CHINESE-CANADIAN MORTUARY MATERIAL CULTURE

NEGOTIATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY:
A STUDY
OF CHINESE-CANADIAN MORTUARY MATERIAL CULTURE
IN
VANCOUVER AND VICTORIA, 1900-1960

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines in early Chinese-Canadians mortuary material culture in Vancouver and Victoria during the period dating from the early 20th century until the liberalization of immigration laws in the 1960s, in order to explore changing conceptions of community identity.

Data was collected during fieldwork in Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver, and in Victoria's Ross Bay and Harling Point cemeteries. This was supplemented by archival information from death and burial records. Burial place, marker style, epitaph text, and commemoration rates were documented, as a means of studying patterns of change and variability in the community identities commemorated through mortuary material culture.

Three main patterns were identified. One was of interpersonal variability, as distinct commemorative strategies were present at any time. One involved the foregrounding of commonalities among Chinese-Canadians, while the other allowed for a greater range of identities to be commemorated. The second pattern was one change, involving the gradual transformation of the standard commemorative practices engaged in by the majority group. The last pattern was one of differences in how the first two patterns developed in each city.

These patterns may be employed in the exploration of how early Chinese-Canadian identities varied and developed over time. Both local and translocal factors informed commemorative individual decisions, resulting in the development and change of commemorative traditions. Because of similarities with the dynamics of social change in a transnational context, it is believed that the study of Overseas Chinese cemeteries commemorative traditions may help to elucidate the factors involved in broader social transformations.

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CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines changing understandings of community identity among Chinese-Canadians during the period of immigration restrictions dating from the early 20th century until the liberalization of immigration laws in the 1960s.

Chinese immigrants first arrived in Canada in 1858, drawn by the gold rush and subsequently by opportunities for work on construction and resource extraction projects (Con et al. 1982). Early on, Victoria became an important hub allowing traffic of people, goods and news between Chinese residents in smaller Canadian communities, communities in China, and other Overseas Chinese communities worldwide. By the first decade of the 20th century, Vancouver's Chinese community had surpassed Victoria's in size, and both remained important centers throughout the first part of the twentieth century (Anderson 1991, Ng 1999).

Many of the community identities that had been important in China – a person's place of origin, their lineage, their social class, ethnicity, and others – were transformed by immigration, gaining or losing in salience, or were completely transformed in Canada (e.g. Con et al. 1982, Liu 2005). This thesis will examine mortuary material culture to explore changing representations of community identity as depicted in this context. Patterns of variability in representation and patterns of change over time provide a sense of the diversity among early Chinese-Canadians, and of the dynamics involved in the

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development of larger-scale community identities during the early twentieth
century.

This analysis is informed by recently developed perspectives on Chinese-
Canadian history. Scholarship on Chinese-Canadian history and archaeology has,
since the 1990s, focused predominantly on two main issues, in large part as a
reaction against the more normative interpretations that had previously been
prevalent. The first is the exploration of the variability within Chinese
Canadian/American communities, and the range of identities that could be
meaningful for people beyond that of "Chinese" or "Chinese-Canadian." This
focus is supported through the use of methodologies that emphasize a variety of
non-traditional sources, and focus on the range of personal experiences that were
possible in a particular context.

The second is the examination of Chinese-Canadian/American people and
communities as participants in a diaspora, of the ties that bind people both locally
and over great distances. Although this issue is sometimes examined in terms of
essentialist identities, a common and interesting approach is to interpret these
transnational communities as historically specific, constantly developing sets of
social networks and ties, experienced differently by persons in specific local
contexts.

Many contemporary works treat both issues as profoundly interconnected,
while typically favoring one over the other, depending on their particular focus
and the nature of their data. One important methodological difficulty remains in

the reconciling of the two scales of reality outlined above: the lives and experiences of people who made decisions as members of these networks, their sense of themselves; and the networks themselves, which result not only in diversity but in the sharing of certain pressures and possibilities.

An examination of changes in mortuary practice and material culture, through the lens of cemeteries in Vancouver and Victoria, can contribute to the exploration of the intersection of these scales, by examining how different community identities were represented within a specific historical context, and how these representations changed over time. What makes these trends interesting is that they are the result of discreet decisions, informed by circumstances; each marker basically commemorates a single person, who died in a specific time and place.

While many of the factors guiding individual commemorative decisions were idiosyncratic, they nonetheless sometimes had a simultaneous impact on many people – either by virtue of these people having had similar experiences in life, or because the context within which they made funerary decisions was similar. Changes in those shared experiences may have fostered broad patterns visible through mortuary material culture.

To explore whether such patterns were present in Vancouver and Victoria cemeteries, I focused on a series of different elements of mortuary material culture, considering in particular: the site of primary burial, the style of the marker, the community identities commemorated in the text of the epitaph, and

the rates of commemoration (as reconstructed using burial and death records in conjunction with cemetery evidence).

There seem to be two broad patterns in commemorative practices in Vancouver and Victoria, which play out simultaneously, albeit differently, in each of these elements of commemorative practice. Because of the manner in which these two styles differ, they allow for an emphasis on different scales of community identity.

The first set of commemorative practices, as seen on the vast majority of markers, emphasized commonalities among Chinese-Canadians. Indeed, most Chinese-Canadian dead were commemorated in similar way:; until the 1930s, the majority seem to have had their bones repatriated to China, but, around the time of cessation of shipments, there was a gradual (more so in Vancouver than in Victoria) transition to permanent burial in Canada. These burials tended to be situated in sites reserved primarily for the burial of Chinese-Canadians (which were either in segregated cemeteries or sections within public cemeteries), where large numbers of markers were placed close together. These markers and epitaphs were fairly similar to one another, in a way that often drew the visitor's focus towards public material culture like altars. Overall, these practices appear to emphasize larger-scale corporate identities as Chinese-Canadians, rather than smaller-scale distinctions, such as those based on ethnicity, family or lineage.

The second set of commemorative practices was more varied, allowing for the expression of a wider range of scales of community identity. Prior to the

1930s, a small group of people forewent bone repatriation while the practice was still accessible, and were instead given permanent burials in Canada. Their markers commemorated a relatively wide range of personal experiences, in Chinese, English, or in both languages. These people were commemorated in a range of spaces, which added to the different community identities being commemorated. These spaces included general municipal areas, primarily Chinese-Canadian grounds, and religious zones; choice of burial location within the space often emphasized marital or other family ties. Overall, different scales of community identities were commemorated in death, from the smaller scale of personal achievement to the larger scale of ethnic or religious community.

Three main patterns are revealed by an examination of the data on Chinese-Canadian grave-markers in Vancouver and Victoria. The first is the presence of fairly distinct commemorative strategies, which were engaged in at the same time and in the same place, but by different people. One strategy involved the foregrounding of commonalities among Chinese-Canadians, while the other allowed for a greater range of identities to be commemorated. The second pattern is a gradual transformation of the standard commemorative practices engaged in by the majority group. The last pattern, most immediately visible to cemetery visitors but least easily analyzed, consists of differences in how the first two patterns developed in each city.

The discussion will explore these patterns in light of historical information, and of the different ways that community identities are highlighted

by these commemorative practices. Because they speak to broader questions of

community and identity, these patterns can contribute to the exploration of how

early Chinese-Canadian identities varied and developed over time.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

Historiography

Introduction

Overseas Chinese communities have been in existence for hundreds of years, and in various parts of the world, and they are the subject of literature in an extensive breadth of languages and disciplines. Because of this abundance, I situate my work only in relation to other studies of Chinese communities in Canada and the United States prior to and during the period of exclusion – particularly on the West Coast – and available in English.

From its inception, much of this scholarship has been dominated by a deep preoccupation with questions of acculturation and assimilation. A recent widening of interests and of types of data examined by historians and archaeologists has allowed new questions to be asked with regards to early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American history: questions about the complicated ways in which people interacted with others both locally and far away, about the identity categories through which people understood these interactions, and about the ways in which these factors informed people's perceptions of themselves in relation to the communities around them.

While researchers have examined a wide range of sources in relation to these questions, large cemeteries have yet to be approached in these terms. There is a growing body of excellent research on Overseas Chinese cemeteries and funerary rituals, but for a range of practical and historiographic reasons, it remains

primarily descriptive and focused on equations between cultural identity and ritual practice.

Mortuary material culture in Vancouver and Victoria cemeteries can provide a novel source of data to explore some of the dynamics relative to the variability and change in the ways in which community identity was commemorated for different individuals in an early Chinese-Canadian community. This is particularly true if it is approached in light of both the rich contextual information provided by studies of Overseas Chinese cemeteries and the appreciation for the fluidity of identity drawn out in recent works on the history of Overseas Chinese communities,

Historical and sociological writings

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, people who were themselves participants in, or felt that they were in some way affected by Chinese immigration to North America, wrote works reflecting on their situation.

Many of these texts were written in China, in a range of narrative styles. Although many of these works contributed to the development of scholarly traditions about Overseas Chinese communities in China, they do not seem to have had a large impact in Anglophone North America. Instead, they are only now becoming recognized, either as rediscovered scholarship (e.g. Chen 1940) or, more often, as data about events and experiences at the time (e.g. the *qiaokan* magazines published in Taishan and distributed throughout the world, studied by

Hsu [2000], or the records kept by bureaucrats with the Overseas Chinese Affairs

Commission in Guangdong, and studied by Szonyi [2005:46]).

Other texts were written in North America, both in Chinese and in English.

Early texts were usually not articulated as historical at the time of their writing

[Chan 1996:8]), but rather as openly political or sociological in nature. While they

seem to have had an important impact on the themes explored by early historical

scholarship in Canada and the United States, from the 1970s onwards, other

influences (notably from biographical and anthropological writings) have led to a

diversification of approaches used.

Assimilation and Resistance

Historical Approaches

Concepts of assimilation and cultural conservatism figured prominently as

central concerns of both historical and archaeological research during much of the

20th century. They gained prominence early on, in writings that advocated for

social or policy changes, in relation to ongoing and impassioned debates about the

place of Chinese immigrants in the rapidly transforming communities of 19th and

early 20th century North America (Chan 1996:8, Roy 1998:51). These writings

ranged in style from government commissions (e.g. Chapleau and Gray 1885) to

short books and pamphlets that were often inflammatory in tone and content

(Chan 1996:9), where information was used to bolster objections to Chinese

immigration and presence, and to lobby for more restrictions on access to various

rights, or conversely to advocate against those very discriminatory practices and ideas (e.g. Baldwin 1890, Tow 1923, Townsend 1876). Many of these arguments hinged on perceptions of Chinese immigrants' ability, or lack thereof, to become "Americanized" or "assimilated", and of Euro-Canadian and American people and institutions' willingness to allow them to do so (e.g. Tow 1923:67-74, Chapleau and Gray 1885:422-423, Coolidge 1969[1909]:448).

By the early 1900s, as sociology developed as a discipline, more rigorous research standards began to replace those that had characterized earlier publications (Chan 1996:9). Because debates about immigration rights and discrimination remained lively, Coolidge's (1969[1909]) *Chinese Immigration*, which brought Chinese-American experiences into the realm of formal scholarship (Peffer 1992:42), and many of the sociological works that followed it, had social as well as academic goals (e.g. Coolidge 1969[1909]:486-496).

Much of the scholarship on Chinese immigration that was created after the 1920s was done by students affiliated with (Liu H 2007) or heavily influenced by (cf Turner 1988:325) the Chicago school of sociology. It relied on primary research, using numerical data and interviews in a well delimited cultural and social context to develop theories able to describe more general kinds of social phenomena (Turner 1988:329-333), including immigration (e.g. Lee R 1960:4-5, Siu 1987:1, 294-295). Most Chicago-school scholars accepted the premise that "the natural outcome of integrating those who arrived at America's shores would be a process of assimilation" (Pedraza-Bailey 1990:45).

In this context, a goal of scholarship was to explain a perceived lack of assimilation by many Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese origin. Among the most common explanations were those that hinged on the idea that Chinese immigrants had a sojourner mentality (Peffer sa 1992:46, Siu 1987:294-301): that they remained enmeshed in the social networks of their place of origin, invested most of their money in China through remittances, and, having every intention of returning as soon as possible, were not desirous of adopting new cultural practices or of creating ties outside of the local Chinese community.

Another explanation focused on the effect of discrimination, which prevented many Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans from participating fully in the social and professional life outside of Chinese enclaves. This argument was first developed in works by Kit King Louis (Liu H 2007) and Rose Hum Lee (1960), who examined the experiences and attachments of American-born Chinese persons. Even when bilingual and educated, many found their prospects limited and emigrated to China as adults (e.g. Liu H 2005: 7,164, Yee 1985:64-66). In advocating for a change in the attitudes of Euro-Americans, Lee (1960:430) formulated assimilation as the ultimate reward.

This question of assimilation stimulated research exploring the development and perpetuation of anti-Chinese racism, from the perspective of Euro-American/Canadians (e.g. Anderson 1991, Roy 1989) – an approach that left unexplored many dynamics within the Chinese-American/Canadian communities (Chen Y 2000:2-3, Lyman 1974:473, Ng 1993:7-8).

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Archaeological approaches

Archaeological excavations of Chinese sites in North America have overwhelmingly taken place outside of the context of targeted research projects, occurring primarily as rescue or preservation efforts at various sites (Fong 2007:116, Greenwood 1993:376-378, Voss and Allen 2008:17). This is still the case for much current research. As a result, many reports were and are still under-theorized (Greenwood 1993:378), remaining instead "largely descriptive and framed only within local historical points of reference." (Voss and Allen 2008:18). Furthermore, many of these works remain in the form of difficult to access grey literature (Voss 2005:425, Voss and Allen 2008:18).

More recently, both question-centered excavations of Overseas Chinese sites and, to a greater extent, the re-examination of material and data from previously excavated sites have formed a basis for more theoretically informed research. However, because issues of assimilation and acculturation have been particularly central to this body of work, questions of identity only occasionally come into focus.

Early historical and sociological literature on assimilation and cultural continuity has had a profound impact on archaeological research. Indeed, one of the first studies of Chinese-American material culture (Spier 1958), which examined tool-use in different labour contexts, had as its aim the elucidation of factors affecting acculturation.

The concept of acculturation has remained central to many early and some current interpretations of Overseas Chinese sites (Fong 2007:116-117, Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77, Lydon 1999: 256, Praetzellis et al. 1987: 39, Voss 2005: 426, Voss and Allen 2008:19) and is still used, albeit in more nuanced ways, by many other recent works (Mullins 2008:153). This perspective has resulted in works that often depict early Chinese-Canadians and -Americans as belonging to "traditional, bounded ethnic groups that resisted acculturation into the non-Chinese populations among whom they lived" (Voss 2005: 425).

This situation has been fostered by many earlier investigators' lack of familiarity with the historical context, leading to an understanding of "overseas Chinese culture as rigid, unchanging and monolithic" (Greenwood 1993:381). Furthermore, because Chinese-only sites like Chinatowns and work camps have been excavated with a frequency disproportionate to their importance, there is an over-representation of ethnically segregated sites where there is less evidence of cultural contacts and change than there would be in sites with a more diverse population (Van Bueren 2008:80).

Another factor contributing to the prevalence of this perspective may be the ease with which certain forms of material culture could be identified as being of Chinese provenance (Greenwood 1980:118, Praetzellis et Praetzellis 1998:88), which facilitates the application of such a framework (Statski 1993). Methodologically, this perspective encourages a focus on questions of artefact count and provenance (Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77, Voss 2005:427). Such

interpretations are often characterized by a perception of Chinese material culture as exotic (Voss and Allen 2008:19) and by more extensive analyses of those " 'strange and unusual' material things that seem to signal identity distinctions" (Mullins 2008:153) – distinctions which are often underpinned by ideas of opposition between East and West (Voss 2005:427) or stereotyped narratives of Chineseness (Fong 2007).

This approach is reflected in studies where material culture is viewed as concomitant with essentialized cultural affiliations, and which interpret the geographic origin of clothing, dishes, and food-stuffs as indicative of different degrees of acculturation or, more often, of resistance to acculturation and cultural conservatism (e.g. Diehl et al. 1998, Fagan 1993, Gust 1993:208, Lalande 1982, Langenwalter II 1980, Schuyler 1980:87, Statski 1993). The idea that people of Chinese origin were particularly conservative and resistant to assimilation was at the heart of many observations: "Chinese Americans were much more successful [than Afro-Americans] at preserving their Old World cultural patterns and resisting acculturation to American society." (Schuyler 1980:87).

Many of the same explanations put forth in historical texts – a sojourner mentality (Voss 2005:428), the isolating pressures engendered by discrimination (e.g. Chen Y 2001) or an essentially conservative culture (Voss 2005:248) have been used in archaeological contexts as well.

Admittedly, this framework has allowed for interesting research. Some works, notably, employ an essentialist approach – in that they try to draw out

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"unique overseas Chinese architectural patterns" (Sisson 1993:53), or to characterize "the archaeological signature of overseas Chinese burial rituals" (Pasacreta 2005:1), or other similar archetypes – as a tool to better locate currently under-studied types of archaeological sites. Others point out differences in the rate of assimilation between different groups within early Chinese-Canadian or Chinese-American communities [e.g. Greenwood (1980) examines age differences in acculturation rates].

However, interpretatively, this perspective of culture-change along a single axis leaves little room for the imagination: it cannot fully account for individual agency in matters of culture, or for the richness of possible experiences and self-understandings that different people can develop in a similar context.

Recognizing Chinese-Canadian presence and contribution
Historical Perspectives

By the 1960s and 1970s, many of these earlier debates were made moot by important changes in attitudes and immigration laws allowing new Chinese immigrants into Canada and the United States (e.g. Con et al. 1982, Lee 196; Yee 1988:137). Many Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans who had grown up in these countries during the exclusion eras also came of age during this period (Ng 1993:ii). There was a desire by some to protest conflation with "foreigners" (e.g. Chen A 1983:165-167) and with recent immigrants who had a different

history, and were often culturally and linguistically different (e.g. Choy 1999:234; Young Yu 2008:158).

Whether professionally or by interest, many became engaged in advocacy aimed at better exposing the fact that Chinese-Americans and Chinese-Canadians had been part of local and national histories, going back more than a century (Chen A 1983:162, Young Yu 2008:158), and at exploring their contributions which were often still under-acknowledged by scholarly and popular histories (Chen 1986). In this context, the "Sojourner myth" (Yong Yu 2008:159) began to lose its explanatory prominence within historical scholarship (Peffer 1992:47), and more research was published that aimed to fill silences in local and national histories. In Canada, a number of monographs have relied on primary research, involving the re-examination of previously underused Chinese-language sources and oral histories to create written (e.g. Chen 1986; Con et al. 1982; Lai 1997, 1991, 1988; Li 1998; Ng 1993, 1999), and visual (e.g. Li 1984, Wright 1988, Yee 2005, 1988, 1985) narratives of Chinese-Canadian history.

Such works have led to academic publications that assert the impact of early Chinese-Canadian communities, and, through popular writing and commemoration, to the increased public visibility of their contributions.

Archaeological Perspectives

This has been one area where major contributions have been made by archaeological research. The goal of foregrounding under-reported histories

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coincides with a project important for many historical archaeologists more generally, of making more visible those "muted groups" (c.f. Little 2007:65) who were "prevented from expressing their preferences and worldviews in the dominant cultural discourses" (Little 2007:67) both written and material.

Such silencings result from a number of factors, many of which affected early Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans disproportionately heavily. The lack of Chinese writings in English, and the under-representation of certain voices and experiences in Chinese writings were important factors biasing the historical record (as will be discussed later). However, a number of basic factors common to most Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans also limited opportunities for lasting expressions through publicly visible material culture. These included working hours that were long, exhausting, and left little free time (e.g. Con et al. 1982:23, Siu 1987:72), high rates of poverty due to low salaries (Chan 1983:63), to the need to set some earnings aside for remittances (Siu 1987:156-164), and, for those who intended to return to China once they had raised enough money, to a focus on "accumulating wealth" to that end (Siu 1987:181). Such factors afforded the majority of Chinese-Canadians little opportunity for buying or making much material culture, especially as a means of self-expression.

This situation was exacerbated by further effacement due to the occupational and residential patterns that characterized many Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans. In urban areas, most lived in rooming houses, shops, or employers' homes, rather than in private spaces that they could alter at will (Chan

1983:74-75, Voss 2008:44). Furthermore, because other residents often resorted to

"local legislation or violence to confine Chinese residents to an urban enclave"

(Smits 2008:114), Chinatowns were often the main site where a Chinese presence

was visible at all. These densely populated residential areas (Lai 1991), often

racialized and mythologized by other residents (Anderson 1991), were thus

particularly vulnerable to destruction due to gradual gentrification and

redevelopment (e.g. Costello et al. 2008:148, Fosha and Leatherman 2008:101),

and to racist acts like arson or mob destruction (e.g. Anderson 1991, Voss 2005).

Rural residents were often even less visible. Many Chinese-Canadians

worked on construction and resource extraction projects (Con et al. 1982:16-20)

or were engaged in the provision of various services to such workers (Con et al.

1982:22, Fee 1995, Yee 1993, 1988:12), and thus lived in temporary camps that

needed to be relocated when work opportunities and resources waned.

Chinatowns in these smaller cities were often abandoned as extractive industries

extinguished themselves or as residents passed on or moved away during the

dramatic population drop in the decades that followed the passage of exclusionary

laws (Hom 1987:12). The abandonment of such sites during the 19th and early 20th

centuries, has left important historic sites practically unrecognizable as such. This

has contributed to effacement of early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American

contribution to local and national histories (Chu 2009).

Archaeological research on such sites allows for their valorization as

historic sites. Fee's (1993) work identifying and describing Chinese-operated

terraced gardens in California has allowed for sites that appear wild to the
untamed eye to be re-characterized instead as "a glimpse of China in the
backcountry of Idaho; a constant reminder of Asian contributions on American
soil" (Fee 1993:94).

Once-large Chinatowns in since-depopulated cities like Barkerville (Chen
Y 2001, Pasacreta 2005) and Cumberland (Lim 2002) in British Columbia,
Deadwood in South Dakota (Fosha 2004, Fosha and Leatherman 2008), or San
Bernadino (Costello et al. 2008), Ventura (Greenwood 1978, 1980) and
Virginiatown (Rouse 2005b) in California were essentially lost until their
excavation. In urban areas where the Chinese community continued to thrive,
older Chinatowns could still become invisible, as happened in Sacramento
(Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997) and San Jose (Voss 2005, 2008) following large-
scale destruction by fire or arson, and the subsequent relocation of survivors.

Such archaeological investigations often provided a basis for the
preservation of these sites and, importantly, their increased visibility for local
residents and tourists. Lim's (2002) research on Cumberland's defunct Chinatown
resulted in the creation of a touristic site where informative plaques and
photographs mark out a thriving social landscape under bush. Similarly, Chen's
(2001) research on early Chinese gold-mining communities in Northern British
Columbia contributed to the 2008 designation of the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong
building as a National Historic Site (Parks Canada 2009c). The rewriting of these

places as "heritage" sites extends the impact of this research beyond the realm of academia.

Relationship to my work

It is clear that the desire to explore poorly recorded histories and to increase public awareness thereof has provided an important impetus for much overseas Chinese archaeology, and has therefore been at the heart of much research design and site selection. My own research would not be in this vein, since the contribution of Chinese-Canadian communities to Victoria and Vancouver's histories is already well known. Neither Victoria nor Vancouver's Chinese communities have ever been in situations where extinction was a serious risk, nor have their early histories ever come close to becoming invisible. Sections of each city's old Chinatown architecture have been protected since the 1970s (Lai 1988:246; Yee 1988:137) thanks to the engagement of local activists and community associations in the face of redevelopment pressures (e.g. Lai 1988:246, 250; Yee 1988:137), and to the ongoing vitality of certain local institutions serving newer Chinese immigrants, old residents, and members of descendant communities (e.g. Chen-Adams et al. 2005, Yee 1988:246).

The Ross Bay, Harling Point and Mountain View cemeteries, all appear to be well protected at present. During my visits, all three were carefully tended to by employees or volunteers, and a number of documents already explore their histories (Adams 1998, City of Vancouver 2009, Lai 1987, Old Cemeteries N.D.,

Weir 1985). The importance of these histories has also been made manifest to the public. Sections of Victoria's Chinatown were designated as a National Historic Site in 1995 (Parks Canada 2009a), and both municipal and neighbourhood agencies promote historic Chinatowns as historic sites of importance to local residents and tourists: there are maps, informative plaques, guided tours, books, web sites and other media that make reference to these sites' histories. Cemeteries are similarly sites of active and ongoing commemoration: Lai's (1987) research has contributed to the designation of the Victoria Chinese Cemetery as a National Historic Site (Parks Canada 2009b). In Ross Bay, members of the Old Cemeteries' Society of Victoria area are actively engaged in education activities.

Since these sites are already well known, well protected, and given that their histories are now copiously documented, it becomes possible to look towards them with a greater range of questions in mind. By integrating some of the more recent perspectives that have started to become integrated into Overseas Chinese archaeology, it may be possible to do so.

Identity, diversity, and transnational ties

Over the past decade and half, the publication of the primary research described above, concurrently with a wave of first person-narratives and ethnographic publications, has led to the development of new perspectives on early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American history. By examining the construction of transnational community ties and the development of personal and

community identities in a transnational context, these studies produced nuanced and complicated interpretations of the interplay between individuals and communities. While explicitly transnational perspectives have only recently become influential in the archaeology of the Chinese Diaspora, such perspectives converge with other recent theoretical interests, and have allowed for exciting re-interpretations of seemingly mundane material culture.

First person narratives

Along with an increased awareness of their own agency and impact of early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American people, one important outgrowth of the movements to reclaim a Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American past, and of the debates surrounding these, was a growing academic interest during the 1980s in the lived experiences of these individuals (Scott 2005:81). This interest was also fed by the first-person narratives that were becoming available through the printed word. A number of memoirs have been published (e.g. in Canada, Chong 1994, Choy 1999, Price 2009) helping to create a "richer and more substantive account of Chinese-Canadian history" (Lee 2002:107) by bringing personal histories together with more general historical events. A similar role was played by novels which, though recounting fictional stories, were anchored in authors' personal experiences and academic research (e.g. Choy 1995, Lee 1990, Huffman 1991, Ng F. 1993, Woon 1998, Yip 1990[1959]), by collections of oral histories and histories told in large part through first-person accounts (e.g. Wolf

and Owen 2008, Sugiman 1992, Yee 1988), and by anthologies of early Chinese-language publications (e.g. Hom 1987, Yung et al. 2006).

