CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOS ANGELES CHINATOWN:
1850-1970

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography

by

Thomas Allen McDannold

June, 1973
The thesis of Thomas Allen McDannold is approved:

California State University, Northridge

February, 1973
DEDICATION

To my Parents
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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOS ANGELES CHINATOWN:
1850-1970

by

Thomas Allen McDannold

Master of Arts in Geography

June, 1973

In 1970, Chinatown contained the largest single grouping of Chinese within Los Angeles. It was characterized by a high concentration of population and specific land use. Although its functional relation to the Chinese who lived throughout the city could be tentatively identified, questions as to its geographical development were unanswered.

The answers were found by tracing Chinatown from its incipient point to the present location. It was discovered that the enduring presence of the Chinese within the city began in 1850. By the 1870s, there had developed an area known as Chinatown. Two Chinese businesses had formed the nucleus for the development. From 1890 to the 1930s, Chinatown reached its epitome
both geographically and socially. Destruction of Chinatown in the mid-1930s resulted in three small areas of Chinese concentration in 1940. These were the City Market, New Chinatown, and China City. By 1970, the City Market had all but disappeared through its providing residence for the large Chinatown that resulted from the merging of New Chinatown and China City. Coalescence of these two points was accelerated by the recent influx of Chinese immigrants.

The identification of the evaluation of Chinatown made the factors that formed the concentration apparent. Paramount to the original Chinatown were the early Chinese pioneer merchants and the means of Chinese migration. After the destruction of Chinatown, three individuals were of importance in building upon the past. The fruit of their labor was the Chinatown of 1970.

When these elements were juxtaposed within the historical perspective, it became possible to state that Chinatown had developed in its original location in an unplanned manner while its present location resulted from organized planning.
SECTION I

THE PRESENT-DAY CHINATOWN

Introduction

The distribution of Chinese within Los Angeles in 1970 indicated a major concentration and several minor clusterings amidst a somewhat dispersed residential pattern (Figure 1.1). The major concentration was known as Chinatown. Its location, as perceived by the general non-Chinese population of the city, was that of being near the Civic Center. Streets which bisected the area were College Street-North Broadway and Ord Street-North Spring Street. The following discussion examines this area characterized by its concentration of Chinese inhabitants. Attention is given to the areal extent of Chinatown and how the Chinese used the land.

Geographical Extent of Chinatown

The delineation of the Chinatown borders utilized demographic information and field investigation rather than ill-defined borders based on cross-streets. The 1970 census provided area-based population data concerning the
Figure 1.1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1970
One Dot Represents Forty Persons
Chinese. An examination of these data indicated that 11 per cent of the 27,345 Chinese residents of the city lived within two of the 1,583 census tracts of Los Angeles. These were census tract numbers 1,971 and 2,071. The Chinese accounted for 51.9 per cent and 70.8 per cent of their respective total population. Given that ethnic dominance in a certain area requires that a particular ethnic group account for 51 per cent of the area's total population, tract numbers 1,971 and 2,071 constitute the geographic area of Chinatown (Figure 1.2A).

However, field investigation of the actual distribution within the two census tracts indicated that in tract number 1,971, the Chinese were highly localized in an area contiguous to tract 2,071. This was a function of the limited housing within tract 1,971 which resulted from most of its area being given over to a city park (Elysian Park) and sports arena (Dodger Stadium). The result of this concern for actual location, rather than data based on an areal unit, produced an even smaller Chinatown (Figure 1.2B).

Of note was census tract number 1,977. Although its percentage of Chinese (32.6 per cent) placed it outside of the 51 per cent criterion, its numerical content (1,029) indicated that it contained a substantial number of Chinese
Figure 1.2

DELINEATION OF CHINATOWN, 1970

- **CHINATOWN**
- **1970 CENSUS TRACT NUMBER**
- **2.6% PER CENT CHINESE**
- **14 ACTUAL NUMBER OF CHINESE**

residents. A survey of dwellings in this tract, which is almost entirely made up of residential units, revealed that those housing units located adjacent to tract 2,071 were predominantly occupied by Chinese. Near the center of tract number 1,977, residential occupancy was balanced between Chinese and non-Chinese. Once this somewhat arbitrary line was crossed, non-Chinese constituted the majority of residents. These considerations, although in violation of the criteria previously set forth, resulted in yet another modification of the boundaries of Chinatown (Figure 1.2C). However, this change presents a more realistic picture of the geographical extent of Chinatown.

The basis for this conclusion was that the line of delimitation encompassed those areas in which there was a significant number of Chinese in close proximity. In fact, the Chinatown borders shown in Figure 1.2C enclosed 15 percent of the total Chinese population of Los Angeles in 1970. This percentage was concentrated in a 0.5 square mile area.

**The Land Use Within**

Within the one-half square mile of Chinatown, there were both Chinese residential and non-residential land uses. Frequently this was identifiable by its distinctive
landscape appearance. Although many Chinese lived above the shops which were Chinese operated, the majority of Chinatown residents were located in residential units. The greatest number of buildings which were designed specifically for residential use was located west of Hill Street. These housing units were pre-World War II single and multiple family dwellings, many of which were being replaced through the construction of contemporary-style apartment buildings. Most of the apartments being built displayed the names of Chinese construction companies (Plate 1.1). One completed apartment had a small Chinese garden in its front lawn (Plate 1.2).

Field investigations in the area, as well as a survey of the dwellings, indicated that those units east of the Pasadena freeway were almost entirely occupied by Chinese. Units to the west of the freeway consisted of well-kept single and multiple family dwellings. As noted previously, the majority of Chinese in the latter area (census tract number 1,977) lived near the Pasadena freeway boundary.

Non-residential land use within Chinatown was essentially related to civic and commercial activities characterized by Chinese proprietorship (Figure 1.3). A north-to-south transect through the area, beginning north
Plate 1.1. This apartment unit, located on Solano Avenue, represents the majority of new units being built. Sign number one indicates that not only was the general contractor Chinese but also that his office was located in Chinatown. Sign number two states, "Now renting. New two bedroom with living room apartments. Inquire at 440, apartment number 3."
Sign number three amends number two by stating, "Good [as in luck or fortune] apartment for rent. Interested persons call 748-7473." It is interesting to speculate on how "For Rent" signs written in Chinese might tend to keep non-Chinese inquiries at a minimum. (Translation of the signs by the author. Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
Plate 1.2. This garden in front of an apartment on Cottage Home Street was constructed by one of the apartment manager's sons. His intent was to create a small landscape which had an "oriental" flavor rather than a garden with religious significance. His success resulted in several requests from other Chinese to design and build gardens for their homes. The manager's other son is an engineering major at the University of Southern California. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
Figure 1.3

NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USE OF THE CHINESE IN CHINATOWN.

- RESTAURANT
- RETAIL
- MANUFACTURING
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
- CIVIC ORGANIZATION
- CHURCH
- LANGUAGE SCHOOL
- RAILROAD

Data source: Field survey; Los Angeles Chinatown.
of College Street on North Broadway, revealed many neon-lit shops and restaurants with English language signs and menus. Most of the buildings had a Chinese-type architecture (Plate 1.3). In the Alpine Street and North Broadway section, there began a subtle domination of shop signs written only in the Chinese language while the number of Chinese on the streets seemed to increase. These stores did not have a distinctive architectural style. On North Spring Street between Ord Street and Macy Street, almost all of the commercial signs were written in Chinese and much of the conversation that drifted from the open doors of the businesses was in Chinese. At this point, the number of Chinese on the streets exceeded the number of non-Chinese. Interspersed were buildings with a Chinese appearance (Plate 1.4).

A Complex of Functional Relations

The Chinese who did not live within Chinatown proper were related to it. The minor areas of clustering, such as the one east of the Long Beach freeway and north of the Santa Ana freeway tended to be closely associated with the major Chinese concentration. This interrelationship was probably a result of ethnic ties such as participation in social and civic organizations as well as the
Plate 1.3. A view of Chinatown as seen from North Broadway above College Street when looking south. The Chinese writing and names on stores as well as ornate roofs and a gate give a distinct appearance to the northern edge of the Chinatown business area. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
Plate 1.4. Chinatown as seen when looking north on North Spring Street near Macy Street. The dominance of Chinese writing on the stores and the subdued Chinese architecture give the visitor an impression of utility which is directed toward the Chinese rather than non-Chinese. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
smaller area serving as a "dormitory community" for some of the merchants and businessmen whose base of operation was located within the major concentration.

