalia, and glass gaming pieces and Asian coins used in games like *weiqi* and *fan tan*. Remains of Western-style clothing were recovered that were worn in ethnically distinct ways, as suggested by archival photos. Medicine bottles indicate Chinese migrants combined traditional and Western pharmaceuticals on Lion Island as did their Japanese neighbours. Finally, the Chinese bunkhouse assemblage includes similar household, personal, work-related, and architectural artifacts as on Don Island.

Interpretations and Broader Significance

The everyday lives of Chinese and Japanese migrants as revealed by archaeological and archival data from Don and Lion Islands can be interpreted in the context of interdisciplinary literature on the related concepts of transnationalism and diaspora. In brief, transnationalism is a process whereby migrants create and maintain multiple identities, relationships, and practices drawn from both home and host countries simultaneously rather than being forced to choose between them (i.e., cultural conservatism vs. assimilation) (Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Diaspora is a process by which people dispersed from an original homeland maintain collective communities and identities rooted in that homeland while living abroad (Anthias 1998; Butler 2001). Archaeologists and scholars of Asian American communities are beginning to recognize the importance of these concepts as frameworks for comparing and interpreting factors influencing past population movements (Azuma 2005; Hsu 2000; Lilley 2004; Mackie 2003; Voss and Williams 2008). See Ross (2013a) for a fuller discussion of transnationalism and diaspora and their relevance to the archaeology of Asian migration.

Archaeological and archival evidence indicates Chinese and Japanese labourers on Don and Lion Islands used a combination of Asian and Western domestic consumer goods and practices, although relative proportions vary in different behavioural contexts. Imported Asian merchandise and practices are most commonly associated with dining, recreational activities including games and social drinking. Pharmaceuticals are also of Asian origin, whereas clothing, tools, and household goods are primarily locally available Western-style consumer goods. At both sites glass bottles reflect a diverse range of domestic and imported Asian

beverages. Another significant similarity is that the bulk of both assemblages of artifacts consist of cheap, locally available consumer goods with few luxuries.

Among the notable differences is the wider range of Western foods and culinary paraphernalia in the Japanese community that include a considerable diversity of Japanese ceramics. In contrast, the Chinese relied more heavily on traditional foods and a very limited range of ceramic tablewares that excludes many vessel forms commonly used in the homeland and found on other overseas sites.

Explanations for these similarities and differences in patterns of material culture and behaviour involve a combination of choice and societal pressures locally and in the homeland. Chinese and Japanese migrants were both subject to racist exclusion that relegated them to low-paying jobs and severely limited their consumer power; many were also unmarried, transient, and had little reason to invest heavily in material things. Consumer choices were further influenced by a need to secure work, and it was often necessary to use local work clothes and tools to gain employment in some industries. The Japanese community on Don Island had greater long-term economic and social stability because it was occupied year-round by a core group that included families, allowing it to develop a more profitable infrastructure involving several other entrepreneurial activities aside from fishing. It also organized labour contracts and intra-group provisioning of food and other supplies. In contrast, the all-male Chinese bunkhouse had high annual personnel turnaround, and residents were outfitted by independent contractors who likely skimped on provisions to maximize profits. This explains the low quality and limited variety of the cooking and dining artifacts, but a much greater diversity of beverage bottles (which closely resembles the diversity found in the Japanese community) indicates that Chinese residents were responsible for organizing their own recreational activities and thus had more choice in what they drank.

Another important factor influencing the artifact assemblages at these sites was the Meiji era reforms in Japan, during which the government promoted Westernization and the country began producing and consuming (and indigenizing) many Western commodities, including beer. Overseas migrants adopted many of these things, and changing consumption patterns on Don Island cannot be linked solely to acculturative forces in Canadian culture. Popularity of certain Western good and customs among Japanese migrants was already part of a broader process of Westernization begun at home, explaining the greater ease with which Japanese migrants appear to have adapted to local customs. While available in Chinese treaty ports, Western goods were not promoted in China, although we must not ignore evidence of changing cultural patterns in China that influenced consumer habits abroad. For both Chinese and Japanese migrants, their home countries were not simply sources of static cultural tradition but also change and modernity, which also influenced migrant

consumer patterns as a result of periodic return visits and merchant networks that brought a continual influx of goods and ideas.

Returning to transnationalism and diaspora, consideration of archaeological and archival data from Don and Lion Islands elucidates the role of both home and host countries in influencing everyday consumer habits among Asian migrants, as attested by differences in diet, dress, and recreational activities. Furthermore, patterns of material consumption are not just a product of ethnicity, but are also influenced by aspects of identity like race, class, and gender, and other local contextual factors. So, while cooking and dining practices were heavily influenced by ethnic tradition, they were also affected by access to imported commodities, racism, and labour recruitment conventions in the industry. Likewise, clothing and alcohol consumption were influenced by patterns of dress and recreational drinking in local work camps. Asian migrants drew on influences and options from both home and abroad without having to choose between them, and selection and use of material goods did not necessarily reflect gradual change from one static identity to another, but multiple simultaneous identities in dynamic flux. Also, culture change does not necessarily mean loss of cultural identity; diasporic ethnic identities rooted in a shared homeland were maintained by retaining a handful of traditional practices such as dining and recreational activities that were important catalysts for social cohesion back home.

Archaeological investigations on Don and Lion Islands show that historic sites can provide a wealth of important information about issues like ethnic identity and patterns of cultural persistence and change among migrant groups in B.C. This study has also demonstrated that in-depth research in historical archaeology is effective in complementing and adding nuance to aspects of the recent history of the province. In 2013, I conducted further excavations on Lion Island as part of an archaeological field school at Simon Fraser University. Focus was on two bunkhouses appearing on archival maps that may have been occupied by Euro-Canadian cannery workers (Ross 2013b). If so, the substantial quantity of artifacts recovered from this location will provide a valuable contrast to material patterns identified at the Asian camps.

Another valuable direction for future research will be to compare the lives of Asian migrants from different time periods and generations and in a variety of urban and rural contexts, to explore variability within diasporic communities. Unfortunately, substantial archaeology on historic sites in B.C. is relatively uncommon because sites post-dating 1846 are not granted automatic protection under the provincial Heritage Conservation Act, and so this kind of work will take time. In the meantime, there is a strong need to revise heritage legislation and policy in the province to lend the same protection, and mandate similar site recording and analysis standards, for post-1846 sites as is granted to earlier ones and promote the development of a more robust local tradition of historical archaeology.