

Chee Kung Tong Building, Barkerville, British Columbia

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A similar version of this report on the Chee Kung Tong Building in Barkerville, British Columbia, was presented to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The Chee Kung Tong Building has since been designated a National Historic Site of Canada and is of historical significance because: it is a rare surviving example of Chee Kung Tong architecture in Canada, with the interior divided into a hostel, kitchen, and socializing space on the ground floor and a society hall and altar room on the second floor, all of which illustrate nineteenth-century Chee Kung Tong architectural conventions; it exemplifies the community building and sense of belonging produced among immigrant Chinese labourers and merchants in new settlements throughout Canada by the provision of benevolent services and traditional Chinese and Hong-men society ceremonies and celebrations, as well as the provision of a vehicle for political diaspora to maintain a connection with China; and it served as a venue for dealing with the affairs of the Chinese community in the Cariboo District, exerting control over business and personal relationships between members.

The Chee Kung Tong building¹ (figs. 1-4) is part of the Barkerville provincial historic park in British Columbia. Nestled in the Cariboo District mountains at an elevation of four thousand two hundred feet and along Williams Creek, the Barkerville Historic Town serves to interpret the early Cariboo Gold Rush. The historic town boasts an inventory of more than one hundred and twenty-five

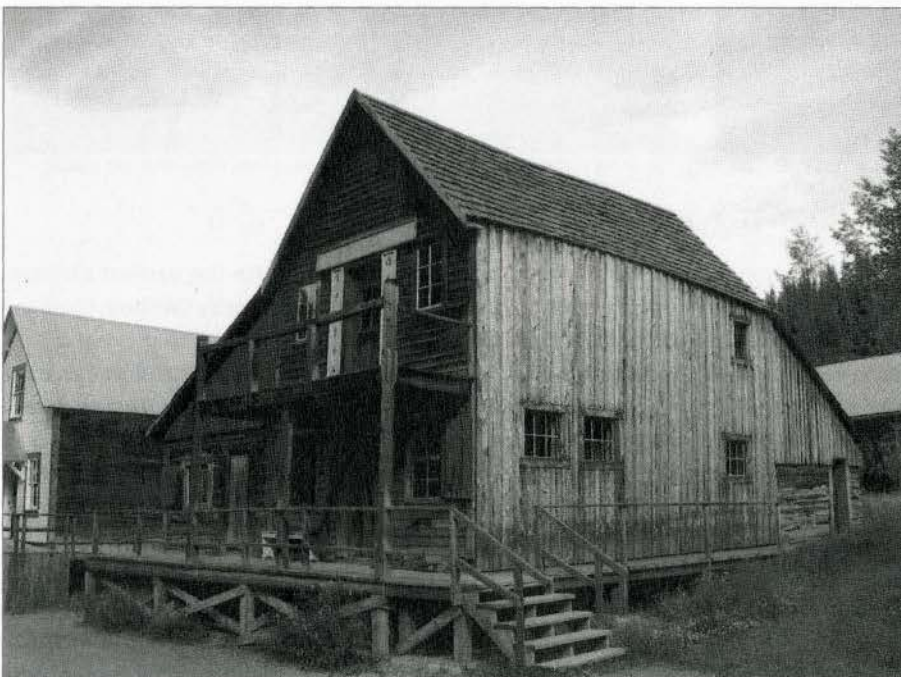


FIG. 1. THE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING, BARKERVILLE HISTORIC TOWN, BRITISH COLUMBIA, AS IT APPEARED IN 2006. |
NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

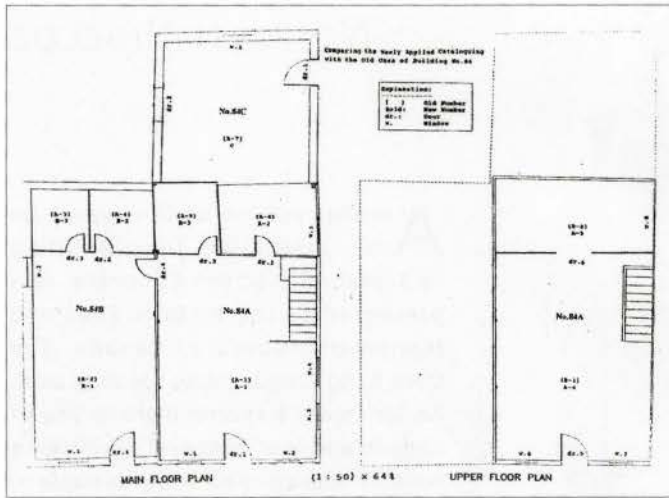


FIG. 2. MAIN FLOOR PLAN (LEFT) AND UPPER FLOOR PLAN (RIGHT) OF THE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING IN BARKERVILLE. | CHEN, 1992 : 26.