Diaspora and transnational communities

One set of experiences that were brought to the fore by these publications were those of split families – families with members both in China and in Canada or the US, who could be separated for decades, yet remained bound together by important emotional, social or economic ties (e.g. Chong 1994, Hom 1987, Woon 1998). This spurred a wave of academic interest in the exploration of relationships between early Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans and people in China or elsewhere in the diaspora.

Although one of the first English studies on Overseas Chinese sociology (Wu 1926) had described Chinese migration to Pacific-rim countries as a single broad phenomenon with local manifestations, subsequent studies almost all maintained a single geographic focus. Even when Chinese immigrants were described as members of a diaspora, it was as part of a broader descriptive framework in which terms historically related to Jewish experiences were employed to describe Chinese-American social structures and experiences in the face of ethnic discrimination (e.g. Siu H 1987:300, Lee 1960: 52-68), in an analogy that harkened back to early European descriptions of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, often middlemen minorities, as the "Jews of the East" (Pan 1990:129).

More recently, however, a number of major works have made early Chinese transnationalism their main subject (Chen 2000, Chan ed. 2006, Hsu 2000, Pan 1990, Wang 2000, Yin 2000, Zhao 2002). Conceptualizing such relationships in a manner that can be described is not a straightforward endeavor (McKeown 2001), and various approaches have been tried. Some works have focused on the history of specific transnational institutions or associations, exploring the connections that they enabled. A wide range of institutions have been examined in this light [e.g. Hong Kong's Tung Wah hospital which provided a social support hub for migrants (Sinn 1989), transnational *qiaokan* newspapers (Hsu 2000), Chinese political movements active in the diaspora (Chen S. 2006, Duara 1996, Leung Larson 2002), banks and firms allowing for the transfer of money and information (Hsu 2006), humanitarian movements (Leong and Wu 2008, Peterson 2005), educational institutions (Lai H. 2006, Stanley 1995:19), and theatre troupes (Ng W. 2005)].

Others have focused on the history of specific communities, exploring the ways in which transnational and local connections affected them. Transnational Chinese communities in the United States [e.g. Chen 2000, McKeown 2001, Ng 1999] and in China (Chen 1940, Chen 2006, Hsu 2000, Woon 1985) have been examined in these terms. Yet others have explored such ties at a much smaller scale, by looking at how the history of individuals or families remained enmeshed in multiple places (e.g. Chong 1994, Liu 2005).

Theoretical openings

These analyses of transnational social networks have allowed interesting theoretical openings, by focusing attention on situations where essentialist categorizations of culture were untenable, and by showing some of the complex negotiations in which people can be engaged in their daily lives. In emphasizing the importance of Overseas Chinese to the history of their communities, many studies adopted perspectives that converged, in practice, with those of studies concerned with assimilation. By creating narratives of belonging anchored to specific sites, they maintained conceptions of culture as uniform:

> While rejecting assimilationist viewpoints, many of [these] scholars presented Asian American history as less an Asian and more an American story and as a tale of diverse people becoming one nation. In their writings, Asian immigration is a linear progression from rural to urban, from traditional to modern, and from alienation to Americanization. The priority in their research was to fight for representation and inclusion of the Asians in American history, to challenge the homogeneous image of America as white, and to claim the American-ness of Asians. (Liu H 2004:136)

In contrast, a focus on transnational ties, in conjunction with the desire to "revisit the world of Chinese immigrants as they knew and experienced it themselves" (Chen 2000:5), has fostered the opening of new questions and perspectives – notably in relation to the exploration of identity as something complicated and socially constructed, rather than innate. Indeed, the concept of diaspora, because it is about connections rather than places, can form a basis for histories that do not essentialize identity categories:

> [The idea] of diaspora can be the basis for a history that starts from the connections between places, and the flows, interactions, and

> transformations that take place through these connections. In doing so,
> it can avoid some of the dichotomies and multiplicities that often
> plague discussions of migrant identity. (McKeown 1999:309)

Studies that take into account the diasporic connections at the heart of many early Chinese-American and Chinese-Canadian experiences help to establish a link with other writings that explore similar phenomena: ethnographic research on contemporary Chinese transnationalism and anthropological works on transnational and diasporic social formations more broadly. Some of the ideas developed in those contexts can inspire new ways of thinking about the past. Although this is a wide and diverse body of research, some of the issues that it addresses prominently seem particularly relevant to the archaeological exploration of early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American experiences.

One of these issues, as outlined in McKeown's writings cited above, is the idea that a community need not be anchored geographically, but can reside in the connections that exist between people in different places, through their shared engagement in "multi-centered diaspora networks" (Clifford 1994:305, see also Hsu 2000, McKeown 2001 Watson 2005:898 for a similar perspective).

These networks are sustained by the ability of participants to see themselves as part of a same movement, by developing a sense of themselves as sharing some common identity – what Clifford (1994: 311) terms "diaspora consciousness". This sense of commonality makes it possible for people to imagine themselves as part of a bigger community (Hsu 2000b referencing B. Anderson 1991; Werbner 2000:8). Although such consciousness is anchored in

shared experiences, these are experiences that have been imbued with meaning, so that "commonalities [… are] given social relevance through selected narratives of chosen glories and traumas" (Brighton and Orser 2006:69).

These narratives are, in this sense, representations of more abstract and complex – and inchoate – realities:

> The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense. [...] identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation. It is always within representation. Identity is not something which is formed outside and then we tell stories about it. It is that which is narrated in one's own self.
> (Hall 2000:147-148; see also Appiah 2000[1996]:613)

Many works now examine the fluidity of identity in relation to personal circumstances and the broader context, and the diversity of ways in which identity was constructed by people of Chinese descent: rather than assuming identity as a given, they try to interpret it in terms of "a self-image and sense of belonging that is continuously being constructed and reconstructed" (Chan 2008:45, e.g. Chun 2000, Duara 1996, Ng W. 1993, Stanley 1996, Tu ed. 1994).

Such diasporic social networks have also developed over time, in specific historical circumstances, through the interaction of local and global factors (Duara 1996, McKeown 2001, Nonini and Ong 1996, Tan 2004:23). Moreover, the social categories and concepts through which and in relation to which people create narratives and representations, are the product of similar historical developments, and have their own "genealogies" (Nonini and Ong 1996).

These historical developments involve the contestation of categories and their subsequent development. Because representations are constantly being made – about, for instance, the notion of a "Chinese" identity – and because people learn of these categories through others' representations (and through the positive and negative impacts of such representations [Clifford 1994), such categories are constantly redefined through iterated interactions:

> the term "Chineseness" […] is no more than a locus of continuing debate among Chinese, non-Chinese, and (especially) overseas Chinese […] a space […] where ideas and practices are ever reformulated in argument and reinterpretation.
> (Sutton 2007:16)

Such categories provide fields for struggles, among different people, about representation, as a result of the different interests and ambitions held by people who feel bound to some group (Werbner 2000:5). And different scales of agency (cf Voss 2008) can be involved in the negotiation of these social categories. At one level, people are themselves, as individuals, engaged (through their thoughts, actions, and through consumption and creation of material culture), in the creation of informed and self-conscious representations (Appadurai 1996: 44).

The social categories that develop in these ways, whether ethnicity (cf Hall 2000 W Ng 1993:2-3), diasporic community (cf Ong ed.1996), or other, are socially active. They allow for active interaction by people with a community, whether through political engagement (Duara 1996, Lowe 1996:13), or the exchange of money and ideas (Hsu 2000a, Nonini and Ong 1996, Watson 2005).

As a result of these engagements, corporate groups – governmental or otherwise (W Ng 1993:1), are also active in the processes of renegotiation described above.

What is exciting about this perspective is that it opens many important questions. By exploring the development and transformation of social structures and social identities, as informed by local and global contexts, these structures and identities become historical products, rather than natural givens. By studying the evolution of such structures as the result of individual interactions, as informed by personal experiences of living in this broader context, they allow a role for individual people in the transformation of bigger social systems:

> Transnationalism is an important approach to understanding the Chinese American experience. It reflects both local and global social and economic forces that shaped Chinese American history as well as the creative responses of the Chinese towards those forces through their transnational networks.
> (Liu 2004: 153)

Archaeological approaches

Recently, some of these nuances have begun to colour works on the historical archaeology of Overseas Chinese communities. At a very basic level, curiosity about the experiences of early Chinese-Canadians is reflected in research design that strives to underscore the diversity among and within Overseas Chinese communities, thereby undermining stereotypes of homogeneity. In particular, a number of excavations have contributed to this end by showing variety of sites outside of Chinatown cores, including mining settlements (Chen Y 2001, Longenecker and Stapp 1993, Sisson 1993), railroad camps (Gardner 2004),

agricultural sites (Fee 1993, Van Bueren 2008), seaweed gathering sites (Greenwood and Slawson 2008), and fish canning plants (Fagan 1993). Similarly, a number of studies that look at urban areas focus on the variety of experiences possible in these contexts, by examining the often under-recorded experiences of women (Wegars 1993) and children (Greenwood 1980), and the ways in which class differences informed experience (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1998, 2001), as well as the range of residential arrangements and primary communities within which people organized themselves (e.g. Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997, Voss 2008). This interest in difference is most apparent in the case of the anthologies where most of the above works are printed (Wegars ed. 1993, Voss and Williams eds. 2008), because they have selected case studies that by their sheer range demonstrate the variety of economic and residential patterns adopted by Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans.

But at a deeper level, the concerns and questions raised by transnational views on Chinese migration are also manifest in an exciting body of work that strives to draw on a range of theoretical and interpretive resources to explore the dynamics of cultural interaction and of identity-formation in multicultural settings (Voss and Allen 2008:19). This is a still nascent body of work: the most recent major publication (a 2008 volume of the Historical Archaeology journal, edited by Voss and Williams) announces its hope of acting as a "springboard for the emergence of new collaborations and perspectives on Overseas Chinese archaeology and history" (Voss and Allen 2008:21-22).

Questions of representation, in particular, were important in this research –
be it in terms of the "impression management" by Chinese merchants, who
employed different types of material culture to project a sense of themselves in
relation to broader social and economic spheres, adopting different strategies for
different audiences (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001), or of the different ways in
which masculinity was perceived and expressed through material culture by
Chinese- and Anglo- American settlers (Williams 2008).

These works are informed by (and informative of) works on the history of
the Chinese diaspora discussed above. They also resonate with the increased
integration of perspectives drawn from post-colonial theory into archaeological
interpretations more generally. A key focus of post-colonial theory in archaeology
is the rejection of the assumption that identity can in any way be described as
monolithic or inherent in people (Mullins 2008:153), or that cultures are ever
homogenous: "[p]ostcolonial theory can be seen partly as an assault on the notion
of essentialized cultural forms" (Gosden 2001:238, see also Meskell 1999:76-77
and Rowlands 2007:69).

Furthermore, the idea that many levels of diversity exist within any one
person – that their identities are complicated and malleable, and in need of
invention, is important in the archaeological context. Meskell (1999:76-77)
explores how the "interstices [between race, gender, generation, institutional
location, geopolitical local, sexual orientation] provide the terrain for elaborating
strategies of selfhood that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of

collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself." In this sense, representation is central.

Again, because these complicated individuals interact as parts of bigger communities, different scales of agency (both individual and community) are active at once (Voss 2008). Such interactions are worth exploring, both because they are of interest in order to understand society more broadly, and because they are at the heart of the processes within which material culture was created and experienced.

Approach and rationale

Questions and theoretical framework

Early Chinese-Canadians lived in a complex situation, where different kinds of identity mattered in different circumstances – lineage, ethnicity, nationality, could all be important in structuring the relationships and interactions that were possible for a person, in certain circumstances. And yet there was room for flexibility in how individual people negotiated this complex situation.

I hope to situate my own research in relation to recent approaches that focus on transnational connections and identity, as reviewed in the previous section. Although my own research will not be specifically transnational in its focus, I am interested in exploring how Chinese-Canadians framed their own sense of identity, and how the kinds of identity that were framed through

individual representations, and that affected individual experiences, changed over time in relation to local and global factors, during the period of exclusion.

I will focus on exploring how representations changed, and varied, in a specific and limited context: that of mortuary material culture, by focussing on how individuals were commemorated on grave-markers in Vancouver and Victoria cemeteries. I will also trace on how that changed, in order to clarify the structure of that historical process.

Why look at cemeteries?

Cemeteries provide an excellent way of exploring questions of representation and change. On one level, they reveal something of the actions and choices of a large number of Chinese-Canadians who are fairly invisible in most other sources of evidence. But more interestingly, the way in which they were created preserved individual commemorative decisions. As a result, they allow for an exploration of questions of representation, of the intersection of individual practice and community identities, and, because of the often relatively long duration of cemetery use, they permit an exploration of patterns of diversity and change in how such community identities were framed over time.

Bias in existing sources

Both historical and ethnographic approaches to Chinese transnationalism have been criticized as being overly focused on the rich and powerful (be they

19th century merchants and voluntary associations, or 20th century business-people

and corporations), to the exclusion of the majority of people who were, and are,

engaged in transnational population movements (Guest 2004:63-64, Hsu

2000:309). While this problem can be palliated by ethnographic fieldwork that

engages with the experiences of non-elite people, a series of biases in the

formation of the historical and archaeological records make it very difficult to find

much information about the experiences of the majority of early Chinese-

Canadians. Written sources, oral histories, and visual documents all privilege the

stories of an uncharacteristic minority of Chinese-Canadians.

Although written sources have been used to reveal much more information

recently, they remain systematically biased, both because certain groups of people

were more likely to write than others, and because of the topics that they chose to

write about. Documents written in English tended to paint a homogenous picture

of Chinese-Canadians (Anderson 1991: 94). Until the 1930s, very few Chinese-

Canadians and Chinese-Americans were entirely literate in English, having at best

"practical English skills, but not literary ones" (Hom 1987:29). As a result, there

are few English documents written by Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans

(but see Lan Cassel 2002, Tow 1923). Chinese-Canadians who did write English

well were, in large part, born in North America and educated in English. There are

thus few English documents that detail the experiences, sense of self, and

aspirations of early Chinese immigrants to Canada.

Chinese-language sources are much richer and more detailed than English ones. Literate activities were important in many Chinese communities – literary societies held meetings and issued publications (Hom 1987:32-38), while newspapers (Chen 2000:5,73-75; Con et al. 1982:76; Hom 1987:31) were active sites of debate and social construction. For children born in Canada, Chinese-language schools offered full, evening or weekend education (Choy 1999:234, Ng W 1993:12, 38; Lai 2000, 2006; Lai 1991:6-5; Yee 1988:78-79). Even though basic literacy seems to have been almost a prerequisite for successful immigration to North America (Liu 2002), writing skills remained fairly unevenly distributed (Chen 2000:5, Lister and Lister 1989:66-69). Siu's (1987:157) study of early 20th century laundry workers revealed that while most were sufficiently lettered to read, "the majority [wrote] with great difficulty". There are thus likely class differences in the literary record, as the majority were unable to participate fully in the lively written conversation.

Furthermore, even though some aspects of early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American life – in particular those pertaining to voluntary associations or commercial activities (e.g. Chen 2001, Lai 1972, Ng 1993,1999, Sando and Felton 1993) – are quite well recorded, most others remained essentially undocumented (Chan 1986:xvi-xvii, Chen 2000:4s, e.g. Con et al. 1982:22).

Non-written documents are similarly problematic. Material culture was a domain through which most Chinese-Canadians had little ability to express themselves durably, and this inability was unevenly distributed along class lines.

Another important record, the one composed of photographs of life in early Chinatowns, is similarly biased. Archival photos from Vancouver's early Chinese community reveal a desire to commemorate community identities and engagement with associations. The many formal, posed photographs aimed to commemorate engagement with communities for the most part depict community associations, and families (Yee 1985:13).

Oral histories are also biased, in that only a small minority of Chinese-Canadians had any descendants in North America, and much of our understandings of the experiences of these now-deceased generations are drawn from the recollections of these descendants (Voss 2009). Even though many of these Canadian-born Chinese-Canadians did have relationships with some of these elders, and re-told some of their memories (e.g. Choy 1999), the perspective was not the same as that of the original narrations.

Cemeteries may provide a more inclusive historical record

The active selection of data that was created for larger groups may contribute to a lessening of these biases. Mortuary material culture was created for larger groups of people. Burial was relatively cheap, and supported by benevolent associations (Chen-Adams 2005:28)), and because much of the mortuary material culture was affordable – as with concrete markers, and carved wooden poles, most Chinese-Canadians who died would have had access to some form of

commemoration. Mortuary material culture may, in this sense, provide a more inclusive record than other written, oral, and material sources.

Although other sources are biased in being produced by certain individuals more than others, they are also often produced by groups (Voss 2008, Ng 1993:21), giving little sense of individual-scale events. Similarly, most early Anglo-Canadian sources depict the Chinese-Canadian community as fairly homogenous, and as a group.

Cemeteries provide one interesting way of going beyond these community-scale documents, and of exploring the intersection of individual and community, through a series of representations created during specific events: the erection of markers commemorating deceased individuals.

As such, this kind of material allows for an examination of individual decisions (because everyone has to get buried), but also of broader social changes, because individual decisions were influenced by the cemetery as a historical landscape, and by the historical context within which people were making commemorative decisions:

> (…) the scale and form of mortuary expressions are a function of the social and political scale for which memories are relevant and the circumstances in which their representation remains meaningful and effective. The growth and transformation of these expressions over time can therefore be read as a historical narrative of individual choices made in response to spatial representations of the immediate past and perceptions of current and anticipated social and political circumstances (Cannon 2002:191).

Since the way in which cemeteries are created preserves individual decisions/actions in relation to a single event, looking at patterns of change over

time allows for an appreciation of how multiple individual decisions were affected by the context in which they were made, and how they in turn formed part of the context within which subsequent decisions were made.

Furthermore, since certain profound changes are not articulated clearly because their unfolding is gradual, it may be that there is little historical documentation that explicitly articulates the workings of these transitions. Within Overseas-Chinese scholarship, there is a general lack of evidence allowing for the exploration of patterns of change at this scale. The examination of cemeteries, where each marker preserves evidence of a single commemorative decision, but where the number of markers allows for observation of variety, and change over time, could help address this lacuna.

Chinese Cemetery Studies

Mortuary rituals in China and in the Chinese diaspora were complex and often elaborate, involving a series of rites enacted over a long period of time that re-inscribed deceased persons in many of the social networks where they had been engaged in life: family, lineage, local community, and state. Although cemeteries had some importance in this ritual sequence, they were by no means the only sites for commemoration.

There exists a rich literature on Southeast Chinese mortuary practices and material culture. However, much of this literature emphasizes questions of ritual and belief, and relatively little attention is given to the commemorative material

culture created in what is, after all, only one of many funerary rituals in a long sequence.

In North America, Overseas Chinese cemetery research is informed by practical and theoretical concerns similar to those that affect Overseas Chinese archaeology more broadly. This results in works that are often primarily descriptive and culture-historical in their approach, explaining newly rediscovered cemeteries and articulating the local Chinese history with local history more broadly. When works do adopt a more theoretical approach, they remain influenced by the ethnographic and historic literature produced in Southeast China, and often adopt a similar focus. When observed, patterns of change are described in general terms, and explained in relation to concepts like assimilation and acculturation, or conservatism and 'orthopraxy'.

By focusing on mortuary material culture instead, it is possible to escape from the considerations that have dominated much of the literature on Chinese and Overseas Chinese mortuary ritual, to establish a perspective that is informed by and complementary to much of the scholarship that is currently available. Furthermore, because those works that have focused on mortuary material culture were predominantly explorations of smaller and more short-lived cemeteries, an examination of Victoria and Vancouver cemeteries permits a more thorough exploration of some of the patterns of change glimpsed at in other sites.

Mortuary ritual in Southeast China and the diaspora

Early Chinese immigrants to North America were almost all from

Guangdong province (Con et al. 1982:7). Although they had come from different

social and ethnic backgrounds, funerary ritual was sufficiently standardized in the

area – both because of shared regional practices (c.f. Naquin 1988, Pasacreta

2005) and of pan-Chinese ones (c.f. Ebrey 1991:xxix, Watson 1988a) that

immigrants would have arrived in North America already sharing certain

experiences and general conceptions.

Mortuary ritual in Southeast China was a protracted and complex process

involving a sequence of rites performed by different people, in different locales.

Through this process, a deceased person was commemorated in a range of

settings: through ceremonials at the time of their death, commemoration as

lineage members and as family members. They would remain named individuals

with ritual followings for generations after their death – until they lost their

individuality and material representations to become simply general ancestors

(Harrell 1979:523).

These mortuary rituals happened in a complex cultural world, where

different religious traditions – Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism being the

most prominent –influenced practices and ideas (Rouse 2005a:21), and were

combined into syncretic rites that varied regionally and between social classes,

while nonetheless following certain general patterns (e.g. Harrell 1979:520,

Sutton 2007, J Watson 1988a). Because of this, most emigrants from Southeast

China were likely to have shared some common experiences and ways of

conceptualizing death. However, the degree to which convictions and

understandings were shared, and the way in which local factors in various

diasporic sites influenced the development of new practices, varied regionally:

> Over the years, [Chinese religious traditions] have had their own
> local development. There have been transnational influences too.
> Buddhist monks and nuns have been visiting Southeast Asia,
> Europe, and America, while the religious publications from Taiwan
> are available in temples and religious organizations in Malaysia
> and Singapore (Tan 2000:285).

History, ethnography and archaeology: Mortuary ritual in the Chinese

diaspora

There is a surprisingly rich literature on diasporic Chinese mortuary

practices and material culture, examining practices across the diaspora (Abraham

2008a, 2008b; Abraham and Wegars 2003, Jack 1995, Jones 2001), and in

specific areas: within China itself (Hom 2002) and in Hong Kong and Singapore

(Chow and Teather 1998, Freeman 2006, Teather 2001, Yeoh 1991), Australia

and New Zealand (Brumley 1995, Ryan 1991, Williams 2006), Hawai'i and

South-Pacific Islands (Chung and Neizman 2005, Krauss-Friedberg 2008,

Pasacreta 2005), South America (Silverman 2002), the United States (Blake 1993,

Chung 2002, Chung and Wegars eds. 2005, Gerkman 2002, Hitchcock 1972,

Nelson 1993, Smits 2008), and in Canada (Chen Y. 2001:178,192, Densmore

2009, Lai 1987, Maxwell 2007, Pasacreta 2005, Weaver 1985). There is also a

Chinese Cemetery Newsletter (Abraham N.D.) that disseminates contemporary news stories and scholarly publications relating to Chinese cemeteries.

Much of this literature is recent– all but a few texts were published during the 2000s. It is also remarkably varied in scope and intent. Overall, Overseas Chinese mortuary practices are approached by these different researchers in ways that are relatively similar to those that characterize Overseas Chinese archaeology more broadly, as outlined in the historiographic section, although descriptive works and rescue archaeology are even more dominant than in the broader discipline. Questions of assimilation are also frequently used as explanatory mechanisms. Only a few papers take mortuary material culture as data with which to examine broader questions – but those papers demonstrate how much potential this kind of research can have.

Most research on Overseas Chinese cemeteries is essentially descriptive and regionally specific in nature (a trait which does not preclude it from being thorough and interesting). A number of factors can explain much of this focus. Most notably, much of this scholarship is recent, and therefore done by or for people who are initially not very conversant with the typical beliefs, practices, and commemorative traditions that early Chinese immigrant brought with them, or with the manner in which these developed over time. It becomes necessary to explore these issues. This issue has been exacerbated by the fact that many cemetery discoveries are fortuitous, and therefore not done by people specialized in this field of study (over the past few years, a number of cemeteries that had

disappeared have been rediscovered as a result of construction or other disturbances [as happened, notably, at Carlin in Nevada (Chung et al. 2005), in different suburbs of Los Angeles (Lin 2008, Pierson 2008), and in New Westminster, British Columbia (Luba and Chan 2009)].

Most of these works therefore adopt an approach that is primarily descriptive, using a mix of archaeological and historical research to examine basic ritual practices – particularly those practices surrounding funeral processions and bone repatriation – and, to a lesser extent, commemorative material culture (e.g. Abraham 2008a, 2008b, Abraham and Wegars 2003, 2005, Jack 1995, Pasacreta 2005). As a result, the majority of North American Chinese cemetery studies are richly detailed examinations of specific cemeteries and of the communities they served.

Furthermore, a number of publications are aimed at facilitating further research, whether by supplying methodological information (e.g. Jones 2001) by creating a repertory of known sites in a given area (e.g. Abraham 2008a, 2008b, Maxwell 2007), or by providing background information (e.g. Abraham and Wegars 2003, 2005, Pasacreta 2005, Rouse 20005a).

A number of works do examine cemeteries as a source of archaeological data to explore other questions. In particular, grave-markers are sometimes examined as a source of demographic data about the names, ages, gender, and place of origin of people of Chinese origin (e.g. Blake 1993, Lai 1987, Tompkins 2005).

When a more analytical approach is taken, it is most often one that focuses on the performance of ritual by living people: the procession and the care of the deceased during festivals (Chase 2005, Crowder 2005, Greenwood 2005, Pasacreta 2005). Such works make good use of abundant written documents from the period – indeed, mortuary ritual was written about in detail by Anglophone newspapers, and arguments relative to mortuary practices were often drawn on in debates about Chinese immigration and the rights of people of Chinese origin (e.g. Townsend 1876:30). The existence of rich ethnographic and historical data concerning funerary rituals (Addison 1924, Doolittle 1986, Ebrey 1991, Harrell 1979, Kuah-Pearse 2006, Tsu 2000, Watson and Rawski eds. 1988) – much richer than that concerning material culture – has contributed to this focus, as has the fact that much of the most central material culture was impermanent – beautiful cloth and paper goods that were burned as sacrifices (Lee Scott 2007), temporary grave markers that were discarded after exhumation (City of Vancouver 2009b), and photographs or soul tablets that allowed for commemoration in the domestic arena (Liu 2005) have all become essentially invisible. In conjunction with the development of archaeological approaches that focus on performance and community boundary (e.g. Inomata and Coben 2006) and on the relation of sensuous, if archaeologically invisible, ritual experiences with the formation of community memories (Meskell 2003, Williams 2003), this research has allowed for the exploration of changing community boundaries in early Chinese-American and Chinese-Canadian communities (e.g. Cheung 2002).