The other small clusters tended to be functionally linked to Chinatown through a generally undocumented relationship which centered around social interaction and the purchase of Chinatown products such as Chinese foodstuffs and merchandise. These small clusters were superimposed on the generally dispersed Chinese residential pattern that was found throughout the city. In fact, only 183 of the city's census tracts contained no Chinese. This dispersal may have been an indication of a reduction in the previous amount of segregation between Chinese and non-Chinese.

Some Issues for Consideration

Overall, the geography of Chinatown was characterized by compactness and clear-cut borders within which there were residential and non-residential land uses with a distinct landscape appearance. It had at least a tenuous functional relationship with those Chinese who did not live within its geographical bounds. All of this indicated its importance, yet certain basic geographic questions were unanswered:

1) Is the present location the original location?
2) How did Chinatown come to occupy its present space?

3) What were the factors that caused it to develop where it did?

4) Has there always been a concentration of Chinese in a particular place within Los Angeles?

This thesis has as its focus the answers to these questions. To determine the answers, it was necessary to identify and trace through time the location of the Chinese in Los Angeles. This required an examination of the formation of Chinatown, its stabilization, and the early period of its present location. This view allowed for an analysis of the factors that shaped it. The results of the analysis were not only answers to the questions, but also conclusions about its development.
SECTION II

THE FORMATION OF CHINATOWN

Introduction

The Chinese began taking up residence in the town of Los Angeles by 1850. Their initial distribution was somewhat random. In the ensuing years both Chinese workers and entrepreneurs arrived in the town. The establishment of Chinese businesses and an increase in the number of Chinese resulted in an area characterized by its Chinese activity. That place became known as Chinatown.

Los Angeles and the Chinese

The first recorded appearance of Chinese in Los Angeles occurred in 1781 when Chinese shipbuilders entered the pueblo. However, it was not until 1850 that the Chinese again appeared in the chronicles pertaining to the town. This occurrence was their inclusion in the 1850 census and is considered to mark their enduring presence within Los Angeles (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1).

The town itself during the 1850s had its business center located at the intersection of Main Street and
Figure 2.1
CHINESE POPULATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND CITY, 1850-1970

Data source: See Table 2.1
### TABLE 2.1
THE CHINESE POPULATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND CITY, 1850-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Los Angeles County(^a)</th>
<th>Los Angeles City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>4,424</td>
<td>1,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3,209</td>
<td>2,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>1,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>2,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3,572</td>
<td>3,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>5,320</td>
<td>4,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>9,187</td>
<td>8,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19,286</td>
<td>15,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>40,798</td>
<td>27,345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Includes Los Angeles City

**Source:** Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark, *Census of the City and County of Los Angeles, California for the Year 1850* (Los Angeles, California: The Times Mirror Press, 1929), pp. 30-31; U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, various years and volumes of the Census of the United States.
Aliso Street. The aristocratic portion of the city was north of the business center near the plaza along Upper Main Street. Negro Alley, east of the business area and on its border, was the headquarters for gamblers and ruffians. The area between Negro Alley and the Los Angeles River was an abandoned agricultural site with a few houses. The area to the south was primarily agricultural and extended west to Spring Street. The area west of Spring Street was essentially the newly developed residential suburb of the city (Figure 2.2).

The Chinese came to Los Angeles, as well as other parts of the state, as a result of the deteriorating social and economic conditions within China during the mid 1800s. The "push," created by the situation in their native land, combined with the "pull" of opportunities in California in general. These opportunities involved either the chance to gain wealth through the discovery of gold or work as a laborer. The result of the "push-pull" situation was the immigration of large numbers of Chinese from 1850 to 1890. The passage of anti-Chinese legislature by 1890 stopped the flow of Chinese immigrants during the nineteenth century (Figure 2.3 and Table 2.2).

A great many of the immigrants in this forty-year period were sojourners who came with the purpose of
Figure 2.2
LOS ANGELES, circa 1850

Data source: Kelleher, Map of Zanja Madre; P. Ord, Plano de la Ciudad de Los Angeles, 1849
Figure 2.3
CHINESE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES AND CALIFORNIA, 1850–1970

Data source: See Table 2.2
TABLE 2.2
THE CHINESE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES
AND CALIFORNIA, 1850-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>California</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>34,933</td>
<td>34,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>63,199</td>
<td>49,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>105,465</td>
<td>75,132</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>107,488</td>
<td>72,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>119,050</td>
<td>45,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>71,531</td>
<td>36,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>61,639</td>
<td>28,812</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>74,954</td>
<td>37,361</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>41,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>118,000</td>
<td>58,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>237,000</td>
<td>85,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>435,000</td>
<td>136,860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIncludes California

striking it rich and returning to China. Although there are no data as to the number of Chinese who did return to their point of origin, it seems as though many remained in their new environment. These people, as well as the sojourners, transmitted money and letters to their relatives and friends in China. As will be seen in the subsequent discussion, these early Chinese and their communication with China were of considerable importance to the development of the Chinese concentration. However, the genesis of Chinatown began with the early arrivals in Los Angeles.

Early Settlement in the Town

From 1850 to 1860, the residential pattern of the few Chinese who came to live in the town was dispersed.

The census of 1850 lists two Chinese who resided in the town. They were both males. Ah Fou, age 28, had his occupation listed as none, while Alluce, age 18, was a servant. Their employer/benefactor was Robert Haley, a merchant. Haley, his family, Ah Fou and Alluce all lived at House Number 17. Although the exact location of their residence is lost in history, it is possible to indicate the general area in which they lived (Figure 2.4). This hypothesized location is based on the 1850 manuscript census and the Old Zanza Madre Map which indicates the
Figure 2.4
LOCATION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1850

LOCATION OF AH FOU AND ALLUCÉ ② PIO PICO - COT ① B. SODELA

- DWELLING
- PLAZA
+ CEMETERY

Data source: Kelinher, Map of Zacco Madonna, Newman and Newman, Census
residents of Los Angeles in the early 1850s.  

The census states that the first house visited by the Census Marshall was occupied by Benancia Zotela and family. The Old Zanja Madre Map indicates one B. Sodela living across from the Plaza Church. Taking into consideration the language problem encountered by an Anglo census taker with Spanish names, it is felt that Sodela was one and the same as Zotela. It is suggested that the Census Marshall began his enumeration there. The next place of residence which can be tentatively verified is the Pio Pico residence. Noted as House Number 15, the place had two families: Pio Pico and Cot. This residence is shown in the Old Zanja Madre Map and includes almost an entire block adjacent to and west of the Plaza.

Thus, it appears that the Census Marshall started his enumeration northwest of the Plaza, noted as House Number 1, moved out and visited houses 2 through 14, and returned to the Plaza area and listed the Pio Pico residence as House Number 15. Accordingly, House Number 17, that of the Haley family, Ah Fou, and Alluce, would not be far away. This general location is indicated in Figure 2.4.

The census of 1860 stated that the number of people who gave China as their birthplace had increased to
fourteen. A hypothesized location of these Chinese utilized the same methodology as that used in determining the Chinese location of 1850. The location of the residents that appeared in the 1860 manuscript census and on the Old Zanja Madre Map indicate that the Census Marshall zig-zagged across the city (Figure 2.5). Thus, by considering the house numbers of those Chinese who were recorded in the census and the known location of other places, it is possible to offer a tentative suggestion as to where the Chinese lived (Figure 2.6).

Occupations of the Chinese, as indicated by the census, were laundry work (10), cook (2), and laborer (2). Of interest is the fact that Ah Fou appears in the census. However, there is a discrepancy in the ages, for in 1850 his age was given as twenty-eight whereas in 1860 he was listed as being twenty-five years old. Whatever his age, if it is the same Ah Fou he had found employment, for in 1860 his occupation was listed as laborer.