FIG. 3. THE EAST LEAN-TO ADDITION (BUILDING 84C) WAS ERECTED CA. 1883 AND SERVED PRIMARILY AS A KITCHEN. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

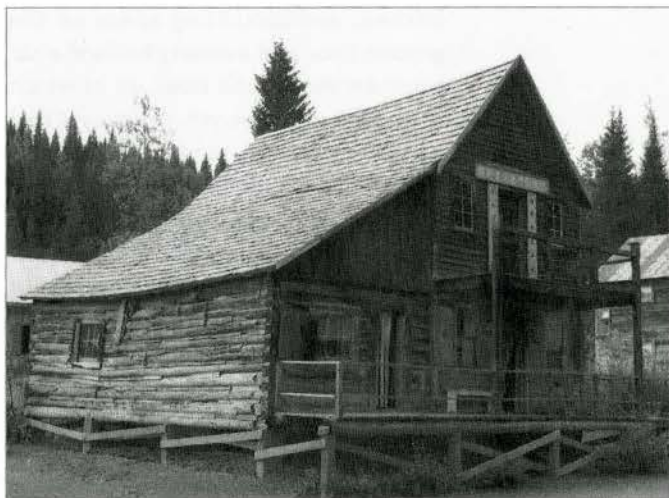


FIG. 4. THE NORTH LEAN-TO ADDITION (BUILDING 84B) WAS ERECTED CA. 1905 TO EXPAND THE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING'S LIVING QUARTERS AND SOCIAL SPACE. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.



FIG. 5. THE FORMER "MAIN HALL" OF THE BARKERVILLE CHEE KUNG TONG (NO LONGER EXTANT). | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, C-09659.

structures that line both sides of the principal road running from north (the park entrance) to south (Chinatown). Many of the buildings date from the nineteenth century. There is a secondary road, also running north to south, between the principal road and the creek, with stables and a few buildings.

The Chee Kung Tong building, located on lot 69 and designated as building 84 in the Barkerville Historic Town's inventory of buildings, is among the

oldest surviving structures in the park. Archaeological data from the early 1990s dates the main part of the structure to 1877, but there is speculation that it may have been constructed as early as 1874. It is unknown whether or not the Chee Kung Tong society had erected a dedicated structure prior to the great Barkerville fire of 1868, which destroyed most of the town's original building stock. It is widely believed that the Chee Kung Tong was originally formed in Barkerville in 1862 or 1863, a period

that coincides with the earliest Chinese presence in the North Cariboo.²

The main part of the Chee Kung Tong building (84A) is a rectangular, detached, two-storey frame structure, covered with board and batten, and with log lean-to additions on two sides (fig. 2). The east addition (84C) and the north addition (84B) were constructed ca. 1883-1885 and ca. 1905 respectively (figs. 3-4). Lean-to additions were a common design solution for expanding



FIG. 6. LUNG DUCK TONG (RESTAURANT). | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.



FIG. 7. LEE CHONG GENERAL STORE, WHICH CURRENTLY HOUSES THE CHINESE MUSEUM. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

buildings throughout Barkerville. Between its construction and the mid-1880s, the main building (84A) was used for ceremonial, residential, and social purposes. The east lean-to addition (84C) was used primarily as a kitchen until 1949. The north lean-to addition (84B) has been used primarily for residential purposes and as a space for socializing. Between 1883 and 1885, the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong constructed a new “Main Hall” (no longer extant) on current lot 62 (fig. 5), which served mainly as the ceremonial house until it was sold in 1932; after 1932, the society hall and altar room likely returned to the second storey of the subject building. In the interim, the subject building was used primarily for the Chee Kung Tong’s benevolent association functions, such as the hostel, gambling and social space, and kitchen facilities.³

The subject building ceased to be officially affiliated with the Chee Kung Tong in 1949 when Dea Song, its lawful owner and the last master of the society in Barkerville, passed away. Subsequently, the Province of British Columbia acquired the Chee Kung

Tong building and other structures at Barkerville in order to establish the historic town. The Chee Kung Tong building now serves to interpret the role of the society in the lives of Chinese miners during the Cariboo Gold Rush. It underwent restoration projects during the early 1960s when the Barkerville Historic Town was being established, in the 1980s, and again in the 1990s. The Chee Kung Tong building is situated on the east side of the principal road, in the centre of the Barkerville Chinatown. It is one of the more prominent structures in the Chinatown; other significant structures include the Lung Duck Tong (an operating Chinese restaurant) (fig. 6), the Lee Chong Co. Store (currently housing the Chinese Museum and adjacent to the Chee Kung Tong building) (fig. 7), and Kwong Sang Wing (an operating Chinese store).