Feng-shui practices and, to a lesser extent, other Taoist practices and their continuation and transformation in diasporic contexts have also been studied (e.g. Chase 2005, Lai 1987, Pasacreta 2005, Peters 1997)

While this has proven to be an important and fruitful avenue of research, it is not the only possible one. I hope that this research will show that, when examined in light of recent perspectives on the historicity of socially salient identity categories, Chinese-Canadian cemeteries can prove to be excellent sources of data about the development and transformation of community identities. Furthermore, given the fluidity of personal identity and the role of grave-markers as forums for representation, an approach centered on material culture can help to provide a better understanding of the variability of early Chinese-Canadian experiences.

CHAPTER 3:   METHODS

Choice of Cemeteries

This study examines changing commemorative practices in Vancouver and Victoria. I focused on these two cities for a number of reasons. Firstly, in order to look at questions of variability and change in commemorative practices, it was necessary to have access to a fairly large number of markers, erected over at least a few decades' time. As cities with continuously large Chinese-Canadian populations from the 19th century on, Victoria and Vancouver were the sites of many burials. Also important was the diversity of these cities' Chinese-Canadian populations. In comparison to smaller cities where a specific industry had attracted adult worker residents (Con et al. 1982), or where chain-migration had resulted in a population that was dominated by a single or a few lineages (Lai 1977), the inhabitants of these cities were varied in age, gender, occupation, and lineage/ethnic/linguistic background. They were also numerous enough to sustain socially active class (e.g. Chong 1994) or political (Con et al. 1982) differences.

Most of the 24 early Chinese-Canadian burial sites thus far repertoried (Abraham 2008a, Pasacreta 2005) served small and comparatively homogenous communities. There were six main large Chinatowns in early 20th century Canada – in Cumberland, Kamloops, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver and Victoria, with the latter two being the largest. Most of these were either lost (as happened in New Westminster [Lin 2008, Luba and Chan 2009]), or damaged/restored in ways that altered much of the early material culture (as in the

restored Kamloops and Nanaimo cemeteries [Pasacreta 2005, Weaver 1985]).
Others contain too few surviving markers to allow much analysis (Cumberland
cemetery, which I visited in 2008, was well preserved and tended to – markers
were carefully swept clean, grass was cut, and flowers had recently been placed
on some graves; but there were only about 20 remaining grave markers).

In the end, Vancouver and Victoria were cities with large and diverse
Chinese-Canadian populations, and cemeteries that are still in relatively good
condition. As such, they provide the best opportunity to study changing
representations of community and identity as expressed in early Chinese-
Canadian mortuary material culture.

Table 1   *Chinese-Canadian cemeteries in Vancouver and Victoria*

Cemetery	City	Period of use	Type
Mountain View Cemetery	Vancouver	1886-Present	Municipal
Ross Bay Cemetery	Victoria	1873-Present Decline in 1950s	Municipal
Harling Point	Victoria	1903-1955	Chinese Cemetery (operated by CCBA)
Royal Oak Burial Park	Victoria	1923-Present	Municipal

*(Adams 1998, City of Vancouver 2009b, Lai 1987, Pasacreta 2005)

Survey of Cemeteries

Survey methods

I surveyed each cemetery one section at a time, walking back and forth along one row of markers after the other, looking at each marker. I surveyed sections where most markers were Chinese, but also sections where they were not. The only area that I did not visit was a small Jewish section in Mountain View Cemetery, as it was surrounded by hedges and had a closed gate. When markers were obscured by grass cuttings or other debris, I swept them by hand until I could read the interred person's name.

In Ross Bay and Harling Point Cemeteries, I took photographs and made notes recording basic information concerning each marker. In Mountain View cemetery, due to the number of markers that were present, while I took photographs of every marker, I only made notes recording the attributes of every second marker. Because of time constraints, near the end of my visit, I took photographs of markers without transcribing inscriptions for entire rows of markers. I only did this when relevant information could be gleaned easily from photographs (i.e. in cases when there was only writing on one face of the marker, when epitaphs were easily legible). This did not affect my analysis in any way that I could discern.

Identifying Chinese-Canadian markers

Finding Chinese-Canadian burials was an important first step in my research, and one that could not be accomplished to perfection. Relying on the language of the marker and its location, and on the names of the deceased, I believe that I was able to identify most markers.

1- Language of grave-markers

All markers that were written in Chinese or that bore Chinese inscriptions were included during my survey of the cemetery. There were three main problems with this method. First, and most importantly, many Chinese-Canadians had markers with writing that was entirely in English. In such circumstances, the two other criteria were used.

Secondly, it is possible that people who were not Chinese-Canadians were buried in graves with markers bearing Chinese writings. There is no clear way to circumvent this difficulty, though there is no reason to think that it was a very common occurrence. Most importantly, if a person did have such writing on their grave-marker, it seems likely that they would have had important family or social ties with Chinese-Canadian community members; and the way in which these relationships were commemorated would be of interest.

The last problem is more an inconvenience than a major difficulty. Japanese-Canadian markers often used writing in Kanji characters (which are identical in script to the Hanzi characters used in Chinese writing). Provided there was enough text (more than just a name written in Chinese script), it was possible

to distinguish the two. Particularly useful to this end were calendrical systems (which differed between the two languages) and place-names, which were present in most Chinese epitaphs. Furthermore, except for a few names that were present in both languages (e.g. Seto), the English transliterations of names provided a good way to determine the person's (or their family's) country of origin.

2- <u>Recorded name</u>

Secondly, the deceased person's name was used. I did not rely on a pre-established list of names with which to cross-check the names on markers (c.f. Surveillance Methodology 2005, Tompkins 2005): such a system would have been unwieldy to use, given the number of different names encountered (e.g. a random sample of 184 markers showed a total of 44 names, 22 of which appeared only once) and given that existing lists (e.g. Surveillance Methodology 2005) focus primarily on late 20th century Chinese-Canadian names. I prepared myself by reading monographs and articles on early Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American history, to familiarize myself with common names, and took note, in particular, of unusual-sounding or disyllabic names (e.g. Seto, Cumyow) that did not "sound" like other English transliterations of Cantonese/Hakka names.

While this method was usually good, it was not infallible. Women who married non-Chinese-Canadians, or their children, would be invisible provided they had adopted their husbands/fathers' names. Furthermore, certain Chinese-Canadian names were similar in sound to common surnames for English or other linguistic groups present in British Columbia, and some Chinese immigrants

adopted, or were given, names that were identical in sound and spelling to common English surnames as transliterations or translations of their own names (Louie 1998:123-125). In some cases, the resemblance was entirely intentional, and served as a means of obfuscating, on paper at least, the bearer's ethnicity – as was the case with names such as Lamb or Brown (Lai 1991: 31?).

People were considered as Chinese-Canadians on the basis of their family name. People with family names that were used only by Chinese-Canadians were included no matter what the personal-name was (e.g. Nellie Chow and Lee Sai Hong would both be counted). Some family names were common for Chinese-Canadians and for other groups as well (e.g. Dick, Gee, Joe, Lee, Low, Young). To avoid grossly overestimating the number of Chinese-Canadian deaths, I only included people with ambiguous last names if they had Chinese-sounding personal names (e.g. Tong Young Lee was counted, but Norman Frederick Lee was not). Since some Chinese-Canadians were given Anglophone first names, or adopted them as adults, this method likely means that some Chinese-Canadian grave markers were not recorded. Although the number of such markers is likely small (given the proportion of Chinese-Canadians who had these names was itself small), this nonetheless leads to a bias in my sample: an informal impression gleaned from the observation of markers in Chinese sections suggests that younger people and women seemed more likely to have had Anglophone first names; similarly, they are more represented outside of primarily Chinese-Canadian cemetery sections (see results section).

3- Location of marker

In Mountain View Cemetery, many sections, or rows of markers within sections, were entirely Chinese-Canadian. In these areas, markers bearing names that were not necessarily Chinese, but could be (e.g. Mavis Elsa Bunn, marker #349) were recorded.

These methods lead to a small – but unavoidable – underestimation of the number of Chinese-Canadian dead. This underestimation is systematically biased, in that Chinese-Canadians who adopted names homonymic with common Anglophone names (c.f. Lai 1991), were buried outside of predominantly Chinese areas and were given English epitaphs were never identified. Thus, while the impact on the overall number is likely small, there is a risk of a slight skewing of the data, because only people who maintained some elements of their identity as Chinese-Canadians in death were identified.

Choice of variables and recording method

I prepared a recording sheet that tried to encompass as many variables as possible. I tried to overestimate the number of variables that were of interest, for fear of not recording some important attribute. Overall, many of the variables recorded were indeed not used in the analysis, because they proved not to follow patterns that I could relate to bigger trends.

Figure 1   *Marker recording sheet*

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Marker # _____

Photograph #   ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
Location   Section ____ Range ____ Block ____ Plot
                    Lot ____

Neighbours Name(s) _____ _____   Dates _____
  North Comments : _____ Photo #_____
  South Name(s) _____ _____   Dates _____
            Comments : _____ Photo #_____
            Name(s) _____ _____   Dates _____
   East Comments : _____ Photo #_____
   West Name(s) _____ _____   Dates _____
            Comments : _____ Photo #_____

Marker appearance Shape _____ Material Stone/_____
Colour_____

Iconography Photo Flower + Foliage Cross
Other   Food Flowers   Garden   Stone + Paper   Other_____
_____

Writing   English, Style _____ Chinese, Style _____
_____

                   Colour _____   Colour _____
_____

Epitaph Text

20s:
0s: 零 / ○
Calendar: Dynasty/AD

</div>

Neighbours

I was interested in the way in which markers resembled, or differed from

other markers around them – and in exploring how placement, as well as the

creation of visible similarities or differences between different markers allowed for the evocation of similarities or relationships between different markers.

I therefore recorded information not only about the marker itself, but also concerning its neighbours. When so doing, I focused on neighbours that were clearly visible as such; I also took photographs of each such marker. However, because most Chinese-Canadian markers were placed together in rows, I did not describe each neighbour explicitly, since that information was recorded simply by virtue of going along a row and taking notes.

Epitaph texts

Except near the end of field research, and only in the case of markers that were easily legible, I noted the full text of each observed epitaph. This was particularly important in the case of markers with weathered surfaces, as it was necessary to trace the difficult-to-see inscriptions by hand in order to decipher them.

When doing so, I paid attention to the language and, in Chinese, to the type of character (traditional or simplified) that was being used. These are two fairly similar types of writing which are used to write Chinese languages (including Cantonese, Hakka, and Mandarin). Although simplified script was later adopted as the official language in the People's Republic of China, and debates about writing have since then often been contentious and enmeshed in questions of identity and political and cultural authority, this was not yet the case in the early 20th century; simplified script appears to have served primarily as an

abbreviated way of writing, and simplified/traditional characters were often mixed together on a single epitaph.

Marker appearance

I recorded the general shape of the marker with a brief sketch of its top edge (if it was upright) or with simply an 'F' if it was flat and rectangular in shape. I made comments if there was anything out of the usual.

Marker size

Most sizes were fairly standardized. Unless otherwise noted, I only recorded markers as being big, medium, or small. In so doing, I was comparing markers to other markers of similar shape in the same cemetery, rather than to any absolute measurement. Very few markers were actually distinctive in size, and so almost all were simply described as medium.

Other

Sometimes, markers were subject to continued visits by family and friends. In some cases, visitors left offerings – including flowers, food, or letters – on the grave. I recorded such instances. I also took note of any other unusual feature.

20s / 0s

In Chinese, different characters were used for twenties (20, 二十, 廿) and for zeros (0, 零, ○), according to expediency and stylistic concerns. I noted which type was used in each epitaph.

Calendar

A number of different calendrical systems were used when giving dates: the Chinese Dynastic calendar, the Christian calendar (written either in English or Chinese characters) or both.

Analysis

A catalogue number was assigned to each grave-marker. This number was inscribed on photographs of markers and on paper notes. All in all, I recorded 2755 markers: 2396 in Vancouver's Mountain View, 6 in Ross Bay Cemetery, and 353 in Victoria Chinese Cemetery.

Identifying gender, age, and date of death

Since I was interested in exploring differences in how people of different genders and of different ages were commemorated, it was necessary to identify these characteristics for individual markers.

Crosschecking markers with burial or death records that provided such information could have allowed for a determination of the gender and age of the deceased, but this was unrealistic. There are no burial records for Harling Point Chinese Cemetery in Victoria, and burial records for Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver (or, at any rate, the part of these records that is publicly available) did not provide information regarding the gender or age of the deceased.

Although death records did contain this information, it was difficult to match records and markers: the latter were often all in Chinese, and transliteration practices were not standardized, or were subject to mistake (Lai 1991:27-31). Even when a transliterated version appeared on the marker, it need not have been similar to the officially recorded version. Men received a number of names and formal nicknames over the course of their lives (Watson R 1986:623-626), and illegal immigrants sometimes adopted the "paper names" of local people whose identity they had purchased in order to circumvent restrictive immigration laws (F Ng 1993, Chong 1994:264). As a result, different names from such (sometimes long) lists of potential names could appear on the marker and on the registers (Stapp 1993:12, Tomkins 2005:3). Consequently, the only information that I could confidently use to reconstruct the gender and age patterns characterizing the buried individuals was that which could be reconstructed using the markers themselves. This could be done for a few markers only.

Gender

Because Chinese names are not clearly gendered, I had to rely on other clues drawn from information in the person's epitaph to make an assessment. In the end, only about half of all extant grave-markers allowed for the identification of the interred person's gender.

In 11% of cases, this was due to damage to the marker (typically from erosion or breakage) that rendered the epitaph, or key parts of it, illegible. This

problem was much more pronounced at Oak Bay Cemetery. In large part this resulted from the greater occurrence of broken markers (37% of all Oak Bay markers were broken, as opposed to only 5% at Mountain View). Choice of marker material was another cause of this disparity, since concrete, which was much more susceptible to erosion than stone, was frequently used for Oak Bay markers. I do not believe this factor is likely to have affected gender ratios much; overall, the proportion of markers being made of concrete was similar, at roughly 15%, for both men and women. It is consequently unlikely that either gender was at more risk of damage than the other.

The main difficulty resulted from the lack of clear and universally applicable means of inferring gender on the basis of a name. Indeed, 40% of all markers had legible epitaphs identifying the name of the deceased, but providing no means of discerning their gender. In Southeast China, names were often very idiosyncratic and thus non-gendered (Watson 1986:620-622). Although there existed some gendered names (Watson 1986:621), even those words (types of stones, flowers, virtues…) that composed them were sometimes also used for members of the opposite gender (Louie 1998:43-45). The confusion was accentuated because boy toddlers were sometimes intentionally given the names of girls, as protection against ill luck (Watson 1986:621-623). Thus, while there were gender differences in naming practices, they were subtle and inconsistent. Anglophone names were occasionally used instead of, or in addition to, Chinese names (e.g. Violet Lore, Baby Fred Chung). I did use these to identify gender.

While personal names were for the most part not useful, there were other means of identifying gender, allowing 49% of all markers to be categorized. One means was the examination of a person's family names. In early 20th century Southeast China, women's personal names were lost after marriage, after which only her family names were used (Watson R 1986:626). In such cases, maiden and married names were usually identified with the characters *shi* (氏) and *men* (門), respectively (Blake 1993:71). Men did not adopt new family names with marriage. Thus, the presence of the *shi...men* (氏... 門) terms or of two family names on a marker allowed it to be recognized as commemorating a woman. The converse was not necessarily true, since unmarried women would have only one family name.

Furthermore, some markers (19% of total) commemorated a person's family role. Words relative to spousal status (indicated through nouns, like wife or *furen* (夫人), or forms of address like that for a wife, *anren* (安人), parental status (as indicated by words like *mu* (母) or mother) or child-status (daughter, baby girl) were used to identify women. Similarly, men were described as spouses (husband), parents (father, *fu* (父), children (son), siblings (brother) or uncles. In the few cases where dedications were present, they could provide indirect

information about the interred person's gender (as was the case with one marker that had been erected by the interred person's wife).

Terms of address were also often gendered. Words like Mr. and Mrs. appeared on a few markers. Women and girls were sometimes addressed as *nüshi* "女士", a polite term that did not relate to the woman's marital status (Blake 1993:75), and single young women and girls could be addressed as *guniang* "姑娘" (Jones 2001:3). For men, although terms like mister (Mr., *xiansheng* (先生)) were almost never used, more formal written terms were present. In particular the term *gong* (公), which literally meant "maternal grandfather" but in practice was used as a polite way of referring to any man (Jones 2001:2), in usage that essentially served as prefacing the deceased person's name with the epithet "honorable" (Blake 1993:62), appears in many epitaphs.

All in all, because of traditional naming practices most married women were identifiable as women. However, not all married women seem to have been named in this way. Unmarried women and men, both single and married, could be designated with a family and personal name which in the absence of exterior clues remained impossible to gender. This means that women may be over-represented in the gender-identifiable category.

Age

Age could be identified when it was given on the epitaph, or when both dates of birth and death were. In a few cases a person was called "Baby", in which case I guessed them to be aged 0.

Since most (75%) markers recorded neither the person's date of birth nor their age, it was often impossible to tell a person's exact age. However, the presence of information about their family or social status at least placed a likely minimum on their age, permitting an admittedly imprecise categorization of otherwise un-ageable markers. Since women often married in their teens (at the turn of the century in the American Northwest, the median age varied between 16.7 and 18.5 years), and since there were few child marriages (in which the wife was under thirteen) (Chan 2006:52-3), I used a fairly gross cutoff of under/over 10 years old, to separate young children and infants from people who could assume adult family roles. Two age categories could be identified: people of unknown age, and people who were not children (who were likely over ten years old). This method was very imprecise, and more relevant for women. For men, there was no easy way of identifying age. While fathers and husbands were adult, the vast majority of men were not commemorated in ways that mentioned their family role. The only indication of gender to appear on such markers, the word *gong* (公

), could be used to refer to men of any age (Hom 2002:44, Jones 2001:2). This approach was nonetheless useful in discerning the very high commemoration rates for adult women in the 1920s and 1930s (see p. X, observations and results).

Date of death

It was important to identify the date of erection of markers in order to explore how commemorative practices evolved over time. In order to ascertain the date of a person's death, I used two main methods. First, and most commonly (for 73% of all markers), I examined the date of death recorded on a marker. This was usually given using the Christian calendar (e.g. 1915) and/or the Chinese Dynastic calendar, which gives the number of years elapsed from the start of a particular emperor's reign, or since the 1911 revolution (typically written out as "*zhong yu mingguo ... nian (*終於民國。。。年)", or "died in Chinese Republic' year #

...". I converted such dates into Christian calendar dates by adding 1911 years to the number indicated. This method does not help to discriminate against markers commemorating a person that died in an earlier decade, or replacement markers erected over an older stone.

In a number of cases (27% of all markers), dates were not indicated on the marker at all, or were too damaged to read. Because markers were sometimes organized in rows according to the person's date of death, I sometimes guessed at the date. I only did so when the marker was in a row of similar markers, with two or more markers on each side dating to the same period, and was similar in style to its neighbours. In the end, 6% of markers could not be dated to at least the decade level.

Marker attributes

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Statistical analysis

I looked at each marker multiple times, both to get a general sense of each cemetery as a whole, and to note any individual marker having interesting or unusual features (when relevant, such markers are mentioned in the observations and results section). I did not, however, translate every epitaph, nor did I look at how each marker fit into broader sequences of change. The sheer number of markers was prohibitive. In order to explore general patterns of interpersonal variability and change over time and space, I used samples of markers, for which a large number of potentially relevant variables were considered: these pertained to aspects of the marker's location, shape, and appearance, the epitaph's appearance and content, and descriptions of the deceased person's gender, age, and social characteristics (see annex 3 for a complete list of recorded variables). These were analysed using SPSS 16.0. I used cross-tabulation analyses to explore how various factors – the gender or age of the deceased, in particular – related to the manner in which they were commemorated, and to look at spatial differences between cemeteries (and between different sections in Mountain View Cemetery) and over time (using decade and, where possible, yearly, increments).

I compiled a few different databases, which were used to focus on particular questions:

1- Random sample of markers

In the case of this first sample to be analyzed, I selected every 15th marker (for a total of 184), from the complete list, using catalogue numbers. Because of

the way the cemeteries were catalogued, the sample is fairly representative of the

actual cemeteries (in terms of the proportion of each marker to be in different

cemeteries or in different sections of a given cemetery). Most conclusions about

Mountain View Cemetery as a whole, or about commemorative patterns in the

1940s and in 1950s in Mountain View, as well as about commemoration in

general, were made using this database.

2- <u>Markers erected prior to 1930</u>

This data-set includes all markers that are known to predate 1930 (153 in total). Because of the paucity of early markers, sampling was not necessary. Usually the year was determined according to the date on the marker itself. I used this database to make conclusions about commemorative patterns during the same period.

3- <u>Markers erected from 1930 to 1939</u>

This data-set was similar to the one concerning markers erected prior to 1930, except that there were enough markers dating from this decade that I only sampled every second marker (for a total of 150 markers)

4- <u>Markers erected from 1940 to 1959</u>

Because there were already quite a few markers from this period in the random sample database, I did not create separate databases for these decades. I did, however, ascertain age and gender information for every second marker erected during these two decades, in order to create a portrait of the people being commemorated during this period and to establish what the commemoration rates were.

5- <u>Harling Point Chinese Cemetery Markers</u>

Because there were many fewer markers from this cemetery than from Mountain View cemetery, I created a database for it. I refer to this database when talking of commemorative patterns in Harling Point Chinese Cemetery.

Questions

I used these databases to explore differences in marker style and epitaph language and content, over time and between cemeteries/cemetery sections, as well as between people of different ages or genders. Many of the examined variables (e.g. style in which the epitaph was written, type of calendrical system used, etc.) did not relate to any visible broader patterns, and are therefore not discussed in the observations and results.

Exploring Bone Repatriation and Cemetery Choice Patterns

Overall, the number of markers commemorating Chinese-Canadians having died prior to 1960 was surprisingly small, given the Chinese-Cadnadian population in Vancouver and Victoria during this same period. Because it seemed unlikely that this was a reflection of actual death rates, it seems that early commemoration rates may have been quite low (perhaps in relation to bone-repatriation practices that were engaged in at the time). I wanted to explore how (and if) these changed over time, and whether the cessation of bone repatriation shipments had any impact on commemoration rates.

Furthermore, because many cemeteries were open in Victoria at the same time, I was interested in getting some sense of how commemoration rates differed at each site – an endeavour which required that I get some sense of how many burials were made at each of these cemeteries during the period of interest.

Both of these questions were difficult to answer directly, as no single archive contained all the relevant information; it was necessary to resort to a number of different sources of data and to make some approximations, as described below.

Sources of Data

In addition to photographs and field-notes describing extant markers, I looked at archival sources pertaining to death and interment. Cemetery records were ideal for reconstructing burial rates. However, there were lacunae in the information available through such records – some cemeteries had no records; others lacked information about the age and gender of the people buried there. This made it necessary to supplement cemetery records with death records, which were available digitally.

People were included on the basis of their name, according to the same criteria used for inferring which markers commemorated Chinese-Canadian individuals. I do not believe that the bias caused by conservative inference was too important. In the 1920s, these ambiguous names make up 4% of all Chinese-Canadian names; in the 1930s, 1%, and in the 1940s and 1950s, 8%. In the ambiguous name samples, gender ratios are still skewed with an over-representation of men. I thus believe that, while undeniably present, the error involved in this method is not likely to be large.

Cemetery records

1 - Ross Bay Cemetery records

Throughout the period during which Ross Bay Cemetery (Victoria) was in use, fairly detailed records were taken concerning burials and other happenings. These are available online (City of Victoria N.D), and lists of names of all people buried for a given year can be obtained. More detailed records are available via microfilm at the city of Victoria's municipal archives' office.

2- Harling Point Cemetery records

I was unable to find any surviving records of burials at Harling Point Cemetery (Victoria).

4- Royal Oak Cemetery records

Royal Oak Cemetery (Victoria) records were not available online.

5- Cemetery Finding Aid

The British Columbia cemetery finding aid (Demaray 2002) has been compiled as a tool aimed at aiding with genealogic research. Data from various registers have been tabulated and are accessible through this central point. Royal Oak Cemetery and Ross Bay Cemetery Records are both included here. It is necessary to search by name (rather than by city or date of death), making this database slightly unwieldy.

6- Mountain View Cemetery records

Mountain View Cemetery Archives (City of Vancouver 2008) were available online, and names were organized alphabetically. Gender and age

information were lacking from the online version of this record; while the more detailed paper records were closed to the public.

Death records

British-Columbia records for deaths having occurred between 1872 and 1988 are available online, through the British Columbia Archives website (BC Archives 2002), where a series of vital statistics' documents (death, marriage, baptismal and birth certificates) have been entered into a searchable database. The death records document the name, gender and age of each deceased person, as well as information about their date of death and the city in which they died. It is possible to conduct searches using any of these fields, or a combination thereof (e.g. one can find death records for all persons with the last name "Wong", all persons having died in Victoria, all persons having died in 1932, etc.).

Table 2   Information available through various burial and death record databases

Record	Year of death	Year of burial	Cemetery	Plot	Name	Age at death	Gender	Place of death	Place of birth
Mountain View Cemetery Records	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Ross Bay Cemetery Records	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
British-Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
British Columbia Vital Events Index: Death Records	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

Exploring Cemetery Choice Patterns

In 20th century Victoria, a few cemeteries were open for Chinese-Canadian burials at any one time. By looking at death (BC Archives) and burial records (City of Victoria 2002, Demaray 2000), it was possible to examine the proportion of Chinese-Canadians who were buried in different cemeteries during the early 20th century.

For the 1903-1920 period, prior to the opening of Royal Oak Burial Park, two main cemeteries were in use: Ross Bay and Harling Point. I looked at Ross Bay burial records (City of Victoria 2008) to find the number of Chinese-Canadian burials having taken place there each year. Since there are no burial records for Harling Point, I subtracted the number of Ross Bay burials from the number of recorded deaths (BC Archives 2002) for the same period, in order to estimate the number of Chinese-Canadian burials at Harling Point.