The Identifiable Chinatown

From 1861 to 1890, the Chinese population of Los Angeles not only increased greatly but also helped produce Chinatown. In 1861, the number of Chinese in the city had risen to twenty-nine: twenty-one men and eight women.
Figure 25
ROUTE OF THE CENSUS MARSHALL IN LOS ANGELES, 1860

ROUTE OF THE CENSUS MARSHALL
1. MCLAUGHLIN (2)*
2. RUZ (251)*
3. ELIAS, ANDRES (257)*
4. COUNTY JAIL (479)*
5. DEL VALLE, IGNACIO (254)*
6. STERN, ABEL (555)*
7. SCOTT, JONATHAN (708)*
8. APABLASA, JUAN (793)*
9. CORONEL, YGNACIO (955)*

*HOUSE NUMBER BY ORDER OF VISITATION

Figure 2.6
LOCATION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1860

1. ATONE, HOP SING (262)*
2. AH KONG (305)*
3. AH CHU, AH HUNG, HOP CHUNG (307)*
4. AU CHOW, AU SOOK, JOHN TAMBOLI (369)*
5. LAWRENCE (453)*
6. AH MU, GEORGE CUSU (566)*
7. CHARLES DOOK WI (708)*
8. AH FOU (768)*

* (HOUSE NUMBER BY ORDER OF VISITATION)

Legend:
○ DWELLING
□ PLAZA
+ CEMETERY

Source: U.S. Population Schedule of the Eighth Census, Ill, Schedule I

Legend:

[Diagram showing locations of Chinese in Los Angeles, 1860]
There were also several Chinese businesses in operation: a herb shop, restaurant, curio store and six laundries (Figure 2.7). These places provided employment opportunities for some of the Chinese and mark the entry of Chinese entrepreneurs into the city.

During the next nine years more Chinese found their way to Los Angeles. A group of Chinese, sent from the overcrowded San Francisco Chinatown, arrived in 1866. In addition, there was a Chinese work force used to build a wagon road north of the city in 1869. Many of these workers settled in Los Angeles. Thus, by 1870, there were 172 Chinese in Los Angeles, half of whom lived in Negro Alley. This area became known as Chinatown (Plate 2.1). After 1870, additional Chinese came to live in Chinatown as a result of the Central Pacific Railroad Company starting construction of a line down the San Joaquin Valley in December, 1869. By 1872, the line had reached Goshen. At this point, the Southern Pacific Railroad, owned by the Central Pacific, started the final leg to Los Angeles. The last stretch, the 6,975 foot long San Fernando Tunnel, employed a work force of 1,500 men of whom 1,000 were Chinese. On September 5, 1876, Los Angeles was joined by rail with San Francisco. Many of these workers settled in Los Angeles and increased its
Figure 2.7

CHINESE BUSINESSES IN LOS ANGELES, 1861

1. HERB SHOP
2. RESTAURANT
3. LAUNDRIES
4. CURIOS SHOP

Dwelling
PLAZA
Cemetery
HILLS

Data source: Bingham, "Los Angeles Chinese: Newmark and Newmark, Sixty Years"
Plate 2.1. This view of Negro Alley, as seen from Arcadia Street, shows the area as it generally appeared around 1870. On the left is the Coronel Adobe where approximately one-half of the Chinese in Los Angeles lived. (Line drawing based on a photograph in the collection of the History Division, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History)
Chinese population to 605 in 1880 with approximately 50 per cent of this number residing within Chinatown. By 1890, Chinatown accounted for over 67 per cent of the 1,871 Chinese in the city.
References


4. Ibid., p. 46.


12 Newmark and Newmark, Census, pp. 30-31, 115, 117.

13 M. Keileher, Map Showing the Location of the Old Zanza Madre, Ditches, Vineyards and Old Town, etc. (Los Angeles, California, 1875); Newmark and Newmark, Census, pp. 18-119.

14 Keileher, Map of Zanza Madre; Newmark and Newmark, Census, p. 29.

15 Newmark and Newmark, Census, p. 18.

16 Ibid., p. 30.


19 Ibid., p. 77.


Bingham, "Los Angeles Chinese," p. 27; Newmark and Newmark, eds., Sixty Years, p. 298.

Newmark and Newmark, eds., Sixty Years, p. 297.


SECTION III
THE STABILIZATION OF CHINATOWN

Introduction

From 1890 to the 1930s, Chinatown was essentially an entity in and of itself. Its geographical location remained somewhat stabilized while its social, economic, and governmental apparatus exerted a cohesive force upon its residents. A satellite community became an additional place of Chinese residence. Its establishment resulted from new social and economic conditions as well as changing land use within the city. Ultimately, these factors culminated in the demise of Chinatown itself.

Morphology at the Turn of the Century

By 1890, Chinatown had taken on the form and structure which was to last until the 1930s (Figure 3.1). From 1890 to 1910, Chinatown was at its apex both geographically and socially (Figure 3.2, Plate 3.1). Its center was Los Angeles Street and Alameda Street. Los Angeles Street was extended through the Plaza and Macy Street became a thoroughfare rather than a rough road.
Figure 3.1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1890
One Dot Represents Forty Persons
(Freeways for reference only)
(Data source: U.S. Federal Census of the United States, 1890: Population, Pt. 1)
Figure 3.2
CHINATOWN, circa 1890

Data source: Scribner Insurance Maps Los Angeles, Vol. 1, 1898
Plate 3.1. Lanterns as well as scrolls with Chinese writing characterize this view of Chinatown in 1890 as seen when looking north on Los Angeles Street. Of note is the brick building on the right. Brick was used extensively to replace many of the old structures in the area. (Line drawing based on a photograph within the collection of the History Division, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History)
The area itself was characterized by narrow, paved and unpaved streets lined with houses painted in bright colors. These structures had been built before the enactment of health and safety ordinances by the city. Also there were a multitude of Chinese stores, restaurants, and laundries throughout the area, all of which had their owners living on the premises or nearby. In the sky above the Chinese concentration there hung a cloud of smoke emitted from the nearby train yard. ²

Non-Chinese businessmen were unable to penetrate the concentration because of a system of store rental that demanded a high indemnity be paid the previous, i.e., Chinese, occupant. Ultimately, the system produced many vacant stores that were untouchable by Chinese and non-Chinese alike. ³ Those few places that were not unreasonable in their cost tended to be given over to gambling houses rather than legitimate businesses. ⁴ Overall, Chinatown had its own distinctive appearance and businesses as previously noted. The result was that the area became a town within the city.

**A Town Within the City**

Chinatown provided the inhabitants with most of the cohesive elements associated with a town. These were
services, employment opportunities, and governmental organizations. Services included a theatre, blacksmithy, telephone exchange, newspaper, temples, herb doctors, schools, service organizations, and a cemetery (located at Eastern and Third Street). With the exception of the missionary-operated schools, all of these tertiary activities were Chinese owned and operated.

In addition, several cultural organizations served as a link between China and the Chinese of Los Angeles. These were concerned with maintaining and transmitting the cultural heritage of China to the Chinese residents of the city. For example, the Chinese language schools provided an atmosphere where it was possible for American-born Chinese to learn the language as well as culture traits. Likewise, the China Society of Southern California was concerned with the study of China and its people while the Chinese Culture Society was dedicated to topics related to India and Korea as well as China.

Other organizations that provided a service to the inhabitants of Chinatown were the Chinese American Citizens' Alliance, the Chinese Native Sons of the Golden State, Chinese Student Alliance, and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The Chinese American Citizens' Alliance
was concerned with furthering the interests of the China-
born Chinese while the Native Sons group was dedicated to
the same goal only with the American-born Chinese. The
Chinese Student Alliance was active in establishing dis-
cussions, debates, sports activities, and community enter-
tainment. Other groups came into being and tended to be
either religiously orientated or to espouse political
ideologies. Overall, these tertiary functions served as
a means for maintaining the ethnic identity and cohesion
of the residents of Chinatown.

Of particular importance in the realm of China-
town's economy was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. It was
primarily responsible for the regulation of the prices of
merchandise in accord with the rates of monetary exchange
between China and the United States. In 1924, the Chamber
of Commerce made efforts to change the image of Chinatown
so that it would attract Angelinos and tourists to the
area. Thus, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los
Angeles tended to exert a centripetal force upon the
Chinese businesses, which helped maintain the extent of
Chinatown.

Employment for residents of the area was found in
the Chinese businesses. These included laundries (35 in
1896 with the Wong and Lew families dominating),
restaurants (15 by 1910), import houses, garment manufacturing, shoemaking, cigar production, and jobs with local fish and meat markets. Outside of the area, the Chinese were able to work as servants, laborers in a fishing company or in agriculture. Agricultural opportunities were found in the orchards, vineyards, or small intensive vegetable farms on leased land located in the Washington Boulevard-Wilmington area (Figure 3.3). Most of the vegetable gardens were located in the present-day communities of Watts, Lynwood, Compton, and Wilmington. By 1880, fifty out of sixty licensed vegetable peddlers in the city were Chinese. Many Chinese lived within the area where they worked. With the majority of employment opportunities within Chinatown itself, it followed that many Chinese would live there. In fact, over 67 per cent of the total Chinese population of Los Angeles lived within Chinatown by 1890.