APPLICABLE HSMBC CRITERIA/ GUIDELINES

The Chee Kung Tong building at Barkerville was evaluated under Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada [HSMBC] Criterion 1(b): it “illustrate[s]

or symbolize[s] in whole or in part a cultural tradition, a way of life, or ideas important in the development of Canada.”

HISTORIC VALUES OF THE PLACE

This report begins with a brief discussion of the Chee Kung Tong in China and North America to provide historical context for understanding this Chinese organization and its place in Chinese Canadian history. Built about 1874-1877, Barkerville’s Chee Kung Tong building is an early and representative example of Chee Kung Tong society architecture in Canada, and the best preserved one of this era known to exist. The building speaks to the early history of Chinese labourers in Canada in the period of the Gold Rush, and exemplifies the organization’s role as a benevolent association. The building was also the base for a thriving political culture amongst the Chinese in this remote mining town, which included providing local governance to its membership, helping with the society’s expansion in Canada, and financially contributing to the Chinese revolution overseas.

An Overview of the Chee Kung Tong and its Arrival in Canada

Chinese in Canada formed associations for many purposes. The earliest and most significant associations can be divided into four categories: 1) fraternal organizations, such as the Chee Kung Tong (also known as the Hong-men secret society, or Hung League); 2) clan associations based on a common surname; 3) locality associations based on geographic origins in China; and 4) community-based organizations, of which the Chinese Benevolent Association is the pre-eminent example.⁴ Each of the associations had benevolent functions for their respective constituents, but the Chee Kung Tong and the Chinese Benevolent Association may be said to have been “open,” in the sense that membership did not depend on a common surname or locality.⁵

The Hong-men society is believed to have been organized no later than the 1760s⁶ in southern China for the purpose of overthrowing the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty and restoring the Ming Dynasty. From that time forward, the secret society’s members participated in most rebellions in southern China until the eventual overthrow of the Qing in 1911. Of particular importance for the Chinese immigration to North America in the second half of the nineteenth century was the society’s participation in the early stages of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), and leading the Red Turban Rebellion (1854-1861). Many of its members are believed to have fled Qing retribution after the suppression of these two rebellions, and thus formed a large proportion of the earliest overseas Chinese searching not only for wealth, but also security from persecution in China.⁷ Besides its revolutionary dimension, from its inception

the Hong-men society had a mutual aid aspect that aimed to offset the natural and man-made calamities that beset southern China from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The society’s mutual aid among sworn brothers was particularly well suited for overseas Chinese labourers in the nineteenth century, and the society enjoyed wide membership virtually everywhere overseas Chinese labourers went.⁸ Although writing specifically about British Malaya, historian Lennox A. Mills’s observation in 1966, “Where the Chinese coolie came the Hung League followed,” applies equally to Australia, the United States and Canada.⁹

In escaping persecution in China, however, overseas Chinese now had to contend with discrimination and oppression at the hands of a Western colonial power. Under those circumstances, according to historian Cai Shaoqing, in Australia “the League’s original nature as an association devoted to resistance to tyranny and to mutual aid came to the fore [...] the Hung League arranged jobs for [brothers], mediated their disputes, and assisted with the everyday difficulties of birth, old age, sickness and death and so on.”¹⁰ The society “had in essence been an association by, of and for indigent labourers seeking mutual aid and support.”¹¹

Historian L. Eve Armentrout Ma has made the same point for the United States and Canada, noting that the Chee Kung Tong’s revolutionary goals before the twentieth century were barely perceptible in North America. On the other hand, the Hong-men societies “maintained hostels in various communities where members could find a place to sleep and food to eat. In addition, in certain localities and industries, jobs were reserved for the lodge brother.”¹²

Ma also observed that the Hong-men society’s sworn brotherhood “helped replace the family that the immigrant had left behind in China: surname associations, which might have fulfilled this need, failed at that time because members were often not relatives in any meaningful sense of the word. In the secret society lodge, on the other hand, all were sworn brothers by choice and bound by oath to help and protect each other.”¹³