For the 1920-1959 period, three main cemeteries were available: Ross Bay, Royal Oak, and Harling Point. Since Royal Oak records are not available online, I used a sample of recorded Chinese-Canadian deaths in Victoria, comprised of all deaths for three years ('02, '05, '08) per decade (BC Archives 2002). I searched for each name in the British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid (Demaray 2000). Since all other Victoria cemeteries (including both Royal Oak and Ross Bay, as well as smaller parish cemeteries) had their records included in this database, missing names were likely in large part those of people buried in Harling Point Cemetery.

Exploring commemoration rates

I was interested in exploring what percentage of people who were buried were still commemorated by extant markers. When available, the number of burials having taken place in a cemetery over a given time period was compared with the number of surviving markers, giving a commemoration rate for the same period. Otherwise, the number of deaths occurring over a given time period, when compared with the number of surviving markers created during the same period, provided a sense of changing commemoration rates.

1- Commemoration rates in Vancouver

To explore commemoration rates in Vancouver, I created a database of all Chinese-Canadian burials created prior to 1960, using names to identify Chinese-Canadian individuals in Mountain View Cemetery burial records (City of Vancouver 2008). The total number of recorded burials for a given period was compared to the number of surviving markers for that same period, as calculated from a sample of half of all markers in the cemetery.

Neither the gender nor the age of interred persons were included in the Mountain View Cemetery records. To explore how the gender of the people being commemorated changed over time, I used death records to get some sense of the gender and age ratios of deceased persons during each decade. I tabulated all Chinese-Canadian deaths in Vancouver for five years per decade (01, 03, 05, 07,

09), and compared the gender and age pattern of deceased persons with that of commemorated persons.

2- Commemoration rates in Victoria

The problem in Victoria was similar to that in Vancouver, given the absence of burial records for Harling Point Cemetery. I created a list of Chinese-Canadian deaths for Victoria and Oak Bay municipalities for three years per decade (02, 05, 08), and compared the gender and age of deceased persons with that of commemorated persons.

CHAPTER 4: OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

<u>Victoria Cemeteries</u>

I visited two cemeteries in Victoria: the municipal cemetery at Ross Bay and the Chinese cemetery at Harling Point. The layout and material culture present at each site were strikingly different, affecting the impressions that the sites made on me as a visitor. Where Ross Bay was a large and shady cemetery, crosscut by winding roads that divide the landscape into sections, Harling Point was open, its ground falling down-slope into the ocean, with a large altar drawing the eye towards the shore. Ross Bay markers were quite diverse, with small family mausoleums and barely visible flat markers placed together in a single section. While there was also a range of marker styles at Harling Point, two types of markers clearly dominated the landscape. These differences extended further – there were very few Chinese-Canadian markers at Ross Bay, and most of those were for children, and written primarily in English, which was in contrast to the absence, at Harling Point, of any marker commemorating a person that was explicitly described as a child, and the predominance of Chinese in epitaphs.

Yet the markers in these two cemeteries were created during the same period, by Chinese-Canadian residents of the same city. This section explores some of the differences in commemoration between and within sites in Victoria, to highlight the different ways in which experiences of community and belonging were captured through memorialisation. Two fairly distinct commemorative strategies appear to have been used throughout this period. One, which will be

termed 'standard' because it was clearly predominant, involved bone repatriation when possible, and commemoration in primarily Chinese-Canadian spaces, with material culture that minimized interpersonal differences, after bone repatriation became impossible. The other, 'non-standard', commemorative strategy really involved a range of more unusual commemorative practices, in which various community affiliations were commemorated, in different ways.

These different commemorative strategies were manifested in a range of choices – notably the person's place of burial, their marker's appearance, and the aspects of their lives that were commemorated on their epitaph.

Commemorative spaces

Cemeteries

Before looking at markers themselves, it is worth looking at where they are. For visitors, it is easy to see a difference between the commemorative styles that predominate at Harling Point and Ross Bay cemeteries. And while this is interesting, at a more fundamental level, the fact that different burial sites were used at the same period, and the ways in which the popularity of different sites changed, can also reveal something about attitudes towards commemoration.

Many cemeteries were open in Victoria during the 19th and early 20th century. These included smaller religious cemeteries; a series of large municipal cemeteries that were open to the public at different times (the old Quadra Street cemetery, its successor, the Ross Bay Cemetery, and eventually the Royal Oak

Burial Park which opened in the 1920s), as well as the Harling Point Chinese

Cemetery, which was open for 50 years between the early 1900s and mid 1950s

(Lai 1987, Old Cemeteries Society N.D).

Despite the range of available options, the vast majority of Chinese-

Canadians were buried in spaces that were primarily reserved for Chinese

Canadians, while a minority used municipal or religious grounds (see tables 2 and

3).

Table 3   Recorded Chinese-Canadian burial sites in Victoria

	Death records		**Cemetery records**		
	Sample N*	*Ross Bay***	*Royal Oak***	*St-Michaels***	*No record****
1920-1929	119	3	2	1	113
1930-1939	99	2	11	0	86
1940-1949	170	3	16	1	150
1950-1955	109	3	42	1	63

*   *Sample of names from death records registered in Victoria for three
        years (02, 05, 08) per decade (only 02 and 05 for the 1950-1955 period)
        (BC Archives 2002)*

**   *Number of persons bearing a name from the sample to be registered in
        this cemetery's records (Demaray 2000)*

***   *Number of names that did not match any cemetery records. Since
        Harling Point cemetery is the main burial place in Victoria that is not
        registered, it is expected that most Chinese-Canadians whose burial site
        was not documented were buried at this site*

Table 4   Number of recorded Chinese-Canadian deaths and expected burials per cemetery in Victoria, 1910-1959

		Burial sites of Victoria dead, 1910-1959					
	Victoria	*Ross Bay Cemetery*	*Royal Oak Cemetery*		*Harling Point Cemetery*	
Decade	*Recorded deaths[1]*	*Recorded burials[2]*	*% of dead buried[3]*	*Expected burials*	*% of dead buried[3]*	*Expected burials*
1910-1919	543	12	N.A.	N.A.	97	531
1920-1929	391	8	3	11	96	377
1930-1939	356	2	11	40	87	309
1940-1949	528	6	10	48	89	469
1950-1955	257	7	38	98	57	146
Total	2075	35	15	303	87	1832

1   *Total number of Chinese-Canadian deaths in Victoria for each decade, based on a count of death certificates (BC Archives 2002)*

2   *Total number of burials with Chinese names, based on Ross Bay Cemetery records (City of Victoria 2008)*

3   *Percentages were calculated by starting with a database of death records based on death certificates issued in Victoria (BC Archives 2002) for a sample of three years per decade (02, 05 and 08). Each name was then searched for using British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid (Demaray 2000). Using the number of burials per cemetery for each decade's sample years, the percentage of Chinese-Canadian dead that were buried in Royal Oak for each decade was estimated. The percentage that was unaccounted for was assumed to have been interred at Oak Bay Cemetery. Percentages are rounded off and may not add up to 100% exactly.*

Parish cemeteries

Few Chinese-Canadians were buried in parish cemeteries during the 1920-1955 period. In the sample of deaths examined, there were only 3 burials in parish cemeteries – the equivalent of less than 1% of burials. All cases were in the cemetery of St Michael's Anglican Church.

Ross Bay Cemetery

From the closing of the municipal Quadra Street Cemetery in 1873 until 1902, Ross Bay served as the main burial site for Chinese-Canadians in Victoria (Lai 1987) at this time, the only alternatives were the parish cemeteries discussed above. During the 17 years between 1885 and 1902, there were 755 Chinese-Canadian burials at Ross Bay – over 41 per year on average (City of Victoria 2002).

Yet once another option did become accessible, with the opening of the Harling Point Chinese Cemetery in 1903, its popularity proved overwhelming and instantaneous: the number of burials at Ross Bay plummeted, from 39 in 1902 to 2 in 1903. Subsequently, Ross Bay Cemetery was little used by Chinese-Canadians. Indeed, there were only 45 burials at Ross Bay during the entire 1903-1955 period: less than one per year, on average (City of Victoria 2002)

When Harling Point Cemetery closed in the 1950s, Chinese-Canadian burial rates at Ross Bay increased only marginally (from 6 burials in the 1940s, to 7 between 1950 and 1955). This was likely related to the increased popularity of

Royal Oak Burial Park and to the gradual desuetude of Ross Bay as a burial site for Victoria residents more generally (there were only 150 burials in Ross Bay in 1955 [City of Victoria 2002], for 1202 deaths in Victoria [BC Archives 2008]).

Harling Point Cemetery

In 1903, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations (CCBA) established a Chinese cemetery at Harling Point in Oak Bay, Victoria (Lai 1987). After its opening, this site served as a burial ground for many of the city's Chinese-Canadians, and as the site where all bones intended for repatriation were to be kept (Lai 1987). Over 97% of Chinese-Canadians were buried here in the 1910s. The number of burials fell by 10% between the 1920s and the 1930s, and again by 30% between the 1940s and the 1950s. By the time Harling Point closed in the mid-1950s (Lai 1987), over 40% of Chinese-Canadians were buried elsewhere.

Although CCBA leaders had hoped to open another cemetery in the suburbs of Victoria, this proved impossible because of financial difficulties, and only municipal cemeteries remained accessible from then on (Lai 1987:35). Given the burial rates, however, it seems that a lack of demand may also have been a contributing factor in this situation.

Royal Oak Burial Park

Among Chinese-Canadians, this cemetery increased in popularity gradually, but significantly, from its inauguration in the 1920s, until the 1950s. By far the greatest rise in the number of people buried occurred between the 1940s and the 1950-1955 period. This rise coincides with the decline in use of Harling Point Cemetery (see table 3).

Summary

As soon as an alternative to Ross Bay municipal cemetery was opened, a clear majority of Chinese-Canadians made a similar choice in opting for burial in a cemetery that was primarily defined as Chinese-Canadian. A small number of people did not make the same choice, opting instead for interment in municipal or pastoral grounds. The number of people choosing these non-standard options grew from the 1920s on, increasing most dramatically in the 1950s.

The presence of these different sites for commemoration does suggest a possibility that there were different strategies of commemoration in use at a given time. The relationship between these different choices in burial place and other differences in commemorative practices will be explored through the rest of the results section. The next section will examine the ways in which the interior organization of space within each cemetery, in conjunction with the mandate of each site, may have informed these different choices regarding burial place.

Different spaces within cemeteries

Introduction

There are differences in the ways the people buried in different cemeteries were commemorated. Although these differences are immediately striking when looking at the markers (and these will be explored in the next section), they extend deeper, notably because space was organized in different ways at each cemetery.

The placement of burials next to one another in groups can serve as an important means of marking community identities. Both archival (City of Victoria 2002) and survey data reveal that in Victoria cemeteries space was used in ways that evoke community identities as different than ethnic group and family. Standard commemorative practices involved placement in ways that effaced religious, family, ethnic and political distinctions, but underscored Chinese-Canadian community identity.

Ross Bay

General organization and shared structures

Ross Bay was a large cemetery, almost sprawling, and one in which it would be easy to get lost if it were larger, because of the winding roads and the absence of central features that visually anchor the rest of the space. The trees and markers dominate the space, especially given the miscellany of markers.

Sections within the cemetery

Although Ross Bay was a public cemetery, it was a segregated one, especially in the 19th century. In the 1870s, while the cemetery was still under construction, many of the churches that were active in Victoria insisted on controlling their own areas (Select Committee 2003[1978]) (although many of these sections were eventually opened to the general public after churches became unable to pay cemetery fees in the late 19th century [Old Cemeteries N.D.]).

An area was set off for paupers and the anonymous dead, and another neighboring one for "Indians and Mongolians" (Select Committee 2003[1878]), or "heathens" (Adams 1998:6, Brabant 1981:3) – including any Chinese-Canadians who were Buddhist, Taoist, or otherwise not active in a Christian congregation in Victoria.

This section was located in the L quadrant of the cemetery (see figure 8). Other neighboring quadrants, E, K (Select Committee 2003[1876], Lai 1987:26) and parts of the N section (Lai 1987:26), although not reserved for a specific group, were also used for Chinese-Canadian burials (City of Victoria 2002).

Figure 2   Map of Ross Bay Cemetery
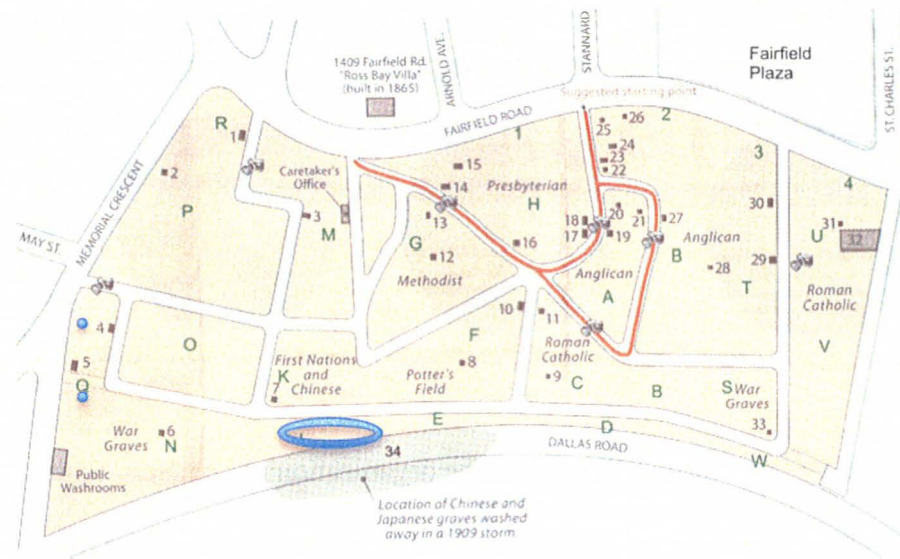
*   *(Old Cemeteries Society N.D.)*
** *Extant Chinese-Canadian markers indicated in blue dots (lone markers)*
    and ovals (groups)
****Potters field was a space reserved for the anonymous and indigent dead*

According to the Ross Bay burial index (City of Victoria 2002), all early

Chinese-Canadian burials were made in the sections that had been designated for

'Heathen' burial (L), or in similarly ethnically segregated neighboring sections

(K, E).

After 1903, there was a shift in burial locations, with an increase in the

number of burials being made in general use sections of the cemetery (especially

sections M, N, O). In the 1950s, five burials were made in the Methodist section

of the cemetery (G) (see figure 3).

Figure 3   Proportion of Chinese-Canadian burials in different sections of
Ross Bay Cemetery
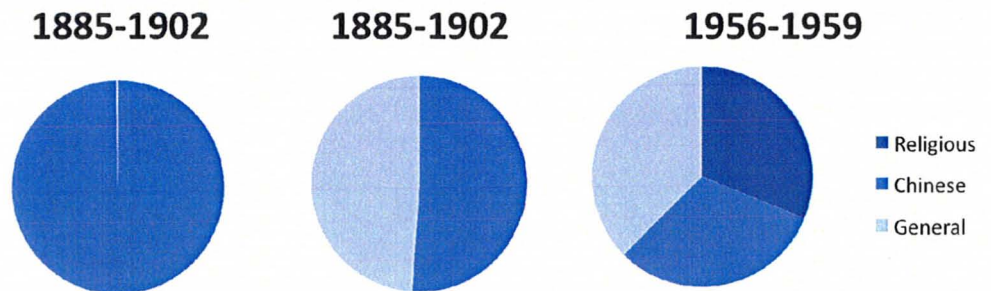
Thus in the 19th and early 20th century, the organization of cemetery space

in Victoria was such that a corporate space was imposed, one that was based on a

broader identity category, that of "Indians and Mongolians". While it is possible

that smaller divisions were made between different groups within the space of

these segregated sections, as was done in Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery

the destruction of a large part of this section through erosion and reconstruction

make this question impossible to address. At any rate, an impression of unity

within the landscape may have been created by the presence of an altar for

sacrificing to the dead (Abraham 2009), which had been erected in the Chinese

section, and remained there until the early 1900s.

After the creation of Harling Point Cemetery, there was a change in

practice, in which many of the Chinese-Canadians who were buried in Ross Bay

were buried in non-ethnically segregated sections. In a few cases, people were

buried with other religious community members.

Spatial organization within cemetery sections

Although the general area within which a person is buried relates to large-scale community identities, whether self-ascribed or imposed, choices about burial with, or near, certain neighbors may also create a sense of community at a much smaller scale.

Ross Bay records indicate the plot in which a person was buried. These plots were sometimes re-used, or used by two to four people at the same time. These records indicate that there is evidence of a shift in the placement of burials following the creation of Harling Point Cemetery, at which time more people appear to have been buried with family members.

While a sample of burials from each section for the 1885-1903 period indicates a rate of multiple occupation varying from around 24% to 43%, in only two cases were people who had similar names, and may have been siblings, buried in the same plot (both were in section L).

After 1903, the rate of multiple burials remained fairly high, at approximately 30%. However, there was a much greater incidence of people with the same, or similar, names being buried together: of 19 double burials, 14 may have been of two to four persons belonging to the same family. There were also two sets of people with similar names being buried in separate but neighboring plots. Most of these people were young children, although in two cases more than one generation was present. In such cases an older person (possibly a parent) was

buried with a child that had died earlier. It is possible that burial location may have been chosen in light of a desire for a family burial.

The idea that this pattern could represent intentional burials of family members together is bolstered by the presence of one surviving grave marker (see Annex 2a) which commemorates three young siblings (Baby Fred, Baby Sister, and Alice Chung (張), having died in 1903, 1910, and 1922 respectively) who were buried in the same plot.

Thus the site of burials in Ross Bay sometimes served to underscore the family ties shared by deceased persons.

Harling Point

General organization and shared structures

The way in which the landscape at Harling Point was organized made public structures very conspicuous (see annex 1b), more so than any of the individual markers. This distinction is a matter of appearance – public structures having been larger and more distinct in shape than markers – and of placement – since the altar was placed close to the shore, below all markers. This created a certain visual impression of the cemetery as more of a whole than a collection.

The cemetery included three main public structures, notably an altar, which is still present and is used by all cemetery visitors hoping to burn offerings for the dead (Abraham 2008). When it was in use, it also contained a small building to preserve bones intended for repatriation to China. Bones from cities

throughout Canada were sent to Victoria, where centralized bone shipments
would be organized (Lai 1987:32). Initially, the cemetery had also contained a
groundskeeper's house (Lai 1987:34). Both of these structures have since been
destroyed, and only the altar remains.

Visually, these structures occupied important places in the landscape of
the cemetery. But they also served functions that were extremely important for
many of the people buried at Harling Point and their visitors. Furthermore, all
visitors hoping to make sacrifices to loved ones were likely to make a stop at the
altar, regardless of where in the cemetery the grave itself was.

Figure 4   Map of Harling Point Cemetery
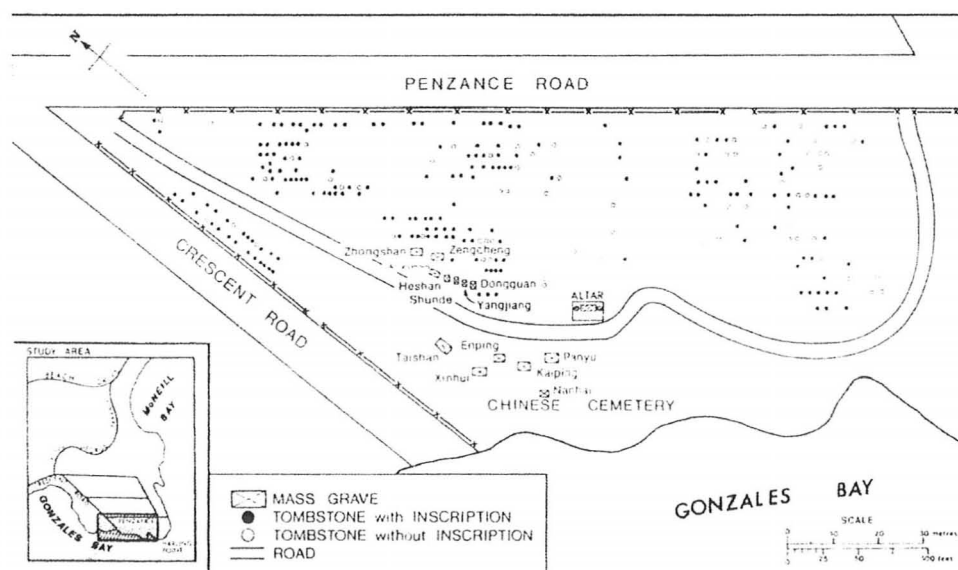
*   *(Lai 1987:37)*

Spatial organization within cemetery sections

At Harling Point, there were no obvious spatial divisions in the cemetery, segregating people on the basis of religion, family name, place of origin in China, or other discernable factors. While there was a general tendency for markers from the same date-ranges (e.g. 1950-1952) to be close to one another in rows, this trend was not terribly rigid. The majority of people were buried in loose rows: two on the side of Crescent Road, facing southeast, towards the cemetery, and many more along Penzance Road, facing towards the ocean.

Overall, there was much empty space between markers within a row (see figure 10). There was a rather large gap, between the southwest and northeast sides of the cemetery. None of the more elaborate markers were situated in the northeast half. However, the markers that were situated there were also not elaborate, and were not in any obvious way different from the majority of markers on the southwest side.

Family

Family ties did not seem to be consistently commemorated through placement of markers, although they were in the case of five couples. There were four pairs of side-by side markers, three of which were covered with concrete slabs or surrounded by concrete outlines, which, although they each bore an individual marker, were placed closely side-by-side. Another pair of markers were placed on top of a single, storied, base; these markers commemorated a couple (Chow, 周 and 周 , 曹氏) (see annex 2). The other three pairs had at least one

marker that could not be read, so it was impossible to tell if they were also couples. One other couple (Mar Sue and Mrs. Mar Sue, 馬), had markers placed near one another's.

In a number of other cases, however, people were not placed near others with whom they shared a family bond. Some of the markers commemorating a woman as a wife (e.g. Mrs. Lowe Ying Shee 劉門榮氏, who died 1942) were not buried near the markers of husbands. The one pair of adult siblings (or cousins) that I was able to identify as such – two men sharing family generational name (cf Louie 1999) and an ancestral village, were in the same half of the cemetery, but their markers were not particularly close to one another.

Royal Oak Cemetery

Royal Oak Burial Park was, from its inception, intended to serve as a "non-denominational, secular cemetery": ethnic and religious segregation were not permitted, nor was the construction of public structures like altars (Olson 2009).

The only segregation that was allowed within the cemetery was the burial of family members as a group, because it was possible to purchase shared or adjoining family plots (Olson 2009). The increasing number of people who chose to be buried at this site during the early 20th century must therefore have been open to – or interested in – these limitations.

Summary

Community ties, whether intimate like those shared by families, or more abstract, like the ones between people sharing a religion or a country of origin, could be commemorated through the placement of burials. Often, the people making decisions about the placement of a grave may not have had such ends in mind. But whether placement was the result of a desire to actually commemorate the deceased person's relationships by placing them near friends or community members, the un-analyzed decision to bury them in the usual place and manner, or restrictions on burial possibilities because of discrimination, certain groups of people were buried together. Chinese-Canadians in early 20th century Victoria were buried in different spaces, with different people. The vast majority was buried in spaces reserved for Chinese-Canadians. Except for a few couples, no other community distinctions appear to have been made within these spaces. A smaller number of people, albeit a number that was increasing from decade to decade, were buried in spaces that sometimes brought them together with people with whom they shared family, religious, or other ties.

While Ross Bay was never a popular choice for burial when alternatives were present, some people were buried here. Many of these people appear to have been family members – most often young siblings – who were buried together. All but one of these groups included a person having died prior to the creation of Royal Oak Burial Park. Since Royal Oak Burial Park allowed families, but not other groups of people, to be buried in a space together, it is possible that similar

arrangements were made there. At Harling Point, as well, a few couples were buried side-by-side. It seems possible that at all sites, but especially in the municipal cemeteries, the placement of burials may have helped to accentuate a very intimate scale of community, that of family members.

Larger community identities were also commemorated, as would be the case with people buried in sections that were reserved for people on the basis of religion or ethnicity. Until 1902, Chinese-Canadians in Victoria were buried together in a part of Ross Bay Cemetery. They shared this space with other people of Asian origin and with Aboriginal Canadians. Although this grouping was imposed – and the site, on unstable shore lands, was not desirable (Lai 1987) – close proximity in burial was maintained by the majority of Chinese-Canadians after choice had become possible. From 1903 onwards, the vast majority of Victoria's Chinese-Canadians chose to be buried together, at Harling Point Cemetery. To some extent, the placement of markers and the presence of public structures created a space in which differences were de-emphasized, and the cemetery as a whole accentuated. None of the lineage or locality associations that existed in life were represented in the cemetery.

Commemorative material culture

Marker style

Ross Bay Cemetery

There were 6 markers and one cenotaph at Ross Bay. One of the markers was for three children, and each of the others commemorated a single person.

The cenotaph was flat and wide, and made of granite. There was a flat marker as well, made of marble, two raised flat markers with their face at an angle from the ground (see annex 2a), one heart-shaped marker (see annex 2b) for a two year old girl, and two upright marble markers that had fallen and were partially covered by the grass. All were surrounded by a concrete outline, and one was also covered by a concrete slab.

In style and material, the Chinese-Canadian markers were quite similar to their neighbors, and could not be distinguished except for the writing: Ross Bay markers were quite diverse overall, with a variety of shapes and attention to personalizing detail.

Harling Point Cemetery

The markers at Harling Point were diverse in appearance, but within the realm of a few characteristic styles. These styles included plain, upright markers made of concrete, with inscriptions drawn by hand while the concrete was still wet. The handwriting is neat, and in a few cases different writing styles can be discerned, with larger and less self-assured letters (see annex 2f). The top shape

varied – rounded, triangular, triangular with a flat top, or flat (see annex 2e), but the overall appearance was strikingly similar. These were by far the most common markers. There were also fewer markers, similar in appearance, which were made of marble. Less common were flat markers made of concrete or, in a few cases, of colorful granite.