Other economic activities were those that came to be declared illegal. Opium dens, numbering approximately 100 in 1896, were closed by the turn of the century. Prostitution was stopped by the city in 1909. The Chinese role in this activity is unclear. It is known that there developed hundreds of prostitute "cribs" next to the Chinese concentration on Alameda Street. Although the
Figure 3.3
CHINESE VEGETABLE GARDENING IN LOS ANGELES, late 1800s
(Freeways and community names for reference only)

DATA SOURCE: Lui, Inside Los Angeles Chinatown
prostitutes were of many nationalities, they were predominantly Americans and Europeans. The hoodlum element which frequented the area tended to make life difficult for all of the people who lived nearby. It is speculated that many of the unsavory activities of the area were attributed to the Chinese who may have only accidentally been spatially related to the area. In any event, few people bothered to make the differentiation. In addition, gambling, originally a type of non-wagering recreation, was declared illegal in 1925. This was prompted by the exchange of money as well as the participation of non-Chinese in the games.

The governmental structure of the town within the city was essentially centered on the family associations and the Chinese Benevolent Association. The genesis of these organizations can be traced to the time during the voyage from China to California where there tended to be a sorting out according to surname by the Chinese as they crossed the Pacific Ocean. This grouping continued after the immigrants arrived in California. In fact, the shops of merchants previously arrived often formed the social and economic focus for the various surname groups. The result was that almost all of the Chinese of Los Angeles were originally from the Sze Yup district of Kwangtung, China.
and grouped into formal organizations which came to be characterized by particular economic occupations.  

The grouping of individuals with similar surnames developed into the family associations. The associations, although structured along the lines which had characterized them in China, were initiated in response to the needs of the Chinese in their new environment. Its primary function came to be that of services to its individual members. These services included burial arrangements, interpreter service, mediation between individuals, and an annual banquet.  

Family associations typical of Los Angeles are indicated in Table 3.1. Those with the surname Louie formed the largest group, most of whom were concerned with agriculture and related activities. This illustrates the relationship of the family association and its close tie with occupational specialization. Through nepotism there was a tendency for people of the same surname to be engaged in the same job.  

The Chinese Benevolent Association (or Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association as it is named in Los Angeles) acted as the governing body for all associations, groups, clubs, and individuals. Its functions were:

1. Supreme Court of the Chinese
2. Spokesman for the Chinese population
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association Name</th>
<th>Family Name(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Che Duck Tong</td>
<td>Choy, Eng, Chow, Yung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chew Poy Kuo Tong</td>
<td>Chu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gee Haw Oak Chen</td>
<td>Chan, Woo, Yen, Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung Chan Kong Yee</td>
<td>Low, Quan, Chang, Chew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shu Yen Tong</td>
<td>Louie, Fong, Kwong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei Ben</td>
<td>Louie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong Kong Har Tong</td>
<td>Wong, Ng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. Initiator and promoter of welfare programs
4. The official voice of the Manchu government to the American based Chinese (prior to the establishment of the Chinese consul)
5. Census taker of the Chinese
6. Developer of Chinese language and cultural schools
7. Organizer of community medical and hospitalization services

8. Watchdog against anti-Chinese legislation

9. Assistant in commercial negotiations

Its greatest service to the Chinese of Los Angeles occurred during this period when there was little communication between the Chinese and non-Chinese. These governmental organizations, like those of the larger non-Chinese community, aided in maintaining a large degree of spatial control over those within its pale. In general, all of the organizations helped in eliminating unemployment, beggars, and public charges, and dealt with criminal matters in accordance with their jurisdiction.

A Satellite Community: The City Market

During this period of Chinatown's heyday, 1890-1910, there developed a second area of Chinese concentration known as the City Market. Located at Ninth Street and San Pedro Street, the City Market became the home of the Chinese produce business (Figure 3.4). Its founder, Louie Quan, opened the 200-space market in 1909. The surrounding residential area quickly became dominated by the Chinese. By 1930, the two schools in the area had as many
Figure 3.4

CITY MARKET – EAST ADAMS AREA, circa 1940

- CITY MARKET
- CITY MARKET CHINESE
- EAST ADAMS CHINESE

Data sources: Cheri, "Chinese Community in Los Angeles;" Lum, "Participation of the Chinese."
Chinese students as did the schools of Chinatown. As the population increased, there appeared a Chinese Congregational Church, grocery store, restaurants, and other small businesses which were still evident in 1970 (Plate 3.2). By the late 1930s, the largest concentration of Chinese in Los Angeles was in this general area which included the neighboring East Adams Boulevard area.

The preceding statement indicates that something had happened to Chinatown itself. In fact, it no longer existed. The following pages discuss how the town within the city ceased to exist.

The Decline and Fall of Chinatown

The decline of Chinatown has been marked as starting in the early 1900s. Enforcement of anti-gambling laws, illegality of opium import, establishment of the Republic of China, and the final passage of state and federal legislation which discriminated against the Chinese, resulted in some Chinese leaving the Los Angeles Chinatown. The destinations of those who were outmigrating were either China or elsewhere in the United States. Efforts to reverse the outward movement had little impact on the out-migration. In addition, the economic depression of the 1930s forced many Chinese out of business while economic
Plate 3.2. When looking south on Ninth Street from San Pedro Street, the City Market itself is on the right. Across the street, Chinese restaurants and small food processing plants are found as are the church and Chinese operated businesses. Residential units in the area are being replaced by new industrial buildings. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
competition with the Japanese created more unemployment. The Chinese governmental organizations were unable to cope with the demands placed on their aid and assistance programs. Consequently, Chinese names appeared on the state relief roles for the first time. All in all, there began a general breakdown of the institutions and organizations which had helped in holding Chinatown together.

The final blow was dealt when it became known that Chinatown was to be torn down and a railways freight yard with terminal facilities built in its place. Litigation over rightful ownership of the land upon which Chinatown was built had begun in 1913. Rumors were rampant as to what this meant. By 1916, it became known that the area was to become a focus of rail transport. This meant that the Chinese must leave the area. However, there developed additional legal problems that ultimately found their way to the Supreme Court. This gave the residents more time to relocate and no doubt accounts for some of the settlement in the City Market area. In 1931, the Supreme Court approved the construction of the terminal. The Chinese were told to move. Thus, Chinatown and its residents fell victim to the invasion of commercial activities in much the same manner as had other ethnic concentrations in cities throughout the United States.
Destruction of the area began in 1933. Various plans were offered as to what to do with the Chinese but none were in operation in 1933. It may have been that by slowly razing the buildings, time would be given for the occupants to find some other accommodations on their own. With demolition of the area completed in 1935-36, Chinatown was gone and the bulk of the Chinatown inhabitants dispersed.
References


4. Ibid., p. 118.


14 Ibid., p. 25.


32 Ibid., p. 133.

33 Ibid., pp. 133-40.

34 David Ward, "The Emergence of Central Immigrant Ghettos in American Cities: 1840-1920," Annals of
Association of American Geographers, LVIII (June, 1968), 348.

SECTION IV

THE PRESENT LOCATION OF CHINATOWN

Introduction

By 1940, Los Angeles contained three areas characterized by their Chinese inhabitants: The City Market, New Chinatown, and China City. The City Market area supplied many of the Chinese who took up residence in New Chinatown and China City. Within a few years, the City Market all but vanished while New Chinatown and China City coalesced into the Chinatown of 1970.

Emergence of the Location

As a result of the destruction of Chinatown, the City Market area became the only place of Chinese concentration from approximately 1936 to 1938. However, an inspection of Los Angeles in 1940 revealed not one concentration of Chinese but three. They were New Chinatown, located just south of the present-day Pasadena freeway, China City which was north of the current San Bernardino freeway, and the City Market area as bisected by the Santa Monica freeway of today (Figure 4.1).
Figure 4.1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1940
One Dot Represents Forty Persons
(Freeways for reference only)

Data source: Manning and Beckett, Los Angeles Its People and Its Homes

[Map depicting the distribution of the Chinese in Los Angeles, 1940]
New Chinatown

New Chinatown was developed by the New Chinatown Corporation. The corporation was wholly Chinese owned with emphasis on establishing an economic basis built on tourist trade. Thus, New Chinatown was designed to appeal to tourists. The development itself was north of the Civic Center in an area zoned primarily for commercial-industrial use. New Chinatown represented the Chinese entrance into an area which had been characterized by French and Italian occupancy.\(^1\) Landscape remnants in the form of abandoned petroleum storage facilities, a French hospital and restaurant, can still be seen in the area (Figure 4.2).