The Chee Kung Tong was the dominant Chinese secret society in Canada. Whereas in San Francisco as many as fifty secret societies existed at the end of the nineteenth century, in Canada all such societies were local chapters of the Chee Kung Tong. Chinese secret societies had a wide and varied scope of operations in North America. “On the basis of available data,” wrote sociologist Stanford Lyman, “it would appear that their activities may be classified according to their political, criminal and benevolent character. They played a significant role in the overseas Chinese community and also occasionally attempted to influence the course of political events in China.”¹⁴ Bruce Ramsey observed that nearly all Chinese in Barkerville were Chee Kung Tong members, and characterized the society as a “powerful organization in the early Chinese community.”¹⁵ Historian David Chuenyan Lai observed that, “[for] more than a decade, Chee Kung Tong controlled the socioeconomic activities of most Chinese miners not only in Barkerville but also in other parts of the Cariboo region.”¹⁶ Similar appraisals abound in research on the Chee Kung Tong in the Americas.¹⁷ It was often the first association to be established at new Chinese settlements in Canada, particularly in mining towns, which makes it an integral institution



FIG. 8. BARKERVILLE'S CHINATOWN, CA. 1890S. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, C-09748.

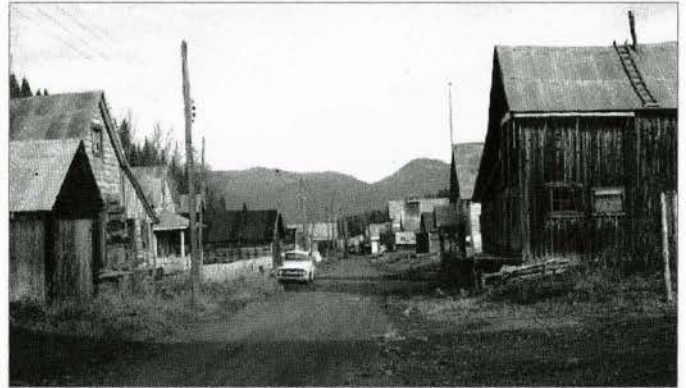


FIG. 9. BARKERVILLE IN 1957. IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE RIGHT IS THE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, I-27032.



FIG. 10. CUMBERLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CHINATOWN (NO LONGER EXTANT) IN 1910. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, B-07606.



FIG. 11. KEITHLEY CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CHINATOWN (NO LONGER EXTANT), CA. 1890S. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, A-05191.

in the crosscutting of organizational life in Chinatowns—what has been called “the warp and woof of overseas Chinese society.”¹⁸ For the Chinese who came to Canada before the turn of the twentieth century, most of whom went to British Columbia for mining and for railroad construction, the Chee Kung Tong was the focal point of their political and social interrelationships. By the dawn of the twentieth century, more than forty Chee Kung Tong lodges had been established in British Columbia, and its overall membership in Canada has been estimated between ten thousand and twenty thousand—in other words, anywhere between sixty percent and virtually every person of Chinese origin then residing in Canada.¹⁹

Early Representation of Chee Kung Tong Architecture

Built about 1874-1877, the modest Chee Kung Tong building is an excellent, well-preserved example of the early architecture of the Chee Kung Tong in Canada. Not unlike other period wooden structures in British Columbia boomtowns, it is a two-storey wooden building, covered with board and batten, with log lean-to additions on two sides. Signage that dates to the 1940s, however, reveals its Chinese associations. Its interior layout corresponds with the requirements of the Chee Kung Tong in nineteenth-century Canada: the main floor, with its open space and kitchen, fulfilled the basic benevolent services offered by the

Chee Kung Tong to its members, notably a hostel, cooking facilities, and space for socializing; the second floor provided space for society meetings and, in a small room at the rear of the building, space for the Hong-men society altar. This type of building corresponds to what has been categorized as “preliminary” Chinatown architecture, which is to say wooden structures in British Columbia boomtowns such as those formerly to be found in Victoria and in smaller British Columbia communities such as Barkerville, Quesnel, Nanaimo, Duncan, Yale, Quesnel Forks, and Cumberland, among others. In the words of architectural historian Edward Mills, “preliminary” structures “were invariably of crude wooden construction and differed little