At Harling Point Cemetery, while markers were initially quite diverse, as described above, and while and a certain level of diversity in style and material was maintained throughout the period under examination, there was an increased standardization after the transition between the 1920s and 1930s. This became more pronounced starting in the 1940s, with the increase in the quantity of upright concrete markers in relation to other styles (see figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5   Marker appearance at Harling Point Cemetery: Material
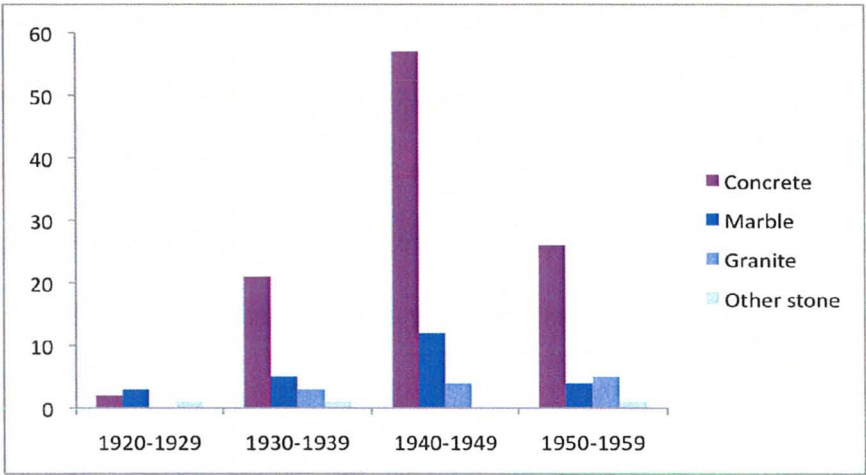
Figure 6   Marker appearance at Harling Point Cemetery: Shape
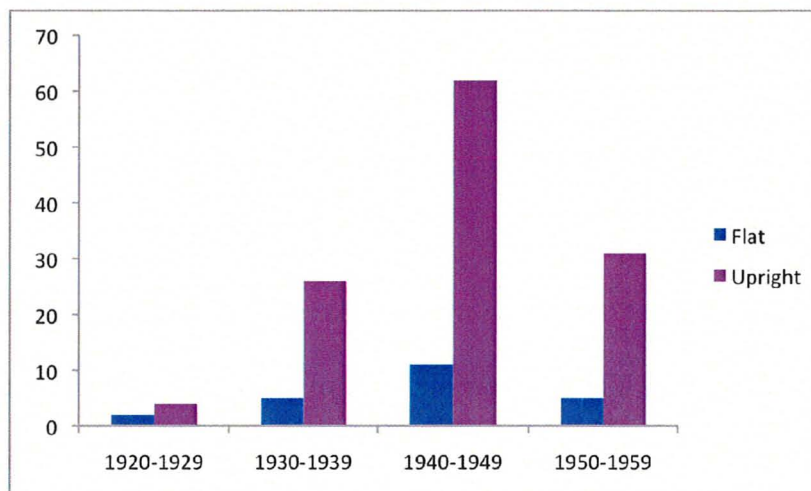
Another important characteristic of many markers was their base, which

was made of concrete. Most markers (N=60) had a small, flat base, with small

holes for holding flowers or incense (see annex 2g). Others (N=26) were

surrounded by an outline or covered by a slab made of concrete. A few of these

concrete bases were more elaborate, creating an entire structure that dwarfed the

marker. In three cases, such bases consisted of raised platforms above a concrete

slab covering. One was three-storied, with a surface that was about knee-height,

and surrounded by four short pillars – it bore two markers, for a couple (see annex

2c). Finally, there were two cases where the concrete had been shaped like

elongated armchairs, with spaces prepared for offerings (see annex 2d). This

marker, described by Pasacreta (2005:148) as "flat-backed omega", was in a style

derived from the armchair, or omega-style markers popular in Guangdong

(Abraham and Wegars 2003:62, Jack 1995:301) variations of which were present

in a number of diasporic Chinese cemeteries (e.g. Chow 1998:286; Chung and
Wegars 2003:62; Jack 1995:303; Freedman 2006; Fromson-Aasen and Aasen
2000:335; Pasacreta 2005:68, 153; Teather 2001:168).

Like the less elaborate bases, these included spaces for offerings – in one
case, an entire flowerpot – allowing for interaction with visitors interested in
paying their respects to relatives or friends.

Interestingly, four of these large structures (both armchairs, one raised
structure, and the storied platform) were for people named Joe (周) or Chow (周):

a couple (see annex 2c), two men (see annex 2e), and a woman, all having died
between the 1920s and the 1940s. It is quite possible that these were relatives, as
there are records of one Victoria family where different children's names were
transliterated into English, from 周 to Joe *and* Chow (Lai 1991:28-29) – a

possibility supported by the fact that those three markers where the ancestral
village is legible all name the same village. So although few family distinctions
were made through placement of markers, their style did, in this one case, create a
very visible connection between members of one family.

Summary

At Harling Point, markers were initially fairly diverse, within a certain
realm of possibilities. During the 1930s, they became more homogenous in style.
This homogenization was not the result of the abandonment of all different styles,

so much as of a large increase in the frequency of one type of marker that was not matched by an increase in the frequency of other styles. Thus upright concrete markers became predominant.

There were, however, differences in style, and a few markers were particularly visible. In one case, the unusual shape of four markers created an impression of connection between the members of one family.

Epitaph

Epitaph-texts included a number of characteristics that were meant to be remembered about the interred person: their family-role and their place of origin in China, their education, their age, their profession, their faith, their activism within political and social groups, etc. While the vast majority of epitaphs commemorated the same experiences and community ties, a few were more elaborate and unusual.

Ross Bay Cemetery

The markers at Ross Bay all bore legible inscriptions. The Oriental Home cenotaph was entirely in English, bearing no information save for the name of the home itself. Two markers had epitaphs entirely in Chinese, the one for Sue Seto (司徒霄葷) and another one for a person whose name was partially illegible. These were also similar to one another in appearance (upright marble), and similar to

some of the markers at Harling Point. They were also the only two markers to note the person's county of origin in China.

The other four markers were bilingual, with all information except for the person's name being in English. All personal markers commemorated the deceased person's name in both languages, and all but one the date of their death. Only the marker for the Chung (張) children gave away their family role. One marker, that for Martha Wong (黃), a two-year old child, bore a religious inscription, "Always in Jesus".

Harling Point Cemetery

Because many Harling Point markers were weathered, not all were legible. Those that were legible, however, were strikingly similar to one another: almost all commemorated the deceased person's name, their ancestral village in China, and their date of death. Indeed, of legible markers, only three did not bear a mention of name and ancestral village, and these were unusual markers in that they were bilingual, made of colorful granite, and at least one was a recent replacement erected for a damaged original (the original, which was placed beside, did commemorate the person's ancestral village).

The majority of markers had epitaphs that were in Chinese (see figure 13). When they were bilingual, it was usually the person's name and the date of their death that were written in English. The proportion of Bilingual and Anglophone

markers decreased in the 1940s and the 1950s, a change that was parallel to the

other changes in marker style.

Figure 7   Language of Epitaph at Harling Point Cemetery
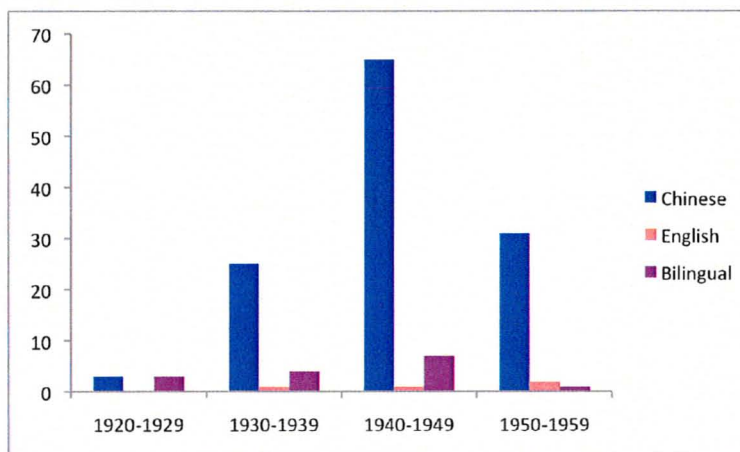
Approximately 80% of all markers combined the most common

characteristics: an epitaph, entirely in Chinese, that listed the person's name, an

honorific title, their ancestral village, and their date of death, but no other

information. The most common variation was with markers that provided similar

information, but also included an English transliteration of the person's name.

Family ties were not, for the most part, commemorated. The ones that

were commemorated most often were those of married women, although this may

be a reflection of naming practices – typically, women were called by both their

married and maiden names, with the particles *men* (門) and *shi* (氏) added, and so

their name itself is what commemorates their family ties. Married status was also

recognized in English, on two markers where women were commemorated as Mrs. *Name*. This may, however, be more a reflection of gendered naming practices in which women's official title, but not men's, reflect their marital status.

One area where a few people did represent their marital status was in dedications, because the epitaph sometimes noted that the marker had been erected by the deceased person's spouse. This only occurred in a couple of cases. Interestingly, one of these cases was on a very plain cement marker. Commemorations of a person as a parent were rare. When they did occur, it was in English, as 'Mother', 'Father', and, in one case, as in Chinese, as mother (母).

Masonic signs were present on three markers. All commemorated men who had died between the 1940s and 1950s, and likely had been active members in the Chee Kung Tung, an association that was also known as the Chinese Freemasons (Ng 1999:14).

Summary

Markers at both cemeteries recorded similar characteristics (name, date of death, sometimes age...). Family ties, religious sentiments, and community association were seldom noted, although they were present on a few markers.

Differences between cemeteries occurred in that Harling Point markers were much more consistent in what they noted, and that bilingual markers, allowing people speaking different languages to find a burial, were much more

common at Ross Bay. The consistency of Harling Point epitaphs increased in the 1930s, at the same time as marker styles were becoming more homogenous.

Commemoration rates

Bone repatriation practices are one of the areas in which differences between standard and non-standard commemoration practices are particularly striking. While in the early 1900s, the majority of Chinese-Canadians were repatriated to China, and while repatriation was accessible to all because of charitable support from community organisms, not all chose to undergo this process.

Ross Bay

Commemoration rates are difficult to establish for the period prior to 1911, because damage to the cemetery grounds destroyed many early Chinese-Canadian graves, and because the majority of surviving graves were subsequently exhumed and the bodies re-interred at Harling Point or prepared for shipment to China (Lai 1987).

Some early markers that were not in the damaged section, and markers that were erected subsequently, however, survived. There are 6 extant markers commemorating 8 people (and one cenotaph commemorating an unknown number), all of which were created between 1900 and 1930. The representation

rate is approximately 22% for this period. None of the people buried after 1930

are represented by a surviving marker.

Harling Point

In Harling Point cemetery, commemoration rates rose slightly from decade to decade – although even by the 1950s, less that 1/5 of buried people were commemorated by a permanent marker. The greatest increase in the rate of commemoration was between the 1920s and the 1930s, followed by a slightly lesser increase between the 1930s and the 1940s. Less than 2% of 1920s markers had survived.

Table 5   Number of burials and extant markers per decade in Ross Bay and Harling Point Cemeteries, Victoria

	Expected deaths[1]	Extant markers[2]	Ratio of markers to deaths
1910-1919	534	0	0
1920-1929	377	6	1.6
1930-1939	309	31	10
1940-1949	469	73	15.6
1950-1955[3]	146	26	17.8
Total	1726	136(341)[4]	7.9(19.8)[7]

1   See annex 1; Numbers are based on a list of all Chinese-language names in Ross Bay Cemetery archives (City of Victoria), but deducing Royal Oak and Ross Bay cemetery burials.
2   Total number, based on a survey of Oak Bay Cemetery
3   Oak Bay was only in use until 1955 (Lai 1987). In order to equalize the data, I halved the number of deaths to estimate deaths in the 1950-1955 period.
4   Including the 205 un-dateable markers, the number increases to 341 markers.

There is additional evidence of non-standard bone repatriation practices at Harling Point cemetery, in that at least one of the two flat-backed omega shaped

markers (see annex 2d) present at this site dates from the 1920s. In Southeast China, omega markers served as permanent secondary burial sites, housing exhumed bones (Jack 1995:301), and contrasted with the usually un-marked primary burials (Kraus-Friedberg 2008:129).

Although no evidence reveals whether this particular marker serves a person having received secondary burial, the choice of shape may have been indicative of a desire to create a permanent burial in Victoria.

Summary

Some permanent markers were created prior to the 1930s, which suggests that in the 1920s, a small number (at least 1.6%) of Chinese-Canadians made a choice not to have their bones, or those of loved ones, repatriated to China. This situation did not last forever, notably because the last bone shipment took place in 1930 – although subsequent attempts were made, various factors in China subsequently precluded the possibility (Lai 1987:35). Paralleling this event, there seems to have been a jarring change in commemoration rates between the 1920s and the 1930s, and again, albeit less so, between the 1930s and the 1940s.

The timing of these changes is suggestive. As seen above, in Harling Point, there was a very disproportionate increase in the number of upright concrete markers with Chinese language epitaphs, which occurred during the same period. It is possible that people who were no longer able to choose bone

repatriation were preponderantly likely to adopt this standard style of commemoration.

Demographic patterns

There are clearly different patterns in the ways the dead were commemorated in Victoria. The standard commemorative strategy involved bone repatriation/interment in primarily Chinese-Canadian spaces, and favoured a style of marker and of epitaph that were similar in their appearances and in the identities that they commemorated to those of the markers around them. Some people, however, were commemorated in non-standard ways: they were buried in a variety of cemeteries, often in places that emphasized certain community ties (family, church), had epitaphs commemorating different aspects of their lives, and markers that were more varied in appearance, creating an impression of individuality or, in one case, establishing visual links with other markers.

Although it is impossible to establish the motivations of people making these commemorative decisions, it is possible to establish some of the demographic characteristics of the people who were commemorated in each of these ways. There is sufficient information about burials to get a sense of the people who were buried at Harling Point, and those who chose to be buried in Royal Oak and Ross Bay cemeteries.

Because the vast majority of Chinese-Canadians were buried at Harling Point Cemetery, a comparison of age and gender patterns for people buried at this

site, with those of people having died in Victoria that year, reveal little difference. Because there were fewer burials at Ross Bay and Royal Oak, the differences in demographic characteristics there prove more revealing.

Ross Bay Cemetery

Using Ross Bay Cemetery records (City of Victoria 2002) it is possible to reconstruct a general demographic pattern characterizing the age (but not the gender) of the people buried at Ross Bay during each period. As seen in table X, there is a vast difference in age profile prior to, and following, 1903. During the earlier period, there was a wider range of ages, with most of the people buried having died in middle age. Presumably, given the absence of alternative burial sites, this would concord with the mortality patterns experienced at the time.

After 1903, the ages at death of the people buried in Ross Bay were entirely different. Of 43 people buried during this period, more than half (24) were young children. More than half of those, again, were less than one year old. Another nine were aged seventy or older. There is also an apparent pattern in terms of the time when persons of different ages were buried. All but four of the 23 children were buried prior to the 1940s; and all but one of the people over 70 were buried after the 40s.

Although the number is too small for many observations to be made about commemoration rates, commemoration also appears to be biased at this site, since the only older child and the two teen-agers buried at Ross Bay (Sue Seto, Samuel

Chan and Alice Chung, aged 7, 16 and 18 respectively), are among those being

commemorated.

Figure 8   Age at death of Chinese-Canadians buried in Ross Bay Cemetery, before and after the creation of Harling Point Cemetery
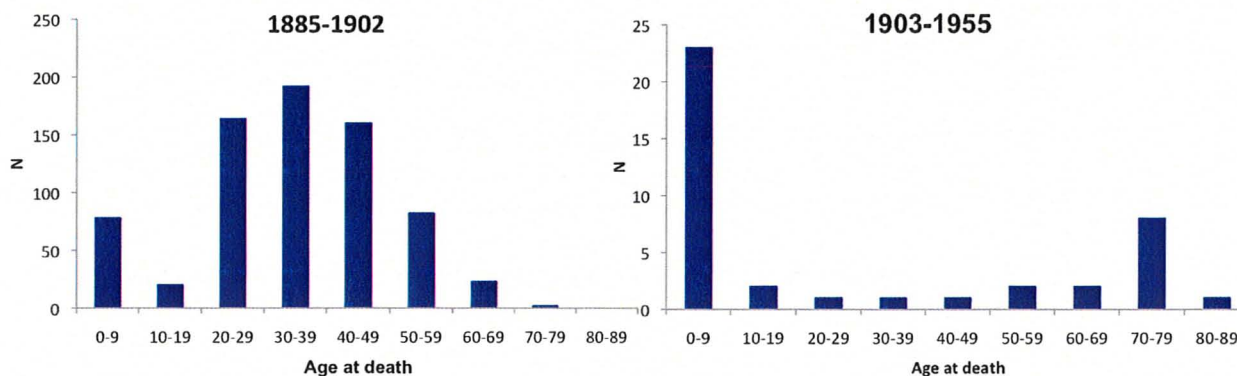
Royal Oak Cemetery

Among Chinese-Canadians, the popularity of Royal Oak Burial Park

increased gradually, but significantly, from the cemetery's inauguration in the

1920s, until the 1950s. By far the greatest rise in the number of people buried was

between the 1940s and the 1950-1955 period. This rise coincides with the

decrease in use of Harling Point Cemetery.

The demographic characteristics of the people who chose to be buried at

Royal Oak Burial Park were not, until the 1940s, typical of those of the general

population that had died (see figures 15 and 16). While the proportion of male

deaths was fairly constant (and high) in the actual population, the number of male

burials at Harling Point was extremely low in the 1920s, and subsequently rose

every decade, reaching a peak in the 1950-1955 period.

The situation was the same for age, in that early on, people dying in their

sixties or older were less dominant in numbers in the cemetery than they were in

actual numbers. This disparity began to diminish in the 1940s, and there was a

dramatic rise in the number of older people in the 1950s.

Figure 9   Comparison of age-at-death patterns for recorded Chinese-
            Canadian deaths in Victoria and burials in Royal Oak Cemetery for
            the 1920-1959 period
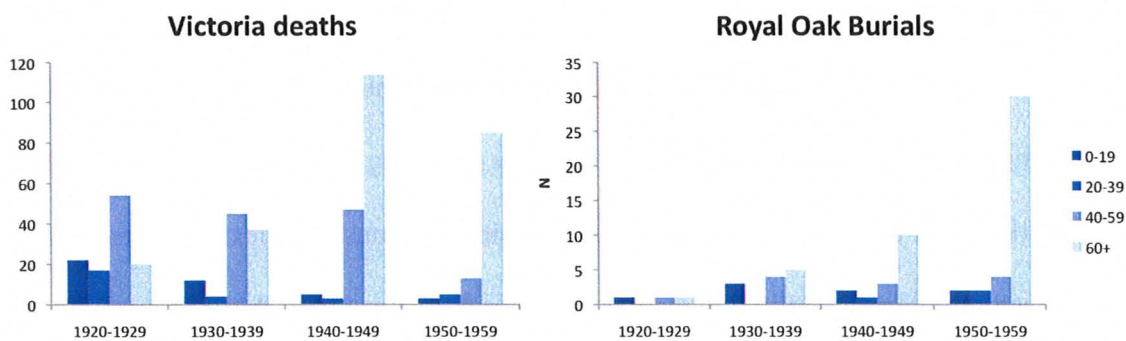
Figure 10   Comparison of gender patterns for recorded Chinese-Canadian
                deaths in Victoria and burials in Royal Oak Cemetery for the 1920-
                1959 period
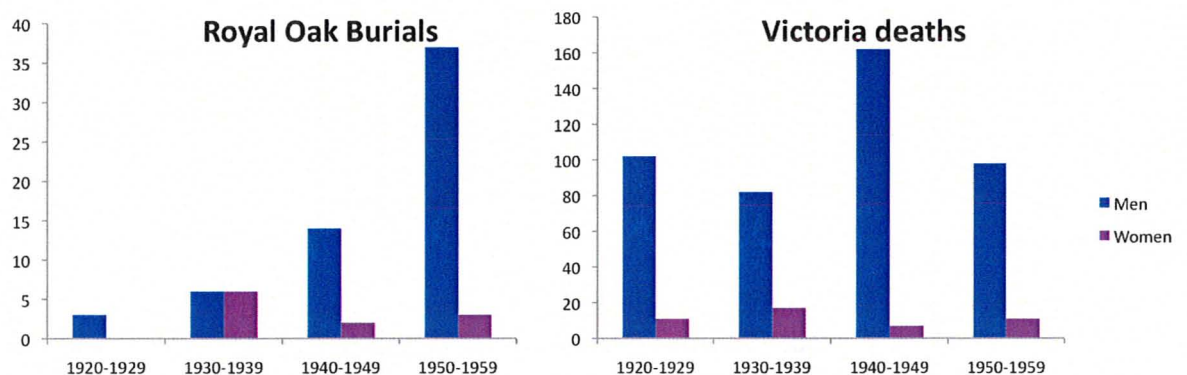
Summary

There was a clear difference between the demographic characteristics of
people dying in Victoria and those of people choosing burial at Royal Oak Burial
Park and in Ross Bay Cemetery. Men and older persons were less represented at
these cemeteries than in the general population. In Ross Bay, this was even more
pronounced, as young children were very over-represented during the 1920s.
These disparities diminished throughout the period, and fell most dramatically
between the 1940s and the 1950s.

Because there are broader differences in commemorative practice between
Ross Bay and Harling Point Cemeteries, as outlined above, it is possible that the
demographic differences seen here were present more generally between the
groups of people adopting the standard and non-standard commemorative
strategies. If this was the case, then the largest group of people in Victoria's early

20th century Chinese-Canadian community – elderly men – and the group having

died in greatest numbers, were disproportionately unlikely to have been

memorialized using non-standard commemorative practices.

Conclusion

In Victoria, two main commemorative traditions appear to be at play. They

differ in the variety and scale of community identities that are expressed and

evoked by markers.

For a minority, adopting a non-standard commemorative strategy, these

identities were fairly varied, and often strongly tied to their place of residence;

even when bone repatriation was available, they were permanently buried in

Canada. There, they were interred in various areas, including ethnically-

segregated, religiously-segregated, and general municipal burial spaces. Within

these spaces, markers were sometimes shared with family members, or placed

near the graves of relatives. These grave markers were somewhat diverse in their

appearance and in the identities that their epitaphs commemorated. After bone

repatriation ceased, such markers continued to be created, and there was no

dramatic change in mortuary practice, save for an increase in burials in municipal

spaces. There was a continuation of the already slightly diverse commemorative

tradition.

In contrast, the vast majority of people were not represented at all in the

early mortuary record, and it is likely that many had their bones repatriated to

China. After bone repatriation ceased, there was a rapid increase in the number of

permanent markers in Victoria (although commemoration rates remained low). The new group of people were typically buried in segregated Chinese cemetery spaces. Their commemorative tradition was inspired by that of earlier burials in Chinese burial spaces, but overall markers were less diverse as only some of the possible styles were adopted. Their commemorative traditions emphasized similarities in marker appearance, and homogeneity in their placement, creating a strong visual impression of group unity. By foregrounding specific categories of identity (name, family name, ancestral village), epitaphs also underscored certain commonalities of experience.

These different patterns evoke some of the diversity among early Chinese-Canadians, as revealed in the different commemorative traditions that developed. Some people were commemorated in ways that emphasized a smaller-scale conception of identity and community; others, larger-scale ones.

The non-standard group created markers that emphasized different aspects of their experiences and used burial spaces that fostered contact with different people: family, with religious congregation members, with other city residents in general, or with other Chinese-Canadians. For the standard group, who constituted the vast majority of the dead, there was a shift in funerary practices from using benevolent association cemeteries and networks as a means to repatriate bones to specific villages in China towards using funerary practices that emphasized ties with other Chinese-Canadians.

Vancouver Cemeteries

From the 1910s until after the Second World War, Vancouver was the city

with the largest Chinese-Canadian population in Canada (Con et al. 1982:303),

and was an important centre for various commercial, cultural, and political

associations. Some of this diversity is reflected in mortuary material culture – not

directly, but by the different commemorative strategies that were employed at any

given time.

These different commemorative strategies were manifested in a pattern

similar to that visible in Victoria, where one 'standard' set of practices was

engaged in by the majority while a smaller number of people employed a wider

set of non-standard commemorative practices. In Victoria, the contrast between

these two strategies was visible primarily through differences in commemorative

style between cemeteries. In Vancouver, however, many such differences were

present between spaces within a single cemetery (Mountain View).

These different spaces were not clearly delineated, but there were areas

with large numbers of more or less standard Chinese-Canadian markers, whose

style and epitaph content de-emphasized individual variability, and which were

placed in neat rows according to the person's date of death. In these areas,

mortuary material culture became increasingly homogenized throughout the 1940s

and 1950s. Because these areas (and indeed, the cemetery as a whole) contained

few extant Chinese-Canadian grave-markers having been created prior to the

1930s, it is possible that early on, standard commemorative practices had included bone repatriation.

Those Chinese-Canadians who were commemorated in non-standard ways, were present in a variety of spaces. Their markers' shape, epitaph and placement emphasized a wider range of community ties than was standard. Because some of the people who were commemorated in these ways had been interred prior to the cessation of bone repatriation it appears that at least some chose permanent burial in Canada.

Commemorative spaces

Cemeteries

In Vancouver, most burials seem to have taken place in municipal grounds. This was in contrast to the situation in Victoria, where there were specifically Chinese-Canadian burial grounds.

In the early 20th century, Mountain View Cemetery was the most important of these municipal cemeteries. The few burial grounds that had served area residents before the establishment of Mountain View were cleared to make way for the creation of Stanley Park (Langis 1932[1951]:68), and by 1886 only the latter was still operating. Although New Westminster's Fraser Cemetery was already open at the time (City of Vancouver 2009b), at almost 20 kilometers from downtown Vancouver, it was too far for Vancouverite burials given the transport infrastructure available at the time (since it was still difficult to bring a coffin even

as far as Mountain View Cemetery [City of Vancouver 2009b, Weir 1985:2]).

Mountain View therefore served as the young city's only burial ground and, until

1903, was known simply as 'Vancouver Cemetery' (Weir 1985:6).

While Mountain View remains the sole cemetery in Vancouver proper

(City of Vancouver 2009a), other cemeteries were eventually created in nearby

cities. These included both large multi-faith municipal cemeteries such as Ocean

View (1918) and Forest Lawn (1956) in Burnaby, and smaller denominational

cemeteries, notably one Catholic and two Jewish grounds (City of Vancouver

2009b). As transport improved and neighboring cities merged with Vancouver,

these cemeteries seem to have become more important. Between the 1920s and

the 1950s, the percentage of Chinese-Canadian dying in Vancouver who were

buried in Mountain View fell from approximately 74% to 47% .