The Los Angeles Chinatown, its official designation, was opened to the public on June 25, 1938. Presiding over the ceremony were former Governor Merrian and the Chinese Consul, Chang T'chang-K.\(^2\) The development itself was a closely knit area of two storied structures utilizing Chinese architecture modified to fit its American environment. Wide streets were laid out in an orderly manner and given significant names such as Mei Ling Way and Sun Mun Way. These names were derived from the maiden name of Chiang Kai-Shek's wife, Sung Mei-Ling and the Three People's Principles of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen. Access to the
Figure 4.2
NEW CHINATOWN AND ITS RESIDENTIAL AREA, circa 1940

NEW CHINATOWN

PETROLEUM STORAGE

FRENCH HOSPITAL

CHINA CITY DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTIAL AREA

FRENCH RESTAURANT

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

RAILROAD

Data source: Chen, "Chinese Community in Los Angeles."
streets was gained from the west by passing through a large gate which had been dedicated to the gathering of all the best talents. Entrance from the east was made via a gate dedicated to motherhood (Figure 4.3, Plate 4.1). ³

New Chinatown's unique aura was the result of the area being well lit and full of attractions such as restaurants and shops, the ornamental gates, and a statue of Sun Yat-Sen. The underlying plan was the preservation of China's cultural features—not for sentiment or artistic value but for commercial purposes. ⁴ The success of the New Chinatown venture can be seen by the following:

1) Almost every business which had been located in old Chinatown reestablished itself in the area. ⁵

2) The investment, initially of $20,000 in 1938, rose in value to approximately $1,000,000 in 1942. ⁶

3) Businesses therein provided employment as a cook or waiter to approximately 25 per cent of the Chinese residents. ⁷

4) There was a great increase in tourist trade. ⁸

An area of residential development for New Chinatown had been set aside by the New Chinatown Corporation. A program for the continual construction of housing units
Figure 4.3
NEW CHINATOWN

RESTAURANT
RETAIL
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
CIVIC ORGANIZATION
GATE
1950 ADDITION


0  150 feet
Plate 4.1. When standing at the East Gate of New Chinatown and looking west along Gin Ling Way, the visitor of 1940 was greeted by a landscape in keeping with his idea of things Chinese in the United States. Although this illustration was based on the New Chinatown of 1970, sources indicated that it looked very similar in 1940. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
was established with the direction of growth to be toward the scrub covered hills of Figueroa Street and northward to Elysian Park. Expansion into these areas by the Chinese occurred at a rapid rate.

The prosperity of the enterprise during the war years (1941-1945) resulted in expansion on the west side of Castelar Street (Figure 4.3, Plate 4.2). This was accomplished by the Chinese Development Company, a group of approximately fifty Chinese who individually owned the land and buildings. Construction, done by the company, was completed in 1950. The street names signified the importance of Chungking in the Chinese war with Japan (1937-1945).

**China City**

The second area of Chinese activity was that of China City (Figure 4.4). China City, a commercial venture initiated by a small group of non-Chinese, was opened to the public in June, 1938. It was designed to include colorful bazaars and a place to display treasures of China while giving the visitor a sense of the "mysterious" Orient (Figure 4.5, Plate 4.3). It was characterized by rickshaw stations, terraced levels, restaurants and shops (located on the "Passage of One Hundred Surprises") and a theatre. The finishing touch was enclosure of China City.
Plate 4.2. This view of the 1950 addition, sometimes referred to as Greater Chinatown, is the area as seen when looking north on Chungking Road. Although not as elaborate in its architectural style as the 1940 New Chinatown, it complements the original development. A recent survey (1973) indicated that some of the small retail establishments were being vacated and converted into piece-work garment manufacturing shops. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
Figure 4.4
CHINA CITY AND ITS RESIDENTIAL AREA, circa 1940

Data source: Chen, "Chinese Community in Los Angeles."
Figure 4.5
CHINA CITY

Plate 4.3. Shown is one of the few remaining structures of China City. It is located behind the New Hung Far restaurant (Plate 1.4) on North Spring Street. Its address was 130 Lotus Pool Road. Although the sign on its window was deteriorated, it seemed to identify the building as being the headquarters of the Lum Sai Hop Tong, a Chinese civic organization. When the author first discovered the building, it was enclosed by a make-shift fence and was used as a storage area. Since that time, the fence and stored material have been removed. Accordingly, the building, which needs repair, lends yet another dimension to the landscape appearance of Chinatown. (Line drawing based on a photograph taken by the author)
by a "Great Wall." Overall, the development tended to take on a movie set appearance. This was primarily a result of the survey and construction work being done by people involved in the motion picture industry.12 Cecil B. DeMille, director at Paramount Studio, donated much of the cinemagraphic paraphernalia with the House of Wong (from the movie, "The Good Earth") providing the focus of the tourist centered area.13 To open a business within the Central Kingdom, one had only to pay rent and set up shop.14 The proprietors and their families lived either above their stores or took up residence in whatever accommodations they could obtain in the nearby area.

The usual ebb and flow of business continued for approximately ten years. In 1949, a fire swept China City which destroyed the center part. This area was not rebuilt but made into a parking lot.15 The fire seems to have marked a turning point for the enterprise. By 1950, 90 per cent of the property of China City was owned by non-Chinese.16 Its demise, apparently unrecorded, occurred within a few years. However, the Chinese continued to live in the area adjacent to the defunct China City.

Merging of the Nodal Points

The area between New Chinatown and China City is
of particular note in that it provided the geographic link between the two nodal developments (Figure 4.6). The merging of the nodes was a result of the area's growth during the 1940s and 1950s. During this time, most of the people in the City Market relocated to the emerging area. It became characterized by commercial service activities specifically directed to the resident Chinese and those Chinese who lived outside of the area. Herb stores, barber shops, grocery markets, small businesses, and meeting halls were staffed with people who spoke only Chinese. Residential units were scattered throughout.

The dispersal of the Chinese in the 1930s, their regrouping in the City Market, and subsequent shift to the New Chinatown-China City area resulted in many of the Chinese organizations redirecting their activities and establishing new goals. The family associations remained important as a means of social interaction, yet the dispersion of their members had diminished their ability to maintain any geographical cohesion as they had done when most of their members lived in one small area. Even though many of the members relocated to New Chinatown-China City, the associations were unable to reestablish their previous importance.
Figure 4.6
COALESCENCE OF NEW CHINATOWN AND CHINA CITY, circa 1950

- NEW CHINATOWN - CHINA CITY NODES
- CHINESE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY
- RAILROAD

Data source: Chen, "Chinese Community in Los Angeles."
Likewise, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association became less of a governing body for the specific area of Chinatown and more of a spokesman for the Chinese of Los Angeles. No longer were all Chinese under its control as had been the case when most of them lived within old Chinatown during the time of minimal contact between the Chinese and the dominant society. Rather, its members became only those who were connected with New Chinatown businesses. The most recent large scale endeavor of the Association was the raising of money for a new headquarters and a Chinese language school. Both of these were completed in 1951 and became the centers of its activities.19

Other organizations of importance were the civic groups and churches located within the Chinese concentration. These included the relatively new Chinese Anti-Communist Legion, the Chinese American Citizens' Alliance, a school, various special interest societies, and family associations.20

Employment opportunities within the area remained similar to that of old Chinatown. Restaurants, curio shops, grocery stores, produce markets, and work in domestic service have attracted most of the Chinese population. Of interest with respect to these places of employment
was their need for renovation. The lack of refurbishment may have been due to the owner's insufficient capital. On the other hand, it may have been that the owner of a successful business did not want to make alterations for fear of the changes resulting in bad luck.22

The Current Configuration

A reexamination of the landscape of Chinatown in 1970, as discussed in Section I, brings this section into focus (Figure 4.7). The residential area, west of the commercial area, characterized by older housing units which were being replaced by new buildings, was part of the housing program of the Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation. Chinese expansion west of the Pasadena freeway resulted from growth in other directions being blocked by impermeable barriers such as industrial and government land use.