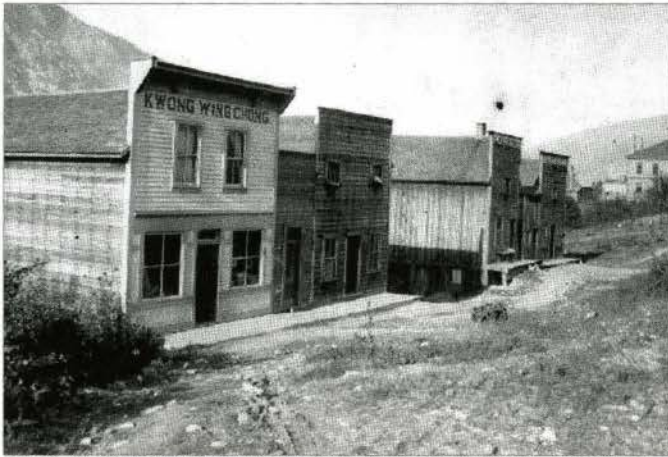


FIG. 12. NELSON, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CHINATOWN (NO LONGER EXTANT), CA. 1890S. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, E-09183.



FIG. 13. YALE, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CHINATOWN (NO LONGER EXTANT), CA. 1885. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, E-00709.



FIG. 14. NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CHINATOWN (NO LONGER EXTANT), CA. 1940S. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, D-03805.



FIG. 15. NANAIMO'S CHINATOWN AFTER THE 1960 FIRE. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, E-04545.

from the standard boomtown structures erected by the host population."²⁰

According to historical archaeologist Ying-ying Chen, the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building "seems to have followed a fixed system formulated by the Hung League":

For example, the Chih Kung T'ang building at Quesnel, which was destroyed in the 1925 fire, and another one in Quesnel Forks, which now still stands, both are two-storied structures like building No. 84A. Their interior functions could be similar to that of building No. 84. The Chih Kung T'ang building in Victoria built up around 1885 is another

example. It is also a two-stories [*sic*] structure. Its first floor was used for lodgings and the upper floor contained the shrine of Guanyu, a patron saint of the Hongmen. The trace of such a basic structure can be even seen in the modern building of Chinese Freemasons in Vancouver.²¹

Chen noted that additional research is required "to know whether such a structure began from the Hung Shun T'ang's building in Barkerville or in San Francisco or even in remote China."²²

Thus, the Chee Kung Tong building in Barkerville is representative of the society's wooden structures during the Gold

Rush period in British Columbia. In that respect, it is almost unique because there are virtually no wooden Chinatown buildings still extant (figs. 8-15). As Ying-ying Chen observed, there is another former Chee Kung Tong structure in the ghost town of Quesnel Forks that dates to the preliminary phase of Chinatown architecture, but in the early 1990s its condition had deteriorated to such an extent that a conservation architect recommended against restoration because the finished product would have been less than twenty percent original²³; moreover, it was moved forty metres in 1999 to prevent its imminent collapse due to riverbank erosion.²⁴ Photographic evidence



FIG. 16. THE NANAIMO CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING (NO LONGER EXTANT), CA. 1910. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, E-04542.

of a comparable wooden Chee Kung Tong building exists for 1910s Nanaimo (fig. 16). Like the structures in Barkerville and Quesnel Forks, the Chee Kung Tong building in Nanaimo was a two-storey wooden structure. Unfortunately, it, along with the rest of the preliminary phase Nanaimo Chinatown, burned to the ground on 30 September 1960. The exteriors of the Barkerville and Nanaimo structures are distinguishable from their non-Chinese counterparts primarily by the Chinese-lettered Hong-men society signs hung above the second-storey balcony doors (figs. 1, 16).

"First-phase" substantial brick structures gradually replaced preliminary phase wooden building stock in Chinatowns, especially in Victoria. These first-phase buildings "were almost invariably designed and built for [Chinese clients] by western architects and contractors," were essentially "utilitarian in design," and resembled their non-Chinese commercial district counterparts.²⁵ Representing first-phase Chinatown architecture for the Chee Kung



FIG. 17. THE DART COON CLUB IN VICTORIA. | EDWARD MILLS, PARKS CANADA, 1995.

Tong is the Dart Coon Club in Victoria, which was established in 1915 as an inner circle of the Chee Kung Tong charged with weeding out Kuomintang sympathizers from the society,²⁶ as the building occupied by that Club has no discernable Chinese building features (fig. 17).