Spaces within the cemetery

Mountain View is an enormous cemetery, taking up multiple city blocks.

There are roads within for visitors to drive around the site, crews of workers

employed all week long at landscaping, and when I visited in the summer of 2008,

a large new center was under construction in the Jones area (see figure 17). Given

the size of the space, there are many sections, and only a fragment of the cemetery

is visible to visitors at any one time.

The vastness of Mountain View and the surprising uniformity of its layout

likely impacted the experiences of visitors. The ground is incredibly flat, and a

decision, made in the 1960s, to lay down most of the cemetery's upright markers

(Adams 1985:7) to create a landscape in line with that of the lawn cemeteries

popular in other West Coast cities (cf Treib 2001) has only accentuated this effect.

Some markers were left upright, but only the larger and more decorative ones.

Few of these standing markers were for Chinese-Canadians: only 6 of over 2000

such markers were left standing. Although there were trees in the cemetery, they

were peppered through the area, like the sparse markers, and only accentuate its

flatness.

Although archival photos (see figure 18) show that there were more trees

and upright markers in early 20th century Mountain View's main Chinese section,

these were thin, and overall, the space remained open. In such a landscape, certain

constructions – (larger structures, areas that were somehow demarcated by having

similar markers) were easy to see, and visually striking.

The first burial in Mountain View took place early, in 1887, in what is

now the Old section of the cemetery (Weir 1985:3) (see figure 17). Cemetery

grounds were repeatedly expanded with land purchases in 1901, 1919, 1922, and

1941 (City of Vancouver 2009b, Weir 1985), creating many sections. There were

many sections in the cemetery, three of which contained Chinese-Canadian

markers: the Old, Jones and Horne I sections. Both the Old and Jones sections,

where the majority of Chinese-Canadian burials are located, were already open by

the 1910s, and the Horne I section was opened by the early 1920s (City of

Vancouver 2009b).

Figure 11   Areas with Chinese-Canadian markers in Mountain View Cemetery
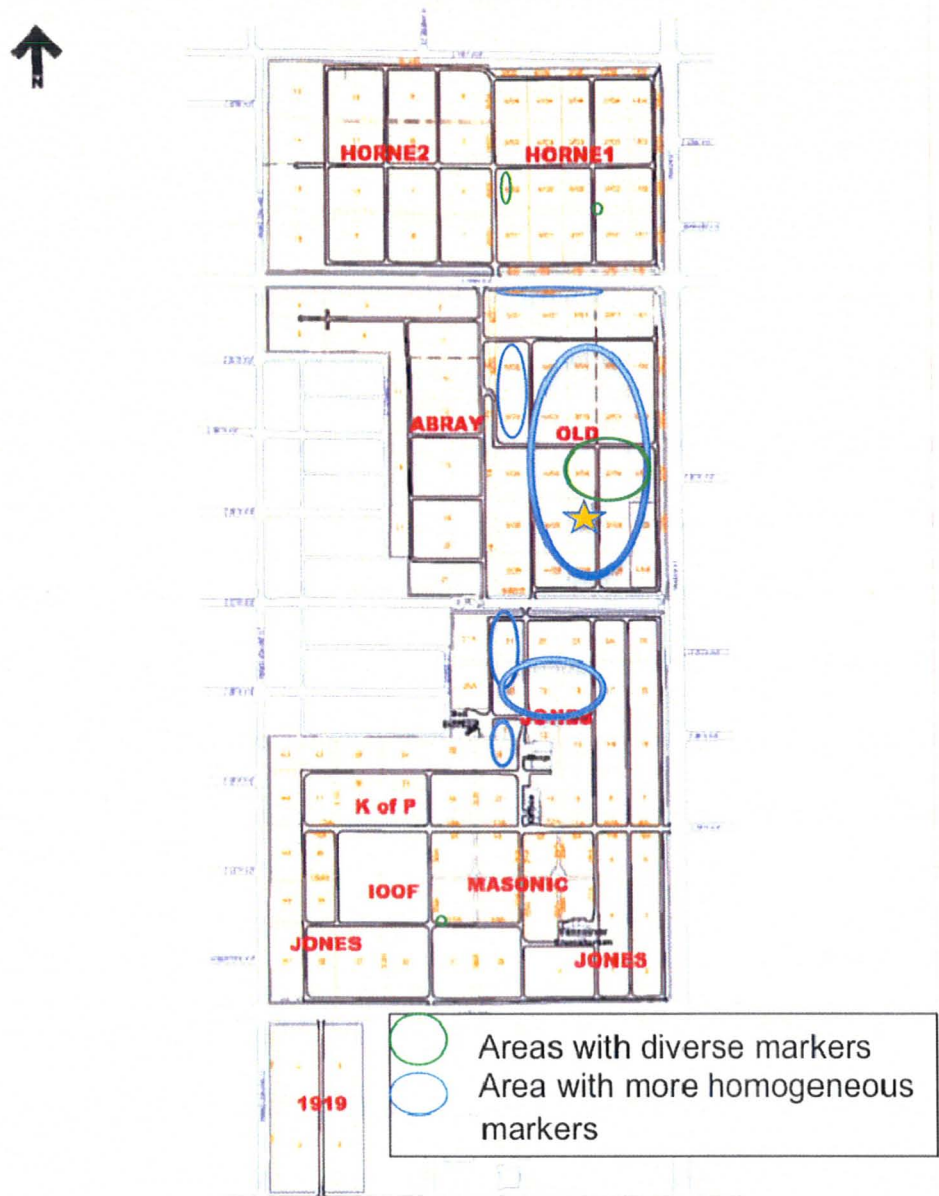
- Map modified from City of Vancouver (2008)

Segregation was commonly practiced within smaller areas of these sections. Some sections were officially set apart for certain groups, whether voluntary (e.g. one section was reserved for the burial of members of the Masonic Lodge, another for those of the Oddfellows Society), professional (e.g. certain sections were set apart for Army members and people having died as combatants), or religious (e.g. one section was reserved for Jewish burials). Unofficial sections were also created when many people belonging to certain groups chose to be buried near one another– this was the case with the Chinese and Greek Orthodox areas (City of Vancouver 2009b), and possibly also with a small infant and child area in the Horne section.

Within the primarily Chinese-Canadian sections, an overwhelming majority of markers were placed in rows organized according to date of death, although a small minority were placed near family members or in smaller groups outside of primarily Chinese-Canadian sections.

Old Section

This section of the cemetery was the first to be opened, and many Chinese-Canadians were buried here. All markers created prior to 1930 and most created during the 1930s were located here, mainly in the 6 blocks surrounding the altar (figure 17). The altar itself was the most visible structure in this part of the cemetery. The current altar (see annex 1c) was built in 1973 (according to a plaque affixed on its wall), although an older altar had been present at the same

site until then (see photo by Simms [1910], figure 24). The altar was built on 16

burial plots bought by the Chinese Association (City of Vancouver 2009b) for that

purpose. It was essentially at the center of this section, and very visible. Markers

near the altar itself were not organized by date of death. In this they stood out

from most other Chinese-Canadian markers, which tended to be placed in neat

rows according to the person's date of death.

Not all markers in this section were Chinese-Canadian. There was a

Jewish area in the southeast corner of the Old section, near the Chinese-Canadian

burials, though the markers were completely separated. This section was fenced

off by hedges that echoed the altar as one of two structures in the Old section.

There were also Japanese-Canadian markers in parts of the same section (in plots

immediately to the east and southeast of the altar). Often, they were not in the

same rows as Chinese-Canadian markers, although they were in some cases side

by side.

The internal layout in this section was different from that in other

primarily Chinese-Canadian spaces. Most of the older Chinese-Canadian markers

were organized more or less by date, but in a very flexible way. Often, more

recent markers seem to have been placed in spaces between older ones, sometimes

seemingly at random, and sometimes in rows according to date of death. In a few

cases, the markers of people who had not died at the same time, but shared some

important relationship, were placed close to one another. These included, for

instance, two young sisters, Chin Yet Moy and Chin Yet May (陳月妹 ， 陳月美

), who had died in 1926 and 1931 respectively, but had their markers placed immediately next to one another (see annex 2j). There were also many Yip (葉) family members buried close to the altar and close to one another, despite often not being immediately one beside the other. Furthermore, there were also more shared markers in this area than in other areas where commemorative practices were more standardized. Some of these shared markers were for couples, others for family members. One such example was the marker shared by a very old woman, Chow Woo Shee (周胡氏), having died in 1982, and a toddler, Charlie Chow (周錦龍) having died in 1922. Given the age difference, he may have been her son, or a much younger sibling.

Near the north end of the Old section, there was an area where more standard commemorative practices were the norm. Here, markers were organized in clear and even rows, according to the deceased person's year of death.

Jones Section

This section was particularly large, and most Chinese-Canadian burials were located here. The most homogeneous commemorative practices were visible in this area.

Within the Jones section, there were smaller areas. In some, both Japanese-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian markers were present, although they were always placed in clearly distinct rows. In other areas, all markers were

Chinese-Canadian. In either case, markers were arranged in rows, placed according to the deceased person's year of death. Almost all markers commemorated a single person.

Only one Chinese-Canadian marker antedating the 1960s was found outside of the primarily Chinese-Canadian areas of this section. It was non-standard in style, and commemorated a couple, Jin Do and Mary Jane Woo, both of whom died in the 1950s (see annex 2K).

Horne Section

There were large areas in the Horne section of Mountain View Cemetery where markers were not visibly segregated according to ethnic or religious lines. Twenty-one Chinese-Canadians were commemorated there, most of whom had died in the 1940s and 1950s. Along with Jin Do and Mary Jane Woo, they formed the very small minority of Chinese-Canadians (even among people adopting non-standard commemorative practices) to have been commemorated outside of large primarily Chinese-Canadian areas.

These markers were situated in two parts of the Horne section. Three were near the southeast end of the Horne section, in an area where many young children or infants, having died in the 1950s or 1960s, had been buried. While many were Chinese-Canadian children having died in the 1960s, many names were also suggestive of other ethnic origins.

The other nineteen people were commemorated on twelve markers situated on the west side of the Horne area, in a section where people with different names, including traditionally English, Chinese, and Japanese ones, were commemorated. – though the 12 Chinese-Canadian markers were placed close to one another, in two rows. Most of these markers commemorated two or three people. These groups included couples, parents and children, (such as Harry and Linda Lee, a father and his ten year old daughter), and in one case possibly siblings. The dates of death ranged from 1918 to 2007, but all markers commemorated at least one person having died in the 1940s.

Summary

Placement of burials within the cemetery could help to emphasize the existence of certain communities. In Mountain View Cemetery, Chinese-Canadians were buried with different groups of people. The standard commemorative practice, followed by the vast majority of Chinese-Canadians, involved burial in Chinese-Canadian sections, in rows, with neighbours who were also Chinese-Canadian and had died during the same year but did not share other visible relationships with one another. Since some of these sections also included Japanese-Canadian markers, broader Asian-Canadian neighbourhoods were also created, although internal distinctions were maintained.

For the minority of Chinese-Canadians commemorated through non-standard practices, the placement of burials highlighted different community ties.

For some people buried in the old section of the cemetery and in non-Chinese-Canadian sections, placement could also serve to bring family members or spouses near one another. In one case, three young children were placed near other young children who did not seem to have been related, but had also shared the experience of a premature death. Since most Chinese-Canadians commemorated in this way were also in primarily Chinese-Canadian sections, the placement of their burial also made visible this larger scale of community identity.

Commemorative material culture

Marker style

In different parts of the cemetery, different styles predominated, and they helped to articulate certain relationships by creating visible similarities or differences between markers. For the vast majority of markers, especially in areas where standard commemorative practices predominated, styles were very simple, and very similar to those of their Chinese-Canadian neighbors. For a very small minority, more unusual and distinctive styles were chosen.

Old Section

Markers in the old section were most varied in appearance. A few were unique, either in their shape, size, or iconography. Most of these unusual markers were also located very close to the altar, adding to their visibility. One of the most noticeable was the marker for Yip Sang (葉春田), a merchant and community

leader (Chen –Adams 2005:27) who died in 1927: a tall and wide marker with a roof-shape along its top edge (see annex 2h). Another was that for Seto Shepon (盤門司徒氏), an obelisk dedicated by her widower (see annex 2i).

Among the few people with more unusual markers, children and teen-agers were well represented: 5 year old William Lam, commemorated with a marble cross, 13 year old Gordon Wong, with an upright black granite marker, and 18 year old Henry Lim, with a stone book (see annex 2l).

The majority of Chinese-Canadian markers, however, were very simple in appearance. They were made of grey granite, white marble that had darkened to grey, or concrete, and they were usually either flat markers or small upright markers that had been laid flat. Those markers created during the 1920s and 1930s were, for the most part, each slightly different from their neighbours (see annex m): a small upright concrete marker with hand carved epitaph, a flat granite marker, and a small round-topped marble marker could be near one another. The overall effect, however, remained one of general similarity, which was especially strong in comparison to the altar and a few of the neighbouring markers.

Although there were both Japanese-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian markers in these sections, they were often easy to tell apart at a glance, because many of the Japanese-Canadian markers were more ostentatious: obelisks and other unusual shapes, often in colourful granites (see annex 2n), that could be very large in size, or stone stele that had been laid flat. Their appearance created very easily visible distinctions between the two groups.

In the area to the North end of the Old section, where more standard commemorative practices were the norm, markers were all flat, made of granite – mostly grey – and very similar to one another in appearance (see annex 2o).

Jones section

Markers in the Jones section were also created in light of standard commemorative practices. Here, as well, there were rows upon rows of very similar markers. Those created prior to the 1950s were less homogenous, and were similar to contemporary markers in the Old section. There were small personal touches on a few markers – one, for instance, was decorated with blue marbles pressed into its concrete (see annex 2p).

Markers in rows dating from the 1950s were more homogenous – they were universally flat, made of granite, and identical in dimensions (see annex 2q), although a few varied in colour, and most varied slightly in the details of the epitaph size and layout.

Horne section

Chinese-Canadian markers in the Horne section were similar in style to their non-Chinese-Canadian neighbours, rather than to other Chinese-Canadian markers from the same time-period. The markers in the Northwest part of this section were all the same in shape, and resembled their neighbors: raised flat stones (15-20 cm thick) that were large (roughly 80x40 cm) compared to most

Chinese-Canadian flat markers (see annex 2r). Markers in the Southeast part of this same section were flat, and very simple in appearance.

Summary

Differences in marker styles were fairly visible when comparing Chinese-Canadian burials in different areas. These differences related, more broadly, to commemorative styles that emphasized different community ties. These differences in marker style often coincided with differences in marker placement. Markers in certain sections commemorated the deceased in fairly standard ways, which emphasized similarities between Chinese-Canadian markers, and differences with neighbouring Japanese-Canadian markers.

In other areas, commemoration was less standard – marker styles were sometimes individualized, creating a sense of distinction through shape and placement near the altar. More often, marker shapes evoked a sense of connection through similarity with non-Chinese-Canadian neighbours who were commemorated in similar ways.

Although the more standard commemorative strategies dominated in most areas, they were not static throughout the period. Marker styles changed over time, as seen on figures 18-20:

Figure 12   Shape of Chinese-Canadian markers in Vancouver's Mountain
View Cemetery, 1920-1959
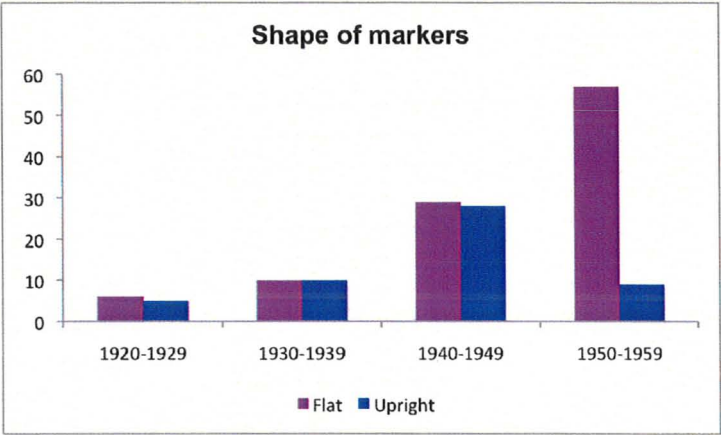
Figure 13   Style of upright-shaped Chinese-Canadian markers in Vancouver's
Mountain View Cemetery, 1920-1959
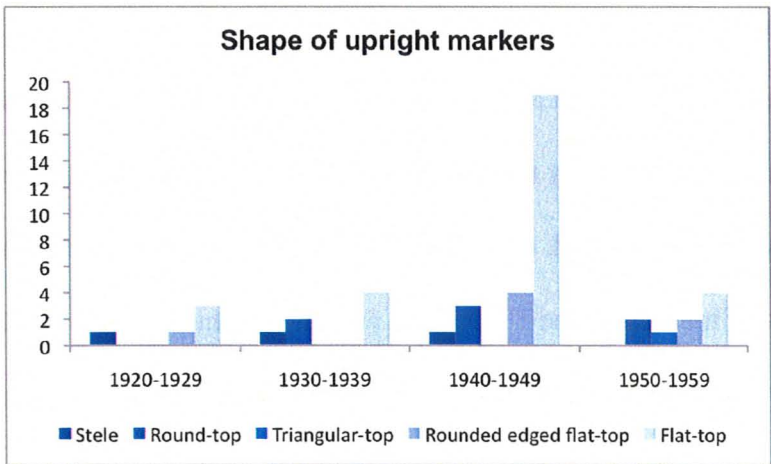
Figure 14   Material of Chinese-Canadian markers in Vancouver's Mountain
                  View Cemetery, 1920-1959
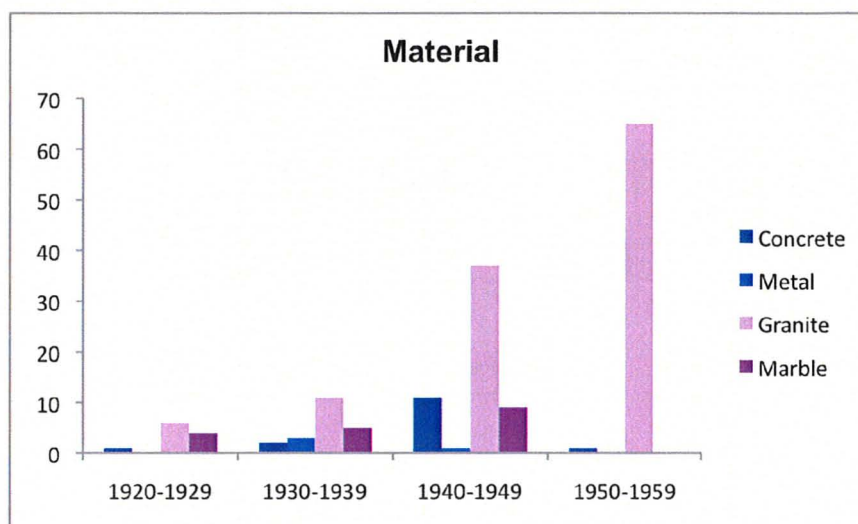
Material

Early markers (primarily in the Old section) were fairly varied in appearance – there were both flat and upright markers, with different shapes, and made with different materials. By the 1940s and 1950s, however, though a certain level of diversity was maintained, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of one specific type of marker. In the 1940s, this was an upright marker with straight flat tops, often made of concrete or granite. By the 1950s, it was flat markers, most often made of granite (see annex 2q).

Thus while non-standard commemoration practices continued throughout the 1920-1959 period, the number of standard-style markers increased in the 1940s and 1950s, and became more homogenous in style by the 1950s.

Epitaph

Overall, Chinese-Canadian epitaphs in Mountain View Cemetery were similar to marker styles, in that different commemorative strategies appear to have been used for markers in different parts of the cemetery, and that the standard practice changed over time.

For the vast majority of Chinese-Canadians in Mountain View Cemetery, epitaphs stressed personal information, but always the same information, and always presented in a very stereotyped way: the person's name, their date of death, and the name of their ancestral village in China. In most cases, the name was given as part of a standard sentence: "Name + (公 / 翁 / 君)+ 之暮", or "the grave of (the honorable/Mr.) name", a sentence which was usually written out in the middle of the epitaph. The date was usually given on one side of the naming inscription, sometimes at the bottom of the epitaph. The person's place of origin was typically given opposite the date, or broken into two columns around the naming inscription, if the date was at the bottom. The person's name was often written out in English, either across the top or the bottom of the marker.

A minority of epitaphs commemorated a greater range of community ties and personal roles. In three cases, the person's education or profession were noted – each time this information was written in English, on a man's epitaph. The person's religious affiliation was seldom commemorated, appearing on less than 1% of all epitaphs. When it was, the affiliation in question was always Christian, and expressed through religious sayings in English, or through cross images on

the marker. The person's political affiliation appeared more frequently, as represented through Free Mason symbols associated with the Chee Kung Tung society (see annex 2s), which were present on 5% of all markers. The most commonly noted kind of community tie was the person's family role, which was indicated on approximately 7% of all decipherable markers. In half of these cases, a role – albeit not necessarily the same one – was given in both Chinese and English; in a third of cases, it was given in English only; and in roughly a sixth of cases, it was given in Chinese only. Interestingly, the roles given in different languages were usually not the same ones – people commemorated as parents were almost always done so in English; and people commemorated as spouses (usually women), in Chinese. In fact, this language separation was so frequent that there are epitaphs entirely – including the name of the deceased - in Chinese, but bearing the word 'Mother' in English.

There were some differences in epitaphs between standard and non-standard sections, but these were not as pronounced as differences in marker style and placement. Overall, there were more epitaphs describing information other than name, date of death and ancestral village in the sections where commemoration was less standard.

Old Section

As was the case for the appearance and placement of markers, epitaphs in this section were less consistent in their layout and content than the epitaphs in sections where more standard commemorative practices were in place. They were more likely to note a range of personal and community ties, and less likely to note the person's ancestral village.

The two people whose epitaphs commemorated their education were in this area. One had a PhD (Dr. Edward J. Ho), and the other was a Columbia University graduate. Asides from these two people commemorated for their education, others were remembered for their faith as Christians (as marked with pictures of crosses), or for their participation in Chee Kung Tung networks (as markd withpictures of the Masonic symbol). Furthermore, the family roles for which people were commemorated were varied, and were presented both in Chinese and in English: people were commemorated in English as 'Mother', 'Father", "Beloved brother", "Our beloved daughter", and in Chinese, as a wife – (夫人，安人), a husband – (夫子), a mother – (母), and, as a father's oldest

daughter (Father's name 之張女)

In the small part of the Old section where standard commemorative practices had a predominant influence on marker layout and style, epitaphs were also somewhat more standardized in layout and basic content. However, they did commemorate family roles, and one noted the deceased person's profession

(Reverend Feng Dickman); there were also religious inscriptions ('Because I live Ye shall live also').

Jones Section

In this area where markers were fairly standardized in physical appearance and placement, so were to some extent the epitaphs. They almost all commemorated the standard information (name, ancestral village, date of death), sometimes with the addition of the person's family role and their religious or Chee Kung Tung affiliation. Yet, even here were exceptions in how the epitaphs commemorated the lives of the deceased, and there seemed to be somewhat more room for distinctiveness in this realm of expression than there was in gravestone style. There was one marker, for instance, which was entirely in English, for 'Mah Hem, Born in Kowloon, China, Died in Vancouver, Canada'. This marker was perfectly similar in appearance to its neighbours with epitaphs primarily in Chinese, even though it was the only marker in Mountain View to commemorate a person's place of birth or death.

Horne section

Two of the three epitaphs in the children's area in the southeast corner of the Horne section were written entirely in English, with focus on the child's family role – as was the case with a marker commemorating "Baby Girl Ling Yeasting". In the other area, on the northwest edge of the section, epitaphs were

all bilingual, except for one which was entirely in English. Most epitaphs

commemorated the standard aspects – name, date of death, and ancestral village -

in two cases, even the person's ancestral village had been transcribed into English.

These were the only two markers in the cemetery to do so. Two of these markers

bore crosses. Most noted the person's family role. In Chinese, the only family role

to be commemorated was that of wife (Name 門 name 氏); while in English, it

was always that of 'Mother' or 'Father', except for one person, Wong Wing Yip,

who was remembered as 'Uncle.'

Summary

There were some differences between epitaphs in sections where standard

and non-standard commemorative strategies predominated; however these

differences were not, overall, as pronounced as the differences in marker style and

placement. According to the random sample of markers, there were many more

epitaphs noting the deceased person's family name in areas where

commemorative practices were less standardized (roughly 22% of markers in the

non-standard areas did so, as opposed to 5% in the standard areas). But while

family-ties were less well represented in the areas where standard commemorative

practices were the norm, voluntary association ties were more likely to be

represented: roughly 7% of markers in these areas commemorated the deceased

person's engagement with the Chee Kung Tong (as opposed to less than 1% in

less standard areas). Similarly, there was not a complete rigidity in epitaph

organization in the more standard areas (about 6% of markers, for instance, did

not mention the person's ancestral village). Epitaphs were thus an area where

there was some room for a variety of expressions – as always, between certain

bounds – even in the context of a commemorative tradition that stressed

homogeneity.

But even this aspect of commemorative practice changed over time, and

became increasingly standardized in the 1940s. One area where there was a clear

change of this sort was the language in which the epitaph was written. This was

particularly important, since in the immense and flat Mountain View Cemetery,

where markers were often similar to one another, the people who were likely to be

able to find a marker were those who were able to decipher the name on the

epitaph. Although most early markers were more or less equally often bilingual

and Chinese, in the 1940s, there was a rapid rise in the number of unilingual

Chinese markers (see figure 21). This change was matched by a simultaneous, if

slight, rise in the number of epitaphs that noted the person's ancestral village in

China (from 88% of markers in the 1930s, to 93% in the 1940s and 99% in the

1950s).