The non-residential land use as seen by the transect through the area was a journey from one nodal development to another. The College Street-North Broadway portion of the Chinatown transect gave a view of New Chinatown with its tourist attractions. The Alpine Street-North Broadway section of the traverse was actually a look at the area that provided the link between New Chinatown and China City. Being directed toward no particular group,
Figure 4.7
DEVELOPMENT OF CHINATOWN, 1970

- Boundaries and Direction of Growth, 1970
- Chinatown, 1950
- New Chinatown, 1940
- China City, 1940
- Non-Chinese Commercial Land Use
- Non-Chinese Industrial Land Use
- City County Federal Land Use
- Elysian Park
- Dodger Stadium
- Railroad
it did not display any Chinese architectural style. However, the section bracketed by North Spring Street, Ord Street, and Macy Street, did have a Chinese appearance because Chinese customers were catered to as a result of the demise of China City. Adding to this were remnant features of the China City tourist attractions. These were seen as peaked roofs and ornate window covers on buildings which had been part of the original commercial development.

Thus, the landscape of Chinatown as it existed in 1970 is known. However, the original questions remain unanswered. To solve this problem, it is necessary to examine the salient factors which formed what was seen on the land.
References

1. Interview, Mr. R. Lovret, Los Angeles City Planning Department, March 28, 1972.


3. Ibid.


9. Ibid., p. 155; Lui, Los Angeles Chinatown, p. 21.


12. Ibid., p. 146.

13. Ibid., p. 147.


16 Ibid., p. 316.


19 Ibid., pp. 89, 243-48.


SECTION V

FACTORS THAT SHAPED CHINATOWN

Introduction

Significant factors in the development of Chinatown were the Chinese pioneers, the means of migration which facilitated the movement of Chinese into Los Angeles, and the establishment of places characterized by the compact location of Chinese dwellings. Of particular concern is the correlation between the processes by which the Chinese came to the city and the areal extent of the concentration. These modes of migration were cumulative, in that each one built upon the previous one. As Chinatown developed, a particular process tended to dominate, although all were in operation to some degree. However, it is necessary to consider the pioneer immigrants before delving into the processes themselves. It is these early arrivals, specifically the merchants, that provided the foundation upon which the rest was built.

The Pioneers

The pioneer Chinese were either servants or
merchants. Upon their arrival in Los Angeles, they were randomly distributed throughout the city. This is the characteristic pattern of many immigrant pioneers.¹ Those Chinese who were engaged in servant-type paid employment had little impact on the later development of the Chinese residential concentration. For example, Alluce was dependent on his employer who presumably determined his place of residence. The employer, being a merchant, found it necessary to be located near the business area of the town. Consequently, Alluce was located near the center of town. However, the employer, his family, and Alluce apparently moved out of Los Angeles for none of the group appeared in subsequent manuscript censuses. The situation of Ah Fou, the other Chinese who resided with the merchant, is uncertain. Overall, their brief stay in the city had little impact.

On the other hand, if consideration is given to the Chinese merchants and the location of their business establishments, there can be seen a correlation between their location and later development of a Chinese concentration.² For instance, it has been noted that a herb shop opened between 1860 and 1861. It has been said that the best location for a herb shop is in the prosperous residential area of a city rather than its busy center.³ Thus,
the Chinese who opened his shop chose such a place. In that the first Chinese residential area was at Los Angeles Street and Alameda Street, it may be possible that the herb specialist acted as a focus for later migration.

The location of the Marchassault Street restaurant is of interest because of its proximity to Negro Alley. It has been found that Chinese restaurants in other parts of the country tended to be located near those people who most needed that service. Such was the case in Los Angeles. Negro Alley attracted more than its share of men who had no family to attend to things such as a meal. Thus, a restaurant would be assured of a clientele. Likewise, a restaurant could be the nucleus of a Chinese concentration. As happened, Negro Alley became the second center of Chinese residence.

The curio shop, located on Spring Street across from the court house, offers an example a business which failed to act as a focus for a Chinese concentration. In operation by 1861, its lack of endurance illustrates how its operator needed to consider the high cost of operation associated with the central portion of town as well as an awareness of the direction of growth of the town. It appears that the business fell victim to one or both of these considerations. Whichever the case, the place did
not develop a Chinese concentration.

The Means of Migration

The means of migration which facilitated the movement of Chinese into the city were of three types: chain migration, impersonally organized migration, and mass movement. Each one tended to have a different, but cumulative, geographic manifestation.

Chain Migration

As the herb shop and restaurant became more successful, their owners were no doubt anxious to inform their China-located friends and relatives of their success. Letters, often accompanied by money, began to be sent from Los Angeles to China. This communication leads to the concept of chain migration, the most personal means by which people migrate and that which resulted in nodal areas of Chinese settlement.

Chain migration is defined as movement in which prospective immigrants learn of opportunities, are provided the means which facilitate transportation, and have assistance offered as to initial accommodations and employment by a friend or relative who previously migrated. This concept has been applied to and seems to be in operation with different immigrant ethnic groups.
utilization allows for an explanation of a situation where-in the exact process of migration and settlement is un-known. Accordingly, its application to the early Chinese immigrants makes it possible to at least partially under-stand how the Chinese concentration started its develop-ment.

Communication between the immigrant and those people still in the native country is of paramount impor-tance. As noted, letters contained invitations to join the immigrant. In fact, the transmittal of information and the subsequent acceptance of the offers partially explains why almost all of the early Chinese in Los Angeles were from the Sze Yup district of Kwangtung, China.

As to chain migration and transportation, it can be said that a substantial number of Chinese, like other immigrants, had their passage paid by someone close to them (Table 5.1). Although there are no figures available prior to 1908, it is likely that much the same situation existed before that date.9

The idea of the pioneer immigrant offering accom-modations to those he encouraged to migrate indicates that they would be either living with him or nearby. Thus, there would be a node, however small in total numbers, of Chinese in a particular place. In Los Angeles, the nodes
TABLE 5.1
MEANS BY WHICH IMMIGRANTS PAID FOR THEIR PASSAGE TO THE UNITED STATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Self (%)</th>
<th>Relative (%)</th>
<th>Other than self or relative (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (average)</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-1910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total World</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


had a business as their core and were generally located in the eastern portion of the city. For example, the first area of Chinese concentration was near the herb shop and the second area was near the restaurant.

As defined in chain migration, there must be assistance offered as to help in obtaining a job. With the
pioneer being self-employed and having a degree of success
in his business, the new arrival could find employment with
his sponsor within the same occupation. This tended to re-
result in a degree of occupational specialization that was
associated with the Chinese by the dominant society, i.e.,
the "Chinese laundry."10 In addition, there is frequently
a particular surname group characterized by their employ-
ment as a result of chain migration. For example, chain
migration offers a partial explanation of why the Wong and
Lew families came to dominate the Los Angeles laundry
business.

The Impact of Impersonally Organized Migration

Overall, it appeared that by the early 1860s there
existed several nodes of Chinese settlement in Los Angeles.
Impersonally organized migration merged the nodes into a
single, large area of Chinese concentration.

The immigration of Chinese increased during the
1860s. The influx resulted from large-scale recruitment
of Chinese for work as laborers in California. In addi-
tion, it became easier for the Chinese to pay for their
passage from China to California. This was made possible
by the establishment of the credit-ticket system which
provided for the ticket cost being advanced at the point of
debarkation. The repayment of the amount was made after the immigrant had obtained employment at the destination. Thus, there came to be a sufficiently large number of Chinese within the state.

A concept which allows some insight into the movement of Chinese and how they aided in the coalescence of the small residential nodes within the town is that of impersonally organized migration. Like chain migration, impersonally organized migration has been used in the explanation of the settlement of other ethnic groups. By definition, movement is based on impersonal recruitment and assistance to the immigrant in the form of transportation, housing, and employment.

The term impersonally organized indicates that the migrants may not necessarily know anyone at the destination who could help in their settlement. Many of the Chinese who ultimately took up residence in Los Angeles were recruited for a specific purpose, told where to go, what to do, and left to their own devices as to choice of residence. An example of this type of migration is the group sent from the San Francisco Chinatown. As conditions became crowded in the Chinatown there, that city's Chinese Benevolent Association apparently organized (recruited) a group of Chinese and sent them to Los Angeles to relieve
internal pressure as well as establish a firm Chinese foothold in Southern California. Likewise, the work party of 1869, probably recruited by a Chinese boss, was a form of impersonally organized migration. Termination of the work allowed each Chinese to find his own place of settlement and employment.