A "second phase" of substantial brick building construction in Victoria and Vancouver's Chinatowns was "more self-consciously 'Chinese.'" Second-phase buildings "are readily recognizable due to the use of conspicuous detailing such as recessed upper floor balconies, 'cheater stories' inserted between the ground and second floors, and, occasionally, upturned eaves and tiled roofs."²⁷ Like first-phase brick structures, second-phase buildings were probably all designed and built by western contractors, with the distinction that, unlike the preceding phase, architects "presumably combined their clients' specifications with their own notions of appropriate ornamentation."²⁸ The Vancouver Chinese Freemasons building, constructed in 1901 and acquired by the

society in 1907, is a particularly striking example of second-phase Chinatown architecture (fig. 18). With its distinctive features and its prominent location at the corner of Pender and Carrall streets in Vancouver's Chinatown, the Vancouver Chinese Freemasons building is perhaps the best-known Chee Kung Tong structure in the country. The Pender Street façade has many of the characteristic features of second-phase Chinatown architecture, most notably recessed balconies, while the Carrall Street façade has predominantly Victorian Italianate features. Although it is a three-storey structure, Chen's observation that it reflects the typical arrangement of two-storey Chee Kung Tong buildings makes sense because first- and second-phase Chinatown structures typically provided for rentable commercial space on the ground floor.²⁹

The Chee Kung Tong's Role as a Benevolent Association

The Chee Kung Tong's primary significance, in Barkerville and elsewhere for

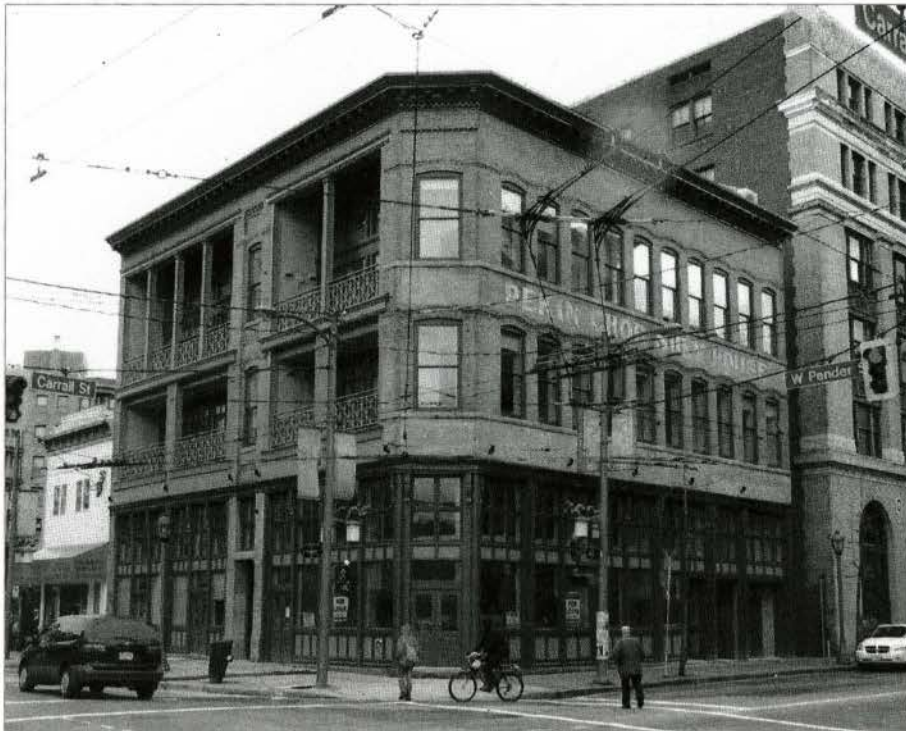


FIG. 18. THE TWO DISTINCTIVE FAÇADES OF THE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING IN VANCOUVER, BUILT IN 1901 AND ACQUIRED BY THE SOCIETY IN 1907. | MICHEL PELLETIER, PARKS CANADA, 2007.

overseas Chinese in the nineteenth century, was its role as a benevolent association. The Barkerville Chee Kung Tong lent money to help cover medical costs, to assist poor and elderly members return to China, and to offset the cost of convening the society to resolve disputes between members. The society maintained a hostel for recent arrivals and winterers, established a hospital (the *Tai Ping Fong*), provided venues for day-to-day social activities, and coordinated traditional Chinese and Hong-men celebrations that galvanized the sense of community. “To those Chinese who had no family and were far away from home,” observed Ying-ying Chen, “this help and associated services were obviously important. It was probably one of the main features that attracted many Chinese to the Hong-men society. This, in turn, enhanced the Hong-men society’s leading position in the Chinese communities.”³⁰



FIG. 19. BARKERVILLE-AREA ARTEFACTS INTERPRET THE CHEE KUNG TONG’S HOSTEL ACTIVITIES. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