Figure 15   Language of epitaphs on Chinese-Canadian markers in Mountain
                View Cemetery
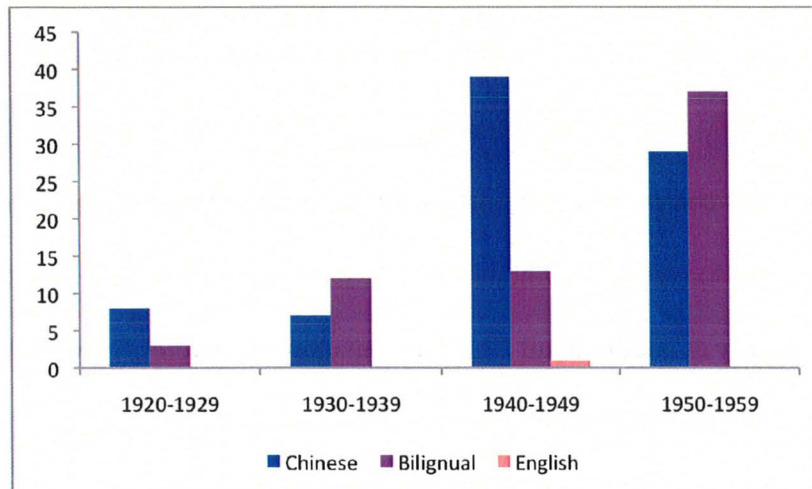
Like markers and location, epitaphs commemorated an individual's

connection with different communities. Most Chinese-Canadian markers in

Mountain View Cemetery were fairly standardized in the identities they

commemorated, but a few were more unusual. There were differences, spatially,

in the variability of epitaphs, and these overlapped with other differences in

marker style and spatial organization. However, the disparity between the two

poles was not as pronounced for epitaphs as it was for other aspects of marker

appearance. There were also some general changes in epitaph text over time. The

increased prevalence of unilingual markers and of markers commemorating the

deceased person's ancestral village coincided with a standardisation of marker

appearance (following the increase in the number of markers that were plain,

upright, and made of granite or concrete) and placement in the 1940s.

Commemoration rates

Although less readily visible than extant material culture, bone repatriation practices can to some extent be inferred from surviving material culture and documents. In Mountain View Cemetery, as in the Victoria cemeteries, bone repatriation was common and important for the many Chinese-Canadians who wished to come to rest in their home village. Until the 1930s, bone repatriation remained readily available to all Chinese-Canadians regardless of wealth or social connections, being organized and financed by community groups (Lai 1987).

Prior to the 1930s, while bone repatriation was an available option, a number of people were nonetheless permanently buried in Vancouver. Some markers from this period (N= 151) are still extant. Since all Mountain View markers were removed following exhumation (City of Vancouver 2009), at least 151 people chose not to be repatriated at a time when this practice was the norm.

All of these early markers are situated in the Old section of the cemetery, near the altar and along the southwest edge of the section. Their layout is somewhat unusual in that they were very loosely spaced. The markers near the altar were mixed in with more recent intrusions, and the few markers scattered in the large expanse of grass along the southwest edge of the section were strikingly sparse, especially in comparison to the tightly packed rows of markers from the 1940s and 1950s.

Changing commemoration rates

Although only a minority who were buried prior to the 1930s are commemorated by extant markers, this was a surprisingly large minority (almost 1/5th of Chinese-Canadians buried in Mountain View during the 1920s have surviving markers [see table 5]). Moreover, a substantial proportion of Vancouverites chose to be buried permanently in the city before bone repatriation became impossible. Also surprising was how slow and gradual the change in commemorative practices was for the majority of people who were not permanently commemorated early on. Contrary to what seems to have been the case in Victoria, the 1930s and the cessation of bone repatriation were not pivotal in Vancouver.

Commemoration rates rose steadily from the 1910s until the 1950s, increasing most dramatically between the 1930s and the 1940s. While they were still rising between the 1940s and the 1950s, the increase was much less dramatic than it had been between previous decades. While the differences between decades are sometimes pronounced, they are the result of gradual changes taking place over the course of each decade, rather than of dramatic shifts occurring at any given point.

A year-by-year comparison of the number of extant markers and recorded burials (figure 17) shows a more or less gradual rise in commemoration rates (although this growth became slightly greater around 1916, 1930, and again around 1943).

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Table 6   Number of recorded deaths and extant markers per decade at
             Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Mountain View Cemetery			
Decade	*Recorded burials[1]*	*Extant markers[2]*	*Ratio of extant markers to recorded burials*
1880-1889	4	0	0.0
1890-1899	18	0	0.0
1900-1909	32	3	9.4
1910-1919	429	16	3.7
1920-1929	765	132	17.3
1930-1939	906	272	30.0
1940-1949	1191	788	66.2
1950-1959	1083	824	76.1
Total	4428	2035	46.0[3]

1 *Total number of burials under Chinese language names, based on
   Mountain View Cemetery Registers (City of Vancouver 2008)*
2 *Total number of extant markers, based on fieldwork in Mountain View
   Cemetery. This number excludes 360 markers that could not be dated with
   any confidence.*
3 *If the undated markers are included, the overall ratio of commemoration
   is higher (54%). It is not clear how this affects the frequency of
   commemoration in specific decades.*

Figure 16 Changing ratio of recorded deaths and extant markers per decade at
Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver
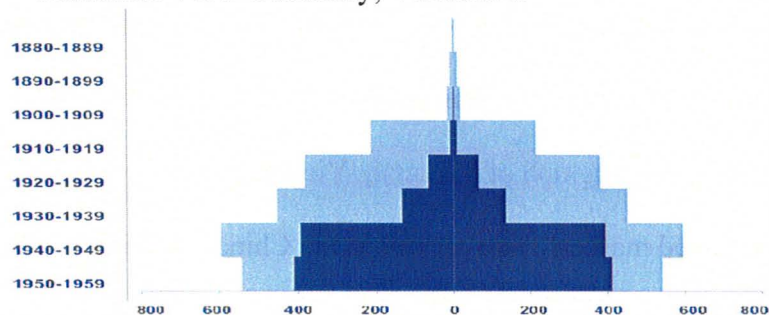
**Number of extant markers per decade shown in dark blue; number of
recorded burials shown in pale blue*

Figure 17 Battleship curves showing the changing numbers of burials (pale blue)
and surviving markers (dark blue) as well as the ratio of surviving
markers to recorded burials (purple) per year in Mountain View
Cemetery, Vancouver
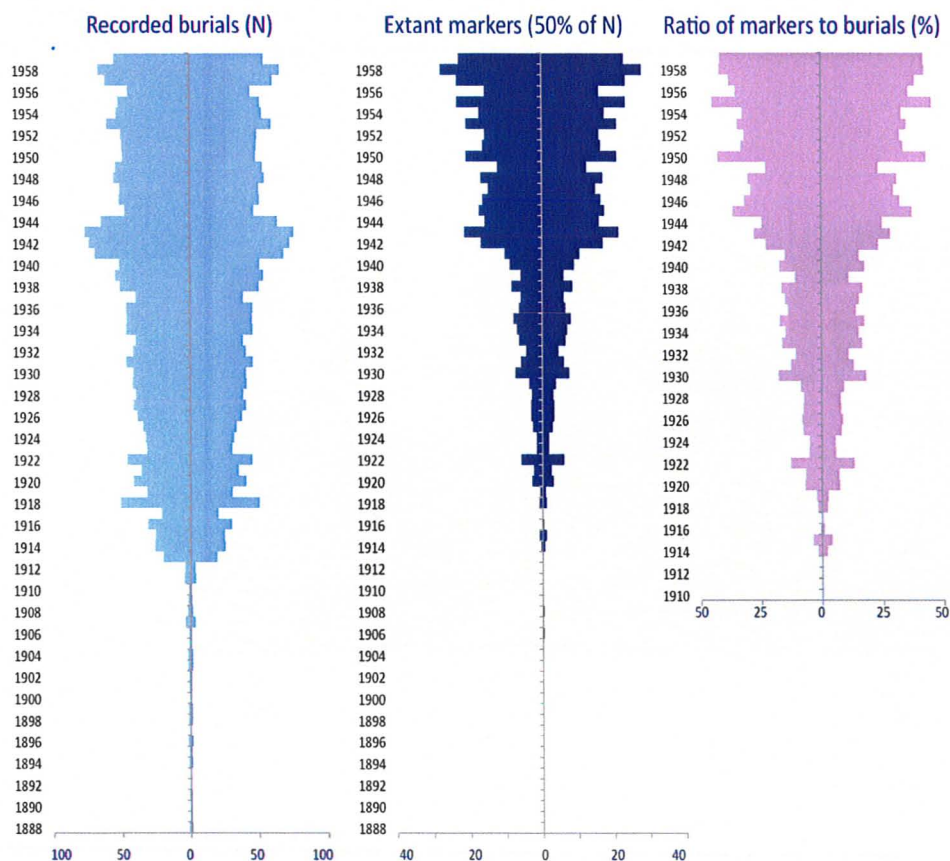
Additional evidence of bone repatriation

There is evidence that there were more markers for early burials, but that some are missing following the exhumation of the bones that they were meant to protect: an archival photograph of Mountain View Cemetery reveals that many wooden pole-shaped markers were present in the Chinese section in 1909, none of which remain today (see figure 24). These were likely temporary markers, which were typically made of wood (Abraham and Wegars 2005:156), and which in Mountain View were removed after exhumation (City of Vancouver 2009b).

Figure 18   Temporary wooden markers in Mountain View Cemetery, circa 1910
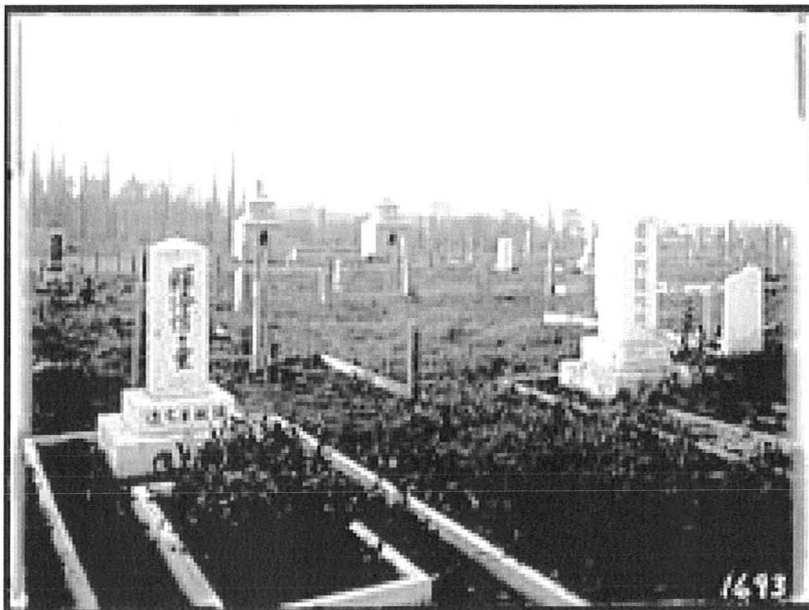
(Simms 1910).

Summary

As early as the 1920s, a large minority of Chinese-Canadians in Vancouver were permanently buried locally. These were the people who were in the old section of the cemetery, near the altar.

For the majority who were not permanently commemorated (whether because their bones were repatriated to China or for other reasons), change was very slow. Commemoration rates increased gradually from year to year. They seem to have started rising faster around 1930 and 1943. By the end of the 1950s, more than three-quarters of Chinese-Canadians buried in Mountain View Cemetery were commemorated. These changes corresponded to changes in commemoration styles (an increase in the number of markers in a few very specific styles, and in Chinese epitaphs).

This contrasts with the situation in Victoria, where the minority who were permanently commemorated was very small, and where the change in the commemoration rate occurred around the 1930s – the decade when bone repatriation became impossible.

Demographic patterns

There is an indication of two patterns in commemorative practices: a large minority of Chinese-Canadians eschewed bone repatriation early on, while the practice was still popular. These people were buried in the Old section of Mountain View Cemetery, and commemorated in a variety of ways.

Subsequently, there was a rise in commemoration rates around the 1940s, which coincided with increased standardization in commemorative practices as a large number of people were commemorated in a very specific way. Although the proportion of people being commemorated in more diverse ways decreased in the face of this sharp rise in the number of people being commemorated in more standard ways, their absolute numbers did not.

There were commonalities between the people who were commemorated on permanent markers dating from before the 1940s, and people who were buried in non-Chinese-Canadian sections after the 1940s. Both groups contained a disproportionately large number of women and of people aged less than sixty.

Demographic patterns and choice of burial location

There were differences in commemorative style between different sections within the cemetery. A comparison of people buried in different sections of the cemetery reveals that there were some differences in the age and gender of people commemorated in these different sections. When comparing a random sample of people buried in 1) the Jones section and in more homogenous areas within the Old sections, 2) people buried near the altar in the Old section, and 3) the 23 people buried outside of primary Chinese-Canadian burial spaces (one couple in the Jones section, and 21 people in Horne section), it is possible to see some broad differences between sections (see figures 19 and 20).

Figure 19   Age distribution of Chinese-Canadian markers in different sections
of Mountain View Cemetery
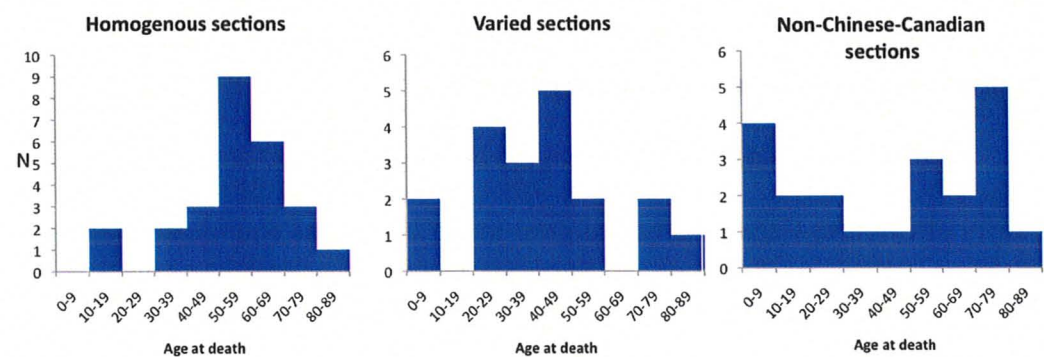
Figure 20   Gender distribution of Chinese-Canadian markers in different
sections of Mountain View Cemetery
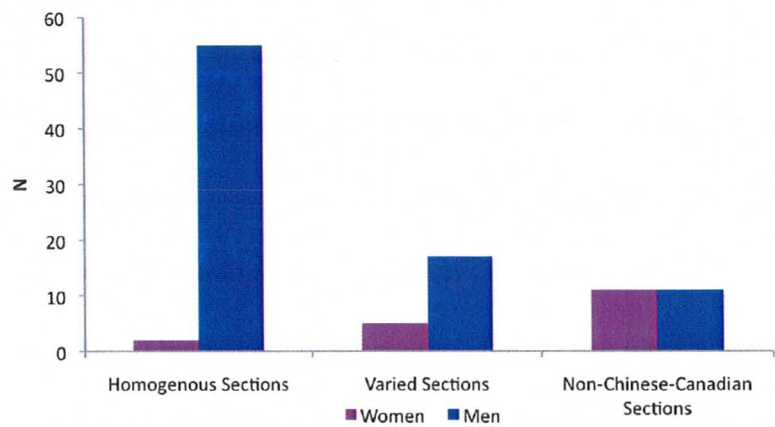
In age and gender, they were not representative of the Chinese-Canadian

population at the time: children were overly represented outside of Chinese-

Canadian areas, and all under-sixty age-groups were over-represented in the Old

section. Furthermore, in part because many markers commemorated couples who

were buried together, the ratio of men to women was equal in the non-Chinese-Canadian sections, and less sharply skewed in the Old section, than in most primarily Chinese-Canadian burial spaces.

Demographic patterns in commemoration rates

Similar patterns appear when looking at changing commemoration rates. A minority of Chinese-Canadians buried prior to the 1940s was commemorated in Mountain View Cemetery. There were gender and age differences between this group and the majority of Chinese-Canadians who died during this period. Although people of both genders and of various ages were included, women and young adults were present disproportionately.

Prior to the rise of commemoration rates in the 1940s, women were over-represented in the marker record (see table 6), by a factor of three in the 1920s and by a factor of five in the 1930s. This over-representation was even more dramatic if only adult women were taken into account. Most female deaths in the 1920s (57%) and 1930s (36%) were of young girls and infants. However, most female markers dating from this period commemorate teen-aged or adult women (since all but three markers describe the deceased as a wife or a mother).

Table 7   Gender ratio of recorded deaths and extant markers for Chinese-
Canadians in Vancouver, 1920-1959

| | *Recorded deaths*[1] | | *Extant markers*[2] | |
	Men	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
1920-1929	474	42	33	7.5
1930-1939	525	53	56	30
1940-1949	873	47	188	8
1950-1959	1075	71	244	11
Total	2947	213	521	56.5

1 Based on death certificates for Vancouver (BC Archives 2002). Only five
   sample years were counted for each decade five ('1, '3, '5, '7, '9) in
   Vancouver. In Victoria, only data from 1952 was sampled for the
   1950-1955 period.
2 Includes half of all markers

Figure 21   Number of recorded Chinese-Canadian deaths and extant markers
per decade at Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver
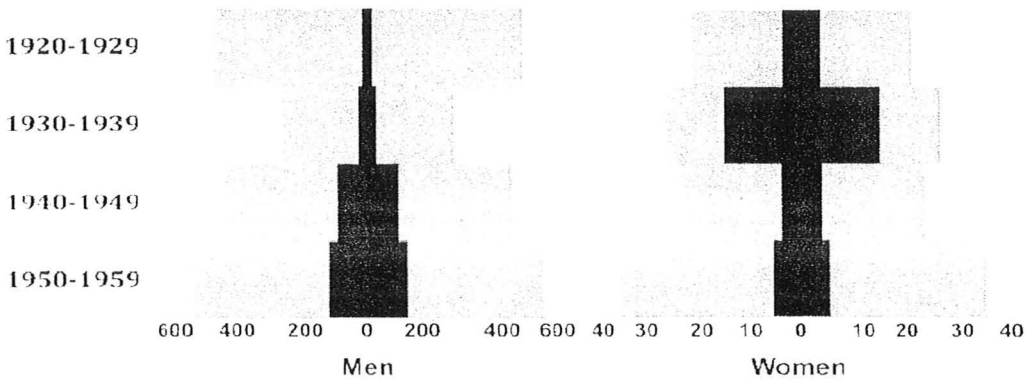
Notes: *Only markers denoting gender were included in the count, so the
number of extant markers is necessarily small, and the proportion of
markers to deaths is not representative of the overall proportion.*

Similarly, the age of people represented on early markers was not typical

of the population as a whole. Until the 1940s, people of different ages were fairly

equally represented in the commemorated minority, while children and older

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people were over-represented among deaths. Although the modal age at death rose

between the 1920s and the 1950s from the 40s to the 70s, this increase was not

reflected in the marker record until the 1940s. Even then, older persons remained

under-commemorated. It was only in the 1950s that the age-at-death of people

commemorated on markers came to resemble the actual age-at-death curve of the

people being buried.

Figure 22   Age at death curves for Chinese-Canadian deaths recorded in
                Vancouver and extant markers in Mountain View Cemetery
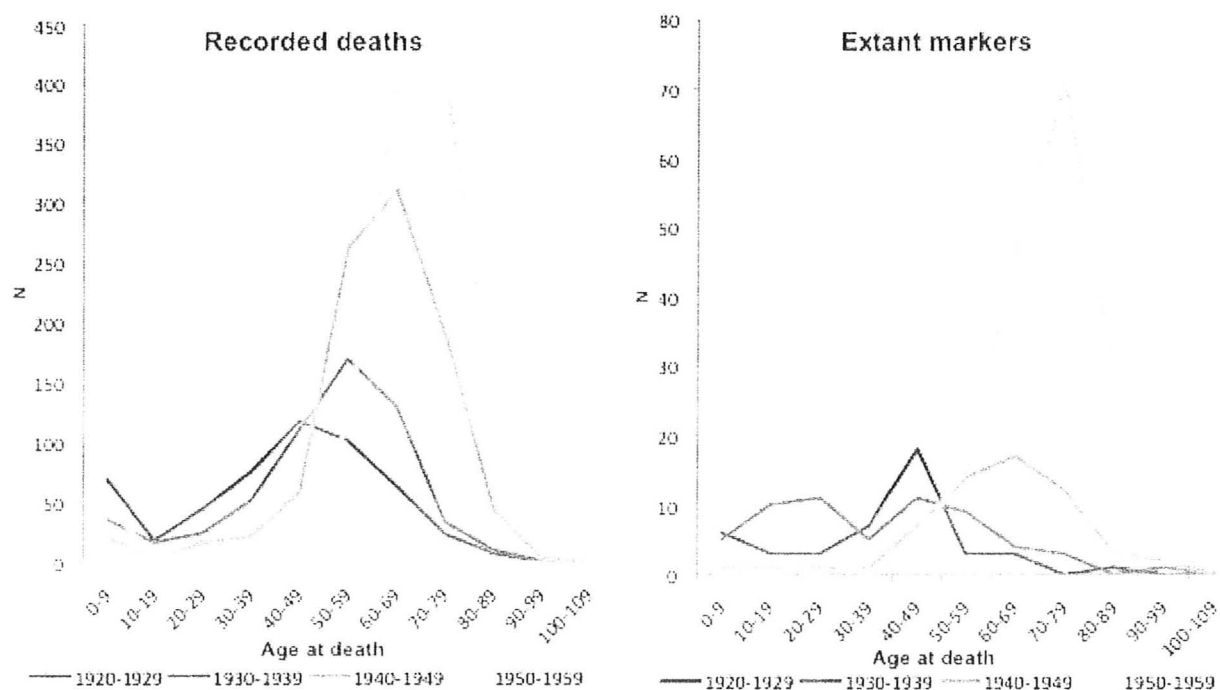
Conclusion

During the early 20th century, most Chinese-Canadians in Vancouver were buried in Mountain View Cemetery. The city's Chinese Canadian population was very diverse, both in ascribed identities and in adopted communities and affiliations. Some of this diversity is reflected in the cemetery, where two broad commemorative traditions seem to have developed. One, which was adopted by the majority of Chinese-Canadians, involved practices and material culture that emphasized large-scale similarities among all, while the other, which was adopted by a minority, commemorated a greater variety of community identities.

Early on, it seems likely that the majority of Chinese-Canadians who died in Vancouver had their bones repatriated to China. A significant minority of Chinese-Canadians, however, eschewed bone repatriation and were buried in the Old section of Mountain View Cemetery. There, they were commemorated in a variety of ways, with markers that were mostly similar to one another in appearance, and commemorated overall similar things – a person's name, ancestral village, and date of death – but where there was nonetheless some diversity. In some cases, the placement of markers emphasized relationships between people buried: immediate family or marital ties, broader lineage ties. The most ostentatious markers were placed close to the very visible and public altar.

After bone repatriation became inaccessible, practices changed gradually, and more Chinese-Canadians were permanently interred with a grave marker in

Mountain View Cemetery. Simultaneous with this increase in commemoration rates was an increase in the number of markers that were homogenous in appearance, regular in their placement according to the deceased person's date of death (indeed, couples were sometimes buried separately if they did not die at the same time [e.g. Chong 1994:266]), and similar in the identities that they commemorated.

This increase did not, however, entail a cessation of more diverse commemorative practices, which were still engaged in by a minority of Chinese-Canadians. Such markers continued to be erected, both in the Old section, and outside of primarily Chinese-Canadian sections of the cemetery.

Throughout the period, the majority of people adopted fairly standardized commemorative practices. Because most people were part of this group, it was representative of the dying population: composed primarily of elderly men. A minority of people adopted non-standard commemorative practices. These people were more varied in age and gender, and although they included elderly men, the latter were slightly under-represented in comparison to their numbers in the population having been buried.

This pattern paralleled that developing in Victoria during the same period. Two general commemorative styles appear to have developed. One, which was more standard, involved an absence of permanent commemoration prior to the 1930s (possibly in relation to bone repatriation) and the adoption of fairly standard commemorative styles after the 1940s. The other, adopted by a minority

of individuals, involved the commemoration of a broader range of community ties, and a greater diversity of practices. In at least some cases, people received permanent burial in Canada prior to the 1930s. After the 1930s, they were buried with markers that were placed in different cemetery sections, bore epitaphs commemorating a range of relationships, and were sometimes distinctive in style.

Because of the large number of burials, it is possible to get a sense of the dynamics of the transition to permanent burial in Vancouver. This change occurred very gradually, rather than suddenly and in reaction to a specific event. In Victoria, the dynamics of this transition cannot be ascertained, because of the small number of surviving markers.

Despite these similarities, there were a few differences between the two cities. The group adopting non-standard commemorative practices, while still a minority, was larger in Vancouver than in Victoria. The way in which these differences were enacted also differed: in Victoria, choice of cemetery was an important source of distinction, while in Vancouver, choice of burial space within the cemetery was more important. Furthermore, the appearance of standard marker styles differed between cities.

The change in standard commemorative practices also occurred differently. The transition to permanent commemoration occurred later in Vancouver than in Victoria (in the 1940s, rather than in the 1930s), but it was much more complete.

CHAPTER 5:   DISCUSSION

Introduction: Three lines of difference

Three main patterns are revealed by an examination of the data on

Chinese-Canadian grave-markers in Vancouver and Victoria. The first is the

presence of fairly distinct commemorative strategies, which were engaged in at

the same time and in the same place, but by different people. One strategy

involved the foregrounding of commonalities among Chinese-Canadians, while

the other allowed for a greater range of identities to be commemorated. The

second pattern is a gradual transformation of the standard commemorative

practices engaged in by the majority group. The last pattern, most immediately

visible to cemetery visitors but least easily described, consists of differences in

how the first two patterns developed in each city.

These patterns may be related to broader questions of community and

identity, and can therefore be employed in the exploration of how early Chinese-

Canadian identities varied and developed over time.

Interpersonal differences

Standard and non-standard commemorative traditions

The first pattern concerns the different choices made about the manner in

which persons were to be commemorated. Throughout the period of study, and in

both cities, there were multiple and overlapping similarities in the style,

placement, and epitaphs of most Chinese-Canadian grave-markers. These

similarities were striking, especially when contrasted to the practices of a minority who were commemorated differently. That a vast majority of Chinese-Canadians were commemorated in ways that were fairly standard suggests that to some extent, a shared commemorative strategy, or commemorative tradition, may have informed the decisions made by many different people.