In any event, these Chinese, like other immigrants seeking a place for settlement, no doubt felt the attraction of Los Angeles. The small Chinese residential area, restaurant, and various employment possibilities would allow their needs to be satisfied while their relatively small number could theoretically be absorbed within the existing Chinese nodes. However, the influx of Chinese resulted in a coalescence of the original nodes on the eastern side of town as a result of the new arrivals wish to live near their fellow countrymen. The area with the greatest Chinese population then became known as Chinatown by the people of Los Angeles. In Negro Alley, one house alone contained sixty-eight Chinese. The last act of giving over the Negro Alley area to the Chinese by the dominant society may have been the Chinese Massacre of 1871.

Much confusion as to what was behind the massacre as well as its actual events is evident in the literature
that discusses the occurrence.\textsuperscript{17} The following is a summary upon which all accounts agree.\textsuperscript{18}

1) The origin of the trouble was in altercations between two Chinese factions.

2) A shooting took place in which one Anglo was killed and several others were wounded.

3) A mob formed, became uncontrollable, and lynched eighteen to twenty-one Chinese.

4) Only one of those hung by the mob had anything to do with the factions responsible for creating the situation.

5) Subsequent indictments, trials, and convictions were a mark against justice.

However, a large indemnity was paid to China for those killed.\textsuperscript{19}

Many investigators point to the massacre as an aspect of the anti-Chinese sentiment prevalent in Northern California. They give justification to their view vis-à-vis the situation of the Chinese elsewhere in California and the time of the massacre's occurrence in Los Angeles. However, this writer feels that whether the massacre was or was not part of a larger scheme directed against the Chinese, its basis lies in the increased number of Chinese in Los Angeles and their subsequent expansion, both
geographically and economically. These factors were construed by the larger group as being a threat. Thus, any excuse could act as a catalyst for attacking the threat. Friction among the Chinese themselves easily lit the fire of mob violence.

The result of the massacre was that the Chinese had an informal restrictive residential covenant placed upon them. There was no longer a choice as to the direction in which Chinatown could expand. Rather, its only avenue of areal growth was east of Alameda Street into the abandoned agricultural area. The area was allotted to them because of its general unsuitability and its peripheral location relative to the city's growth (Figure 5.1). The Chinese accepted the area because it was a place where their expansion would not be opposed by the non-Chinese. Accordingly, the area became a highly localized Chinese concentration wherein they lived involuntarily because of restrictions placed upon them by the larger community. However, the formation of the concentration had a voluntary aspect to it because it was a place wherein a Chinese could preserve his culture and interact minimally with the American society.21
Figure 5.1
DIRECTIONS OF CITY GROWTH, 1870s
(Freeways and community names for reference only)

EXPANDING URBAN AREA
CHINATOWN

Data sources: Various sources
Chinatown and Mass Movement

Additional Chinese took up residence in Chinatown as a result of the railroad coming to Los Angeles. In conjunction with this was the intensification of anti-Chinese sentiment in Northern California with its diaspora of many Chinese from that region. All of this increased the population of Chinatown to the point where it contained 1,254 residents by 1890. Those Chinese who were seeking a place to settle, either because of termination of their employment or discrimination, found the Chinese concentration in Los Angeles a viable environment complete with housing, employment, and companionship.

The increase in population is considered to be the result of mass movement, a phenomenon that seems to occur within many ethnic concentrations. As defined, mass movement is essentially the movement of people who are responding to collective behavior. They move to the new area because they know of someone who is moving there or they have heard of others who are bound for the new place. The result is a relatively large influx of people into the small, established ethnic concentration. Overall, there is a great increase in population density with its attendant pressure on the physical structures and a filling out
of the social and economic organizations of the ethnic concentration.

The mass movement of Chinese into Chinatown was instrumental in developing the town within the city. The influx of Chinese immigrants had been stopped by the anti-Chinese legislation of the 1880s. Accordingly, many of the Chinese who relocated to Los Angeles had been in the country for a period of time. Their varying degrees of acculturation meant that they had learned skills particularly suited to the new urban environment. Thus, as Chinatown became more compacted, it was able to draw upon these skills and provide its residents with an increased range of services. Employment opportunities grew as the number of economic activities increased. Likewise, the governmental structure gained in strength through its activities which were directed toward maintaining its constituents. Accordingly, Chinatown became a town within the city which was able to fulfill most of the residents' requirements.

Interestingly, the population of Chinatown fluctuated around the 2,000 mark from 1890 to 1920. This somewhat stabilized population reflected the limited immigration of United States Chinese, the natural rate of increase of the Los Angeles Chinese, and out-migration of
second and third generation American-born Chinese. An additional factor in this stabilized population may be that this was the optimal population that Chinatown could maintain. The fixed number of employment opportunities, combined with an equilibrium of out-migrating and in-migration of Chinese as well as a finite geographic area acted to keep the population at a relatively fixed level.

The Development of the Chinese Concentrations

Conditions related to the Chinese and Chinatown itself became such that there developed the City Market as organized by Mr. Louie Quan, New Chinatown which resulted from the ideas of Mr. Peter Soo Hoo, and China City as conceived by Mrs. Christine Sterling.

The City Market and Mr. Quan

Factors responsible for the development of the City Market in 1909 lie in the agricultural history of the Los Angeles Chinese. As noted previously, the Chinese were engaged in vegetable growing and the house-to-house selling of the vegetables. The importance of Chinese-grown produce was such that a strike by them in 1878-79, over restrictive regulations, resulted in almost no vegetables finding their way to the tables of city residents. By 1900, the Chinese who grew and often peddled vegetables
were in competition with large-scale produce farmers in the Imperial and San Joaquin Valleys. This, combined with the introduction of refrigerated railroad cars which moved fresh vegetables in mid-winter, resulted in some Chinese becoming produce brokers.\textsuperscript{25} Competition between the Chinese and Japanese in the various aspects of produce resulted in the Chinese leaving the market place at Third Street and Central Avenue and establishing their own market at Ninth Street and San Pedro Street.\textsuperscript{26}

The City Market became the new home of the Chinese produce business. It was started in 1909 by Louie Quan. Raising capital in the form of the sale of shares in the venture, he was able to build a 200-space market in the shape of a horseshoe. The Chinese owned or operated about fifty of these stores with the rest being leased to other ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{27} By 1910, the number of Chinese produce brokers had increased from 7 per cent of the total (3 out of 43) in 1907, to that of 11 per cent of the total (17 out of 155).\textsuperscript{28}

The City Market acted as a focus around which there developed a Chinese concentration complete with tertiary activities. The job opportunities within the market, the early starting hour of the work (midnight), and the distance from the larger Chinese concentration accounts
for the Chinese taking up residence nearby. Its population continued to increase as the litigation over rightful ownership of the Chinatown land built to its climax. With the announcement that Chinatown was to be torn down, more Chinese moved to the City Market with some finding their way to the East Adams Boulevard area. However, once New Chinatown was established, most of the residents left the City Market--East Adams area and settled in the new concentration.

New Chinatown and Mr. Soo Hoo

New Chinatown owed its existence to Peter Soo Hoo. Mr. Soo Hoo, a graduate of the University of Southern California, knew that old Chinatown was to be destroyed and was concerned as to what to do with its displaced residents. This prompted him to develop the idea of building a new and more representative, tourist-oriented Chinatown where the Chinese could combat exploitation by non-Chinese. He saw the establishment of a legal entity as the way to accomplish this, the foundation of a corporation, wherein the Chinese could hold their own and meet the dominant society on a more equal basis. Ultimately, he interested Herbert Lapham, a Los Angeles philanthropist, in the idea. Mr. Soo Hoo, Mr. Lapham, and a group of
prominent Chinese met and developed the plans for the Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation in 1937. 30

The corporation was to be a Chinese owned entity. All of the streets and alleys, as well as one-half of the lots in the subdivision, were to be corporation-held with the balance being privately owned by individuals within the corporation. 31 Other Chinatowns in the United States, including the old Chinatown of Los Angeles, tended to be tenant settlements. 32 Thus New Chinatown, through its corporate ownership, was unique in that the Chinese controlled the land upon which they lived. This uniqueness gave New Chinatown the legal status through which it could resist the expansion of business activities from the city center. Additionally, the corporation acted as a structure that could promote its own goals while offering a sense of solidarity and protection to its members. As previously noted, its foresightedness in planning for residential growth provided the means by which the Chinese could live within their own group in a viable environment.