Data on the Chee Kung Tong’s role as a benevolent association—particularly in the Cariboo District—are gathered from three significant sources: two hundred and thirty-two Hong-men account books dating from the 1870s to the 1910s, a set of lodge rules prepared by the Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong in 1882, and archaeological fieldwork conducted at the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building in the early 1990s. While it is true that most of the account books originated at the Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong, a few were from Barkerville, and, taken as a whole, they provide important data on the society’s operations in a gold-mining context. The predominantly Quesnel Forks account book data can be applied laterally³¹ to Barkerville and buttressed by the extensive archaeological work conducted by the Archaeology Department at Simon Fraser University and by the occasional reference to Chinese festivals in Barkerville’s nineteenth-century

newspaper, the *Cariboo Sentinel*. The number of account books related to festivals and ceremonies indicates the importance of social cohesion functions of the Chee Kung Tong: one hundred and seventy-seven were fundraising accounts for various festivals and ceremonies (the four most frequent being: New Member Admitting, Five Founders [Ancestors] Festival, Wan Yun-long Festival, and Funeral); twelve account books were membership lists; fourteen detailed grocery purchases; ten described construction; eight were for charity events; ten detailed business aspects; and the last was a patient file.³²

As for archaeological data, more than three thousand four hundred artefacts were recovered from an archaeological excavation at the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building in 1993, nearly one third of which were designated “China culture.” Chinese artefacts recovered in all six strata suggest “a continuing site occupation by Chinese.” Moreover, researchers noted the high density of mostly domestic activity artefacts, which implies that 1) the structure was used primarily for residential purposes, and 2) the structure was used intermittently by a larger group, which “is consistent with accounts of the use of the building by Chinese from outlying settlements for holidays, ceremonies, funerals, and other functions.” The 1993 excavation “indicates that the influence of the Chih Kung Tang house on the Chinese was far greater than its actual size implies.”³³

The Chee Kung Tong’s benevolent association role was a wide and varied one, but it can be divided into two broad categories: activities calculated to promote mutual aid and activities calculated to promote social cohesion. Activities calculated to promote mutual aid include society rules that governed relations

between Chinese brothers and the use of Chee Kung Tong facilities, the operation of a hospital for the sick and aged, and the establishment of a pool of funds from which brothers could borrow for medical care. As for the second category, the society organized and operated what Ying-ying Chen has characterized as the four principal social activities that promoted social cohesion: traditional Chinese festivals, Hong-men ceremonies, charity events, and the day-to-day diversions of gold rush Chinese, primarily opium smoking, gambling, and prostitution.³⁴ The two categories of benevolent activities could overlap of course. For example, although funerals will be discussed for their mutual aid aspect, their cooperative and ceremonial features also promoted social cohesion, and the same was also true for charity events. Similarly, Hong-men society rules that called for mutual aid were expected to produce social cohesion.

Activities Calculated to Promote Mutual Aid

The principal mutual aid provided through the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building would have been the hostel located in building 84A (fig. 19) and the kitchen in 84C, intended for the use of travelling and recently arrived members. According to a set of lodge rules discovered at the Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong building, it appears that each lodge formulated its own constitution based on general Hong-men principles, “supplemented by regulations adapted to suit local conditions.”³⁵ Given that they are directly comparable gold-mining settlements, it is reasonable to assume that the nine rules promulgated for hostel and kitchen use at Quesnel Forks would have been similar to those in place at Barkerville. The first rule emphasized the importance of mutual aid and the social cohesion it would tend to produce:

“All those who reside in the hostel have to look after each other. Friendly relationships and kindness among lodgers are most precious.” The second rule warned those who went out at night to observe hostel safety regulations to prevent fires. The third rule stipulated that lodgers would take turns supplying the daily requirements of firewood and drinking water; individuals were to supply their own laundry water, as required. The fourth rule established that lodgers would be assessed equally for the tea, salt, light, and fuel that had been used. The fifth rule stipulated that the hostel would accommodate all members that required its use, but that “strife over bunks will not be permitted”; vacant bunks would be assigned on a first come, first served basis. The sixth rule stated that kitchen use must follow the posted schedule and that the chopping block must be cleaned after each use. The seventh rule stated that the “hostel is primarily to serve travelling members”; travelling butchers and salespersons would be permitted to stay one week after which “rental may be charged by the hostel.” The eighth rule advised that tools and personal belongings should be clearly marked “to avoid mistakes by others,” and that “[a]rticles should be carefully examined before being removed in order to avoid the exchange of old articles for new ones.” Finally, the ninth rule once again emphasized mutual aid and social cohesion: “The friend of a newly arrived merchant or guest staying in the hostel may yield his bunk to his friend to show his hospitality. All lodgers should be polite to each other.”³⁶