The majority of Chinese-Canadians were buried in similar ways. Early on, they chose to have their bones exhumed and repatriated to China, where they were transferred to family members in their ancestral village, in order to be buried there. After bone repatriation became impossible, they were permanently buried locally. Although not all permanent graves were marked by a grave-marker, many were, and such markers were similar in many ways. They were typically placed in primarily Chinese-Canadian spaces, within which markers were organized in ways that did not underscore class, lineage, family, locality, or other small-group community identities. Instead, they were placed in rows according to date of death, or in loose rows that did not reflect an obvious organizing principle. Such markers' style was usually simple, and similar to that of neighbours. Epitaphs, whether bilingual or entirely Chinese, almost always commemorated the person's name, ancestral village in China, and date of death, though family role, religious faith, or political association (in the form of a Masonic symbol) were also occasionally noted.

These fairly standard commemorative practices adopted by a large number of Chinese-Canadians were one of the two broad sets of commemorative practices

that seem to have been engaged in by different people within any community at a given time. A minority were commemorated in ways that were not standard, for whatever reason. I use the term "non-standard" out of convenience more than anything else, as a means to designate all people in that minority who diverged, in whatever way, from the more common set of practices. There was no visibly shared underlying tradition behind these non-standard markers.

Furthermore, although the non-standard markers varied more than standard Chinese-Canadian markers normally did, they remained within the realm of possibilities common for the cemetery in which they were buried. Given that grave markers in Mountain View Cemetery and, albeit to a lesser degree, Ross Bay Cemetery were as a whole fairly limited in the extent of their variation, these markers were not extremely unusual in appearance, and commemorated a fairly small range of experiences and connections.

Some of these non-standard markers were in sections that were not primarily Chinese-Canadian, near the markers of people with whom the deceased had shared community ties. Others were in primarily Chinese-Canadian spaces where homogeneity was less strictly maintained; class distinctions were sometimes emphasized through marker size or material, and family connections were sometimes underscored by placement or by shared markers. Epitaphs were more often bilingual, and commemorated a slightly broader range of elements.

And so, very broadly speaking, two commemorative strategies were adopted by Chinese-Canadians: a standard one, engaged in by the majority, and a

"non-standard" one. While these differences can be described, their meaning and cause, as well as their impact on the experience of cemetery visitors, are more difficult to gauge.

Multivalent commemoration

From an immediate perspective, non-standard markers can seem to reveal a richer picture of the lives of the people that they commemorated. Nonetheless, standard markers could also, under certain circumstances, convey a similarly rich impression.

Markers that shared many similarities can appear to efface personal differences among the people being commemorated. When taken as a group, such markers did create a strong impression of community and homogeneity, resulting from the shape and placement of markers and the layout and content of the epitaphs, all of which were fairly standardized. Yet the relationships that were commemorated in this stereotyped manner were ones that had been meaningful and poignant at a personal level. In the end, those two aspects of commemoration, the individual and the community, were reconcilable: each could be more or less apparent to different viewers depending on their focus and on the extent to which they were conversant with the information presented.

Even at a glance, these standard markers had immediate visual impact when viewed as a group. They were similar in shape, size, and decoration, and were placed together in rows, often occupying large spaces. As such, they

conveyed a certain impression of a 'Chinese-Canadian space' (whether it was

imposed by municipal or other ordinances [Lai 1987), or chosen by the people

burying the dead (City of Vancouver 2009)]. This impression was reinforced by

epitaphs, which were for the most part in Chinese, and therefore shared a similar

script. Even for non-readers, this was already an important source of information

about one aspect of the identity of the people buried here.

For those people who could read Chinese, however, multiple new fields of

distinction were also visible, and could be more or less salient according to the

viewers' familiarity with the deceased person's ancestral village, name, and the

socio-political context in Canada and in Guangdong.

Personal names included the person's family and individual name.

Because of lineage associations' role as providers of support in many early

Chinese-Canadian communities, and because of the role of informal mutual aid in

immigration and commercial endeavors, the family name was extremely

informative and could help to locate the individual, even to a stranger, within

known social spheres. The personal name, meanwhile, evoked memories of a

specific person for those who had known them in life.

Another role of names, which I did not study, because of time constraints,

was that involved in the transpacific travels of people who adopted false identities

to come as the 'paper-children' of citizens. Such immigration strategies were used

by Chinese-Canadians (e.g. Chong 1994:264). The presence of bilingual markers

may have afforded an opportunity to view differences between official names and

personal ones – as observed by Blake (1993:69) in the United States. It is quite

possible that this, and similar, information about the complicated lives of the

people being commemorated were provided, to some, by simple virtue of seeing a

name.

Place-names were similarly rich and complicated. When noted on an

epitaph, place-names were given out as a list of imbricated sites, going from

larger to smaller entities (usually starting with the province, Guangdong, or the

county).

Figure 23   *A Hierarchy of Chinese Toponyms*

Province	省
County	縣
Township	鎮
Village	村
Neighborhood	里

I did not study the rates of occurrence of these different levels of

toponymic resolution. Since markers often named a place without stating the type

of place that it was, such a study would have required that I cross-check names

with detailed 19th century maps. Merely looking at examples, however, sufficed to

show clearly that place-names varied in their specificity. In the vaguest cases,

only the county was named. Most place names were specific at least to the level of the village, and some down to the neigbhourhood.

As a result of this detailed and often specific way of describing places, different regional identities were visible in a single epitaph, each laced with connotations that could be meaningful to the reader, according to their level of familiarity with the places being described.

Large-scale place-identities were important. In Southeast China and in the diaspora, local identity as a person from Guangdong (唐人), or a person from Sanyi (三邑) or Siyi (四邑) districts (groups of counties near the Pearl River in Guangdong) were culturally recognized identities, associated with accents, attitudes, and local cultural particularities (Con et al. 1982:7, Hom 2002:36, Lyman 1974). Furthermore, in the diaspora, County Associations were important players in the organization of early communities (Con et al. 1982:35-36, Lai 1977); they were notably involved in migration decisions because of the support that they provided (Lai 1977). As such, knowledge of a person's county of origin revealed something about the social and support networks to which they had access in Canada, and their cultural background in China.

Smaller-scale place-identities were also important. At a smaller level, people often shared local histories. Market towns formed important centers for cultural and economic traditions, often with their own "little tradition" and local culture (Woon 1984:9, see also McKeown 2001, Szonyi 2002). At a smaller level

yet, villages (村) and neighbourhoods (里), were often occupied by a single

lineage, or a few families whose histories had long been intertwined (e.g. Ahearn

1973, Woon 2001). All of this specificity remained important, both because it

spoke to a person's origins (if they were an immigrant) and because Chinese-

Canadians were often heavily involved in the social and cultural lives of their

village of origin, often maintaining family ties there and recreating them locally

(e.g. Chong 1994, Liu 2004, Hsu 2000, Woon 2001).

Conversely, these smaller-scale local identities were important elements in

the construction of larger-scale ones. In many Overseas Chinese communities,

"native place became even more important amidst the often hostile conditions of

life in foreign lands" (Hsu 2000:125). Native place associations were extremely

active in the development of nationalist movements both in China and in the

Chinese diaspora (Goodman 1995).

Thus even the more standard markers were sites where a range of poignant

and personal connections were commemorated – albeit they were commemorated

in such a manner that for many visitors, shared traits were much more obviously

visible. For those who had the necessary information, a whole range of

community identities could be visible at once – from that as Chinese-Canadian

engaged in common struggles, to that as a villager, having experienced and

participated in the life of a particular family and local culture.

Different Chinese-Canadian experiences

Although all the diversity of human life cannot, of course, be captured in only one kind of representation, and although grave-markers were in general a fairly stereotyped kind of material culture permitting only a somewhat limited range of expressions, the mere fact of the adoption of different commemorative styles can reveal something about the choices that underlay such styles.

While only a minority of Chinese-Canadians were commemorated in unusual ways, their commemoration was a reflection of their experiences and of the manner in which they or their loved ones wanted them to be remembered. Through language, placement, and choice of referents, these markers created representations that addressed a range of publics.

For the majority of Chinese-Canadians, commemorative material culture was fairly standardized. If there were permanent markers, they were similar to one another and placed together. As a result, a large-scale identity, as Chinese-Canadian and as part of a community, was the level of identity most visible at first glance, and most visible to visitors not familiar with the community or with Chinese. More ambiguous and individualized community ties were apparent after a closer look, but only to those who had some knowledge about the person, their family, or place of origin, and who could speak Chinese. For the minority, commemorations were often available in English or bilingually, and sometimes referred to aspects of the deceased person's experiences that were meaningful without detailed knowledge about China – as with references to family roles.

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That representations for the group of people having standard and non-standard commemorative practices were accessible to different publics is particularly interesting in light of some differences between the people who were commemorated in these different ways. Some of the demographic characteristics that characterize the people buried in each group differ. People commemorated in standard ways were primarily elders, and men (as were the vast majority of Chinese-Canadians at the time). Those people who were commemorated in non-standard ways differed from this trend, being more diverse in age. They included younger people and adults of both genders.

Furthermore, at least a few of the people commemorated in more unusual ways could be identified as merchants (Yip Sang and his family in Vancouver, and the Chow/Joe brothers in Victoria [Lai 1991, Yee 1988]). This may be suggestive of class differences in commemoration practices, although it is difficult to affirm this with much certitude without having looked at this question more systematically.

These differences are suggestive of bigger differences in the life experiences of these people. Cultural constructions of gender, for instance, meant that men and women led fairly different lives. During the 1940s, roughly 4% of men had families in Canada, compared to about 50% of women (Li 1998:71-72). Thus women were over 10 times more likely than men to have families in Canada, a ratio that more or less concords with that of the epitaph inscriptions. However, during the same period, over two thirds of Chinese-Canadian men were married

and had families in China (Li 1998:72). While they did not live with their families, they often spent substantial parts of their lives working to provide them with financial support. Connections may have been maintained through writing, trips to China, and the immigration of relatives to Canada (e.g. Hsu 2001, Szonyi 2005).

These family connections are not directly described in the epitaphs (although the emphasis on place of origin names might take on a different meaning in light of the likelihood that the deceased had important ties with people there). The lack of references to these ties also raises questions about whom the marker was erected by, and whose eyes it was intended for: people whose children were not in Canada were very unlikely to be described in terms of their experience as parents.

Home-life experiences, and social interaction, were very varied, according to the factors described above (c.f. Pascoe 1989). Class was also an important factor. Social interactions were much more open, and much more likely to include both Chinese-Canadians and Anglo-Canadians, for merchants and other educated community leaders (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001, Stanley 1996, 1997), as well as for Chinese-Canadians who had received an education in English, or were engaged in Christian religious movements (Wang 2005).

Home-life was also different. Genders were fairly segregated in public life, as described in Chong's description of her mother's life growing up in early 20th century Vancouver:

> The ratio of men to women was […] ten to one […]. But on the
> streets, the ratio was dramatically higher. "Decent" women – the
> merchants' wives – rarely ventured beyond the walls of their family
> home. A laborer, on the other side of the social chasm from a
> merchant, called a rooming house home and rarely even saw a woman
> or girl, unless he fraternized with the white prostitutes in the skid row
> area bordering Chinatown, or unless he frequented the tea houses, all
> of which employed waitresses (Chong 1994:20).

For those (mostly) men who were laborers, very different conceptions of
community prevailed. Long work hours, discrimination and frequent difficulties
with English resulted in some measure of isolation from non-Chinese-Canadians,
and interaction primarily with other members of the same group (cf Siu 1987).
Residence and primary interactions were not based on household or family, but on
co-residence with groups of men who were members of similar voluntary, lineage,
or clan associations (cf Voss 2009). These were important ties, however, and
strong communities were created. Although they did not conform to traditional
family structures in China or in Canada, they were at the heart of many people's
lives and sense of belonging (Voss 2009). A newspaper article detailing a 1961
interview with a group of twelve elders living in a boarding house together
provides an impression of this reality:

> In this house, the members of the Hing Mee Society sleep as late as
> they want. They eat what they like to eat. They invite their relatives in
> each spring for a little party. They are happy. They would like to
> remain together for the rest of their lives, village boys who grew up
> together and want to die together (cited in Yee 1988:134).

A hint of some of these important bonds can be seen through the different

publics that are addressed by early Chinese-Canadian grave-markers.

Differences over time

The almost 60 years covered by this study were an important period in Chinese-Canadian history, and one that was marked by major social transformations, and also by a few extremely reverberating events. As a result, there are good reasons to expect fairly dramatic shifts over time, and possibly shifts that concurred in their timing with specific events.

A number of studies have already explored changes in Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American mortuary practice and material culture. All of these studies make interesting observations about changing commemorative practices, which are attributed to changing social structure (Blake 1993), the increase in Taoist practices because of increased wealth and fear of ghosts (Chase 2005, Pasacreta 2005) or to the cessation of bone repatriation and the need to adopt more permanent forms of commemoration (Abraham and Wegars 2003:63, Hitchcock 1972:13, Kraus-Friedberg 2008, Pasacreta 2005).

Many of these studies (esp. Blake 1993, Kraus-Friedberg 2008) have provided rich contextual information to explain changing practices. In his study of the Valhalla cemetery in Missouri, Blake (1993) draws on multiple kinds of information – most particularily relative to naming practices on markers – to better understand profound social changes over a period of almost a century. Similarly, Kraus-Friedberg (2008) approaches the Pahala cemetery in Hawai'i by looking at changing bone repatriation practices in light of very rich historical

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information, exploring the intersection of 'local' identity in Hawai'i and of diasporic Chinese identities.

All of these studies, however, have focused on smaller cemeteries, with limited sample sizes. The largest-scale thus far, Blake's (1993) study, examined a few hundred markers. Such sample sizes allow for very good observations of longer term changes, but only in terms of phases and other larger-scale definitions of time.

An exploration of change at a much finer scale, by looking at change over years rather than decades, finds that the cessation of bone repatriation did not have a major and rapid impact on the transformation of Chinese-Canadian commemorative practices in Vancouver and Victoria. Rather, change occurred slowly, with a few more people each year adopting a given style.

This gradual change in commemorative practices resembles the pattern observed by Williams (2006) in his exploration of changing bone repatriation rates in Australia (based on written documents). Rather than changing rapidly following the cessation of shipments, the rates had already begun to decline, and continued to do so following, this event.

This rhythm of change is interesting, especially in light of the gradual homogenization of commemorative practices described above. This suggests that commemorative decisions were made not in reaction to outside events, but in ways that, while informed by a broader context, were heavily influenced by local practices. In this sense, such a process resembles the development of

microtraditions, as defined by Chapman (2000), in which memories of past ritual, landscapes of past markers, and the needs of present circumstances all inform commemorative choices.

This process is informative in terms of identity. When creating new grave markers, people referred to already existing markers – by echoing styles, or choosing nearby locations. Chinese-Canadian markers show similarities in style (more-so in Victoria than in Vancouver) and in epitaph contents with markers elsewhere in the Chinese diaspora, and with other local markers (especially in Mountain View and Ross Bay cemeteries). For markers in Mountain View Cemetery that adopted more standard commemorative practices, the people being referred to seem to have been other Chinese-Canadians. For many of the non-standard markers, in Mountain View and Ross Bay cemeteries, non-Chinese-Canadian neighbours seem to have become important referents. As these commemorative traditions developed (gradually, through individual decisions and marker erections), the constantly reiterated references to particular stylistic models created an impression of some small-scale and larger-scale communities.

Regional differences

The final pattern of interest concerns the divergence in the Chinese-Canadian commemorative traditions that developed in Vancouver and in Victoria. This pattern is to some extent obfuscated by structural differences between cemeteries, and can as a result only be characterized tentatively.

Some superficial differences in commemorative practice between the two cities are visible from the outset. Most obviously, the exact style of the more standard markers was not the same. Victoria markers were for the most part upright and made of concrete, while Vancouver markers were smaller, often flat, and made of granite. Vancouver epitaphs were much more often bilingual than those in Victoria, and commemoration rates were much higher throughout the period of study.

Another striking difference was the presence of a specifically Chinese-Canadian cemetery in Victoria, run by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association; and the absence of such a cemetery in Vancouver. Consequently, although people were commemorated in standard and non-standard ways at both cities, the visibility of such practices was not equal. In Vancouver, all Chinese-Canadian burials were within short walking distance of other burials marked by unusual grave-markers. Furthermore, the older, non-standard, markers near the altar were readily visible to all. This situation may have contributed to some of the differences between the two cities. In particular, it is possible that the influence of local practices may have played a role in fostering the development of the particular forms of commemoration that became standard in Vancouver. Flat markers and granite markers were, indeed, very well represented throughout the cemetery in general. It is quite possible that the local context, at a very simple and pragmatic level, may have contributed to the development of commemorative traditions in which certain forms were preferred.

Other differences between the commemorative traditions developing in these two cities were more intriguing but also harder to see clearly. One important difference was in the size of the population adopting unusual commemorative practices. This minority seems to have been much larger in Vancouver than in Victoria (at least, until the 1950s and the rise in popularity of Royal Oak Cemetery for Chinese-Canadians).

Another important difference between the two cities was harder to characterize, because of the small sample size in Victoria. Nonetheless, the sharpest increase in commemoration occurred earlier in Victoria than in Vancouver (between the 1920s and 1930s, rather than the 1930s and 1940s), and seemed more abrupt. Furthermore, in Victoria there was less of a visible stylistic change in the shape of markers over the decades, and less homogenization of standard commemorative styles by the 1950s. It is not clear if this is a reflection of the smaller number of markers observed in Victoria, or if there was a real difference in the dynamics of change in commemorative practices between the two cities.

A number of factors may underpin these differences – notably the relative youth of Vancouver, both as a city and in terms of the age of its Chinese-Canadian population (Anderson 1991, Ng 1999:20-40), and other socio-cultural differences between the residents of the two cities. These questions would be worth exploring further, whether through analyses of other differences between the cities'

Chinese-Canadian communities, or through the selection of other sites to allow a better view on differences in the rhythms of change between cities.

There is much literature highlighing the interaction of local factors and global exchanges in fostering the development of forms of mortuary material culture specific to an area, as demonstrated through surveys of Chinese cemeteries in different regions (e.g. Pasacreta 2005, Ryan 1994, Abrahams 2008a, 2008b). However, none of these studies adopts a diachronic perspective to explore the mechanisms whereby such differences developed. Such a study would provide an important means of exploring the interaction of local and global factors in the formation of different identities within the Chinese diaspora.

Conclusion

This research project, although preliminary, has shown that some aspects of the negotiation of community identities were played out in the mortuary material culture commemorating Chinese-Canadians in Vancouver and Victoria during the exclusion era. In so doing, it contributes to the literature on Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American history in two main ways.

First, it joins a growing body of literature that recognizes the diversity within early Chinese-Canadian communities in North America. Because of documentary limitations, many older works painted a homogenous picture of Chinese-Canadian communities, one that is increasingly disputed through the exploration of alternative sources and approaches. For a variety of reasons, both

theoretical and practical, this homogeneizing perspective has been particularly problematic and persistent in archaeological research. By foregrounding the different ways in which community identities could be framed, and exploring how these different commemorative choices may have been informed but not dictated by different personal experiences, this study presents one way of exploring variability. In so doing, it answers a call for non-essentializing research on early Overseas Chinese experiences in North America, as put forth by archaeological papers that have successfully used novel approaches to explore these topics.

The other contribution of this project is its drawing out of some of the dynamics of change involved in the representation of community identities, by exploring how standard commemorative practices were transformed over time, in Vancouver and in Victoria.

The increasing similarity of standard Chinese-Canadian markers among themselves during the 1940s and 1950s suggests that the development of local commemorative traditions was not simply the result of a process of assimilation resulting from the adoption of local commemorative forms following the cessation of bone repatriation and the adoption of permanent local burial. Instead, this gradual homogeneization may be understood in terms of the creation of a new commemorative tradition, informed by local practices and diasporic Chinese practices, but created locally, by people acting at a point where these different influences intersected. The presence of difference in the traditions having developed in Vancouver and Victoria supports this idea, as it demonstrates the

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importance of local factors in informing this development. Furthermore, the gradual nature of the change, as shown by the very slow increase of commemoration rates in Vancouver, suggests that this tradition developed not in reaction to specific events or pressures – although these may have influenced commemorative decisions – but in ways that were largely informed by the material culture already created by others.

This study is only preliminary, and time constraints have not allowed for a more detailed exploration of the large-scale historical factors, or of the small-scale entanglements, which informed individual commemorative decisions. Nonetheless, a careful analysis of commemorative patterns over time have shown that the interaction of local and translocal factors, and of different individual decisions, have all contributed to the development of commemorative traditions in Vancouver and Victoria. In so doing, it joins a growing body of literature that views the intersection of local and global factors, and the individual decisions informed by these factors, as causes social change.

Consequently, I believe that my M.A. research shows that studies of commemorative practices have the potential to draw out some of the poorly documented debates and changes involved in the complexities involved in the development of community identities in the Chinese diaspora.

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Annex 1: Cemeteries[1]

Annex 1a   Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 1b   Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria

Photo taken facing East
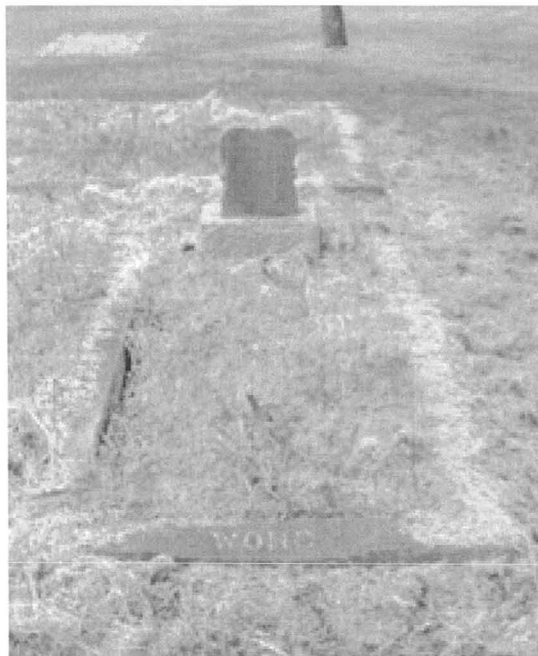Altar visible near ocean, on right-side of the photo

Old Section, with a view of the altar
Photo taken facing West, showing Chinese and Japanese, Chinese, and military sections

Annex 2: Grave markers [2]
Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 2a   Chung (張) family marker

Annex 2b   Martha Wong (黃) marker

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[2] All images photographed by Ani Chénier, June-July 2008

Annex 2c   Chow (周) couple's marker
             Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 2d   Chow/Joe (周) marker (omega shaped marker)
             Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 2e   Different styles of upright concrete marker
              Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria
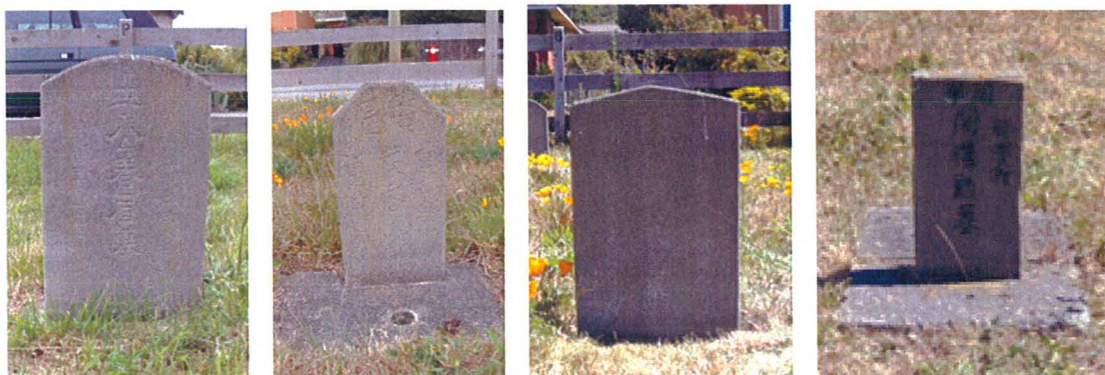
Annex 2f   Different handwrittings on epitaphs
              Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 2g   Different marker bases
              Harling Point Cemetery, Victoria

Annex 2h   Marker for Yip Sang (葉春田)
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2i   Marker for Seto Sheepon (盤門司徒氏)
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2j   Marker for Chin Yet Moy and Chin Yet May (陳月妹，陳月美)
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2k   Marker for Jin Do and Mary Jane Woo
Jones Section (outside of primarily Chinese-Canadian area), Mountain
View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2l   Marker for Harry Lim (林)
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2n   Japanese markers
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2o   Johny Leong marker: plain granite marker
              North side of Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2p   Grave marker with writing in incrusted marbles
              Jones Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2q   Plain 1950s marker
Old Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2r   Marker from the 12 similar ones
Horne Section, Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

Annex 2s   Masconic symbol

Annex 3   Catalogued variables

        Catalogue number

Location of marker
- Cemetery
- Section type
- Section
- Sub-section

Time of marker erection
- Year of death
- Probable year (according to neighbours)
- Overall probable year of death
- Decade of death

Personal information about the deceased (if available)
- Age at death
- Age (Decade)
- Age class
- Gender
- Marital status
- Parental status
- Family role (English)
- Family role (Chinese)
- English family name
- Pinyin of Chinese family name
- Number reference to Chinese name
- Maiden name
- Maiden name (#)
- Province of origin

Marker Condition
- Marker whole/broken

Marker Style
- Number of people memorialized on the marker
- Marker shape
- Marker upright or flat
- Marker size
- Base
- Outline
- Material
- Type of stone
- Stone's colour
- Quality of the concrete
- Presence/absence of plaster covering on concrete
- Iconography
- Offerings
- Presence of hollows for offerings

Epitaph Style
        Presence of epitaph
        Languages of epitaph
        Writing style - English
        Text colour - English
        Text orientation - English
        Writing style - Chinese
        Text colour - Chinese
        Text orientation - Chinese
        Calendrical recording system
        Number script
        Traditional vs simplified Chinese characters
Epitaph: Relationships being recorded
        Family name - presence/absence in epitaph
        Personal name - presence/absence in epitaph
        Age at death- presence/absence in epitaph
        Place of origin - presence/absence in recording
        Resolution of place name
        Place of birth -presence or absence
        Place of death - Presence/absence in epitaph
        Date of birth - Presence/absence in epitaph
        Date of death - Presence/absence in epitaph
        Family role - Presence/absence in epitaph
        Religious affiliation/saying - Presence/absence in epitaph
        Professional affiliation - Presence/absence in epitaph
Other
        Other comments