China City and Mrs. Sterling

The existence of China City, like New Chinatown, was attributable to a particular individual. That person was Mrs. Christine Sterling, the founder of Olvera Street.
Her aim was to adapt the Olvera Street concept to the Chinese by preserving the "mystery" and "atmosphere" of old Chinatown and allow the Chinese to capitalize on the curiosity of the dominant society. Originally, her plan called for a few new buildings and the remodeling and repairing of older structures within the Macy Street-North Main Street area. However, a fire destroyed many of the new and renovated buildings before China City was opened to the public. The second attempt, with the assistance of Harry Chandler of the Los Angeles Times, the Chinese Culture Society, and the newly formed Chinese Merchant Association, was more successful; witness its opening in June of 1938.

Of particular importance to the Chinese residential area of China City was the lack of planning as to where the people were to live. There appears to have been the thought that China City would act as a nucleus with the Chinese moving into the old and vacant buildings nearby. This is exactly what occurred. Accordingly, many of the Chinese found themselves living in buildings that were somewhat old and dilapidated. Overall, much of that which characterized the less attractive manifestations of old Chinatown was perpetuated.
The Growth of Chinatown

The Chinatown of 1970 was continuing to grow from that which had developed in the past. New Chinatown was still a striking feature on the landscape of Los Angeles. However, only remnants of the structures within China City were to be found. It was New Chinatown, owned by the Chinese, that survived. China City, with its Anglo assistance, democracy, and movie lot appearance was unable to withstand the scepticism of time. Of greater importance was the continued development of the impromptu occupancy of the area around China City. It provided the means whereby there occurred the merging of the New Chinatown and China City nodes.

As the nodes became joined together, Chinatown experienced continued growth as a result of changes in the immigration laws. This was essentially the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts in 1943, the initiation of the War Brides Act and the Fiancées Act from 1945-1949, an increase in the number of possible immigrants as a result of the Communist take-over of China in the 1950s, and the liberalized immigration quotas of the 1960s. Although many of the immigrants never lived in the large Chinese concentration, it acted as a place where Chinese could
interact primarily with other Chinese if they chose. Thus, by 1970, the area was experiencing continued growth. The overall result was a large areal extent to the major Chinese concentration where, over a hundred years ago, there had been only a Chinese herb shop (Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3).
Figure 5.2
GENERALIZED DEVELOPMENT OF CHINATOWN

- Herb Shop
- Chinese Concentration
- Abandoned Concentration
- Direction of Movement
DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHINESE IN LOS ANGELES, 1861–1970

One Dot Represents Forty Persons

Figure 5.3

0   8
miles

110
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3 Garding Lui, Inside Los Angeles Chinatown (Los Angeles, California: Garding Lui, 1948), pp. 202-204.


13 MacDonald and MacDonald, "Chain Migration," pp. 82-83.


29 Chen, "Chinese Community in Los Angeles," p. 88; Lui, Los Angeles Chinatown, pp. 41, 43-44.


32 Bingham, "Los Angeles Chinese," p. 149.

33 Ibid., pp. 144-45; Kung, Chinese in American Life, p. 205.


36 Ibid., pp. 155-56.

SECTION VI

ANSWERS AND CONCLUSIONS

Answers to the Questions

The preceding pages have dealt with the evolution of Chinatown and offered an analysis of the important factors which facilitated its development. The answers to the questions asked in Section I are now apparent:

1) The Chinatown of 1970 was the most recent location of the Chinese concentration as it had evolved in approximately one hundred years.

2) The current location is the result of concern for the Chinese by several individuals, both Chinese and Anglo.

3) Chinatown came to occupy its present location because of a need to relocate the Chinese displaced by the destruction of the original Chinatown.

4) In the early days (1850-1860s) of the Chinese in Los Angeles there was not a
particular place characterized by a Chinese concentration. However, by the 1870s Chinatown was in existence.

Conclusions

The answers prompt two conclusions about the present-day Chinatown:

1) Chinatown in the 1800s was essentially an unplanned concentration.

2) Its location starting in the 1940s was the result of planning.

Unplanned Development

The unplanned development of Chinatown was a result of Chinese culture, Chinese experiences in California, and the processes by which the Chinese came to take up residence in the area. The beginning of the Chinese concentration occurred with the establishment of two shops by Chinese merchants in 1860-1861. These were a herb shop, located according to Chinese culture, and the Marchessault Street restaurant which was located as a result of experience in California. Both of these places soon developed small Chinese residential nodes in their immediate vicinity.
The concept which offered an explanation of how a concentration developed in an unplanned manner around the successful businesses was that of chain migration. Offers made to relatives and friends to join the merchant in Los Angeles included assistance in transportation, accommodations, and employment. Thus, those that accepted the offer lived and worked with the sponsor. Accordingly, there resulted a relatively small node of Chinese concentration as well as occupational specialization that was characterized by people of the same surname.

As the chain migration process continued through the 1860s, Chinese unrelated to those in the small Chinese nodes moved to the city. Their method of movement was considered to be impersonally organized migration. This concept indicated that a group of Chinese was brought together by someone unknown to them for a specific purpose. It was the organizing individual who made provisions for their transportation and employment. Upon termination of the group's raison d'être, they had to forge their own way.

One group of this nature was sent from San Francisco to Los Angeles as a colony. Another group was organized and dispatched to the Los Angeles area as a work party on road construction. Upon reaching the city, many of these impersonally organized individuals were attracted
to the small chain migration nodes as a result of ethnicity and certain basic needs, i.e., shelter and food. Their settlement in the small nodes expanded the borders to the point where they merged. By the 1870s, the Negro Alley area became identified as Chinatown.

The dominant society, seeing what they considered to be a great influx of Chinese and feeling threatened by it, responded with violence in an event called the Chinese Massacre of 1871. The result of the massacre was that not only were a number of people killed but the Chinese were forced to expand their concentration in only one direction, east of Alameda Street. Within their allotted area they were able to develop a town within the city as more Chinese came to the city via mass movement. However, the late 1930s found the Chinese being displaced from their area as a result of its becoming a railroad yard and terminal. The need to relocate the people prompted two plans for their resettlement.

Planned Development

Conditions within Los Angeles and a sense of Chinese ethnicity served as the impetus for the planned establishment of New Chinatown and China City. These two nodes acted as the genesis of the Chinatown as seen in
1970. New Chinatown was a response to the destruction of the original Chinatown. As conceived by Mr. Peter Soo Hoo, New Chinatown was to be a modern tourist attraction complete with restaurants and shops which utilized a Chinese motif throughout. Residential units for the Chinese who had lived in the original Chinatown were adjacent to the commercial center of New Chinatown. In order that the Chinese would have complete control over their territory, the entire venture was developed within a corporate framework. Thus, New Chinatown became unique because the Chinese owned the land upon which they lived through the New Chinatown Corporation. Accordingly, the Chinese were able to hold their own in terms of the expansion of the city center and resist being completely assimilated by the larger society.

China City was also a response to the destruction of Chinatown. Mrs. Christine Sterling, with the assistance of several associates, developed a scheme whereby the "quaintness" of old Chinatown could be preserved in the form of a high density, movie-like environment. Considerations as to where the people of China City were to live were lacking. The development, as a commercial venture consisting of shops and restaurants, did not long endure. However, its spontaneously developed residential area
produced a merging of the area with that of the New Chinatown.

As people continued to leave the City Market area, Chinatown experienced more growth. With changes in immigration laws, the population continued to increase. The result was a filling in of available space and a westward trend in areal expansion. Thus, from the planned nodes of New Chinatown and China City, there soon developed the Chinatown of 1970 with its definite boundaries, large Chinese population, and particular landscape appearance.

**Future Research**

In the opinion of this writer, more attention needs to be directed toward the earliest period of development of ethnic concentrations which characterize the large cities of America. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, the historical development of Chinatown in its particular place had little or no relationship to factors usually cited as being the prime determinants for the location of an ethnic concentration. Thus, it is felt that without at least a rudimentary understanding of how a concentration begins, only the most tentative of explanatory concepts and models can be offered. Once knowledge of the early development is acquired, it is possible to correctly
assign an order and degree of importance to the many variables that result in a particular place within the urban environment becoming the core area of an ethnic group.

From this, detailed studies of the functional relation between the center of ethnic activity and the dispersed members of the ethnic group can be conducted. When this task has been finished, a more complete geographic understanding of the heterogeneous ethnic mosaic of the urban scene will be gained.
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UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