The Barkerville Historic Town interprets the hostel (lower level of 84A) and kitchen (84C) at the Chee Kung Tong building with artefacts and interpretive plaques. The hostel plaque notes that members could stay for free provided



FIG. 20. A CHINESE FUNERAL IN BARKERVILLE, CA. 1890S. | BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES, C-09553.

they contributed to the woodcutting and other chores, that new arrivals could bunk there until they located alternative accommodation, and that “[m]en who were sick or who had no other place to stay could rely on this hostel as well, especially during the winter months.” Long-time Barkerville resident Bill Hong recalls that Hong-men brothers “could live in the hall at no cost, providing they contributed their share of the woodcutting and other chores. Older Chinese with no other accommodations stayed in the hall during winter months.”³⁷ The kitchen interpretive plaque states that the wok stove on display is original to the site, but had been removed by the Province of British Columbia and later returned when the historic town was being prepared. Without construction diagrams, the Historic Town has had to approximate the reconstruction and placement of the brick stove. The kitchen area also interprets the significance of the “Kitchen God” who annually reports on the conduct of residents to heaven; for that reason the Kitchen God is conventionally appeased with sweet offerings, such as honey, in the hope

to influence the report. Archaeological data reflect the prominence of the hostel and kitchen among Chee Kung Tong benevolent services: ninety-seven percent of recovered artefacts are classified as “domestic use.”³⁸

Fundraising for charitable causes was another important mutual aid endeavour sponsored and administered by the Chee Kung Tong. Charitable fundraising could be directed towards both the living and the deceased. Donations or loans could be made to a member who had undergone some calamity, like Brother Cui Zhao, who required medical attention after suffering frostbite on his trip from Williams Creek to Quesnel Forks in 1885. In 1890, North Cariboo Chee Kung Tong lodges contributed to repatriate the remains of Zhen Zhang-zhao, former master of the Victoria lodge, and for the relocation of his son back to China. Around 1920, Hong-men members and non-members contributed to send the elderly Low Shong Howe back to China, including sufficient funds to re-establish him there. In addition to donations, Chee Kung Tong lodges’ “public accounts”

could be used to assist a brother who had suffered some natural calamity, was “in urgent need,” or was the victim of some deceit or oppression. The society could also, as required, waive payment for those unable to contribute funds for ceremonies and celebrations, as it did for elderly participants in the Five-ancestors Festival in Quesnel Forks in 1890. “Donation was important to all of the Chinese,” observed Ying-ying Chen. “Living in the harsh mining community, danger was a constant threat that everyone was subject to and for which the primary, if not the sole source of help, was the society or association to which they belonged. The society’s treasury acted as a pool of funds, which could be redirected as donations to various destinations.”³⁹

Finally, fundraising for members’ funerals, and the ceremony itself, was an important mutual aid service organized by the Chee Kung Tong. According to Ying-ying Chen, funerals, which served to bond the community and enhance Chinese identity, are probably second only to New Year’s in terms of community importance. A reporter for the *Cariboo Sentinel* described a funeral in Barkerville with considerable detail, albeit somewhat condescendingly, in the 16 August 1872 edition. The very public proceedings featured firecrackers, drums, gongs and cymbals, and considerable amount of food laid out to assist the departed in the afterlife; the bemused reporter observed that eventually the Chinese mourners “took advantage of the same feast which they had provided for their friend in the other world, to prolong their own life in this.” The reporter probably misunderstood their actions, however, for Chen noted that “[e]ach funeral involved consumption of a large amount of food and beverages served to both dead and living.”⁴⁰ Chen also stated that

"[a]ll available members attended and shared the cost of the funerals," though the Quesnel Forks lodge rules explicitly stated that donations for such causes "must be voluntary."⁴¹ Historical photographs document Chinese funeral ceremonies in Barkerville outside the former Chee Kung Tong "Main Hall" (fig. 20).

Between 1874-1877 and 1883-1885, and again after 1932, charitable and funerary fundraising would have been decided upon and organized out of the society hall located on the second storey of building 84A. In the interim, charitable and funerary fundraising would have been organized at the former "Main Hall" on lot 62.

Activities Calculated to Promote Social Cohesion

Activities calculated to promote social cohesion may be further divided into two categories: sponsoring and/or hosting celebrations, festivals and ceremonies (in addition to the funerals and charitable events described above); and facilitating day-to-day Chinese social activities.⁴² Although there were clan associations and businesses involved in sponsoring both categories of social cohesion activities in Barkerville, for Ying-ying Chen from the 1870s onwards the Hong-men society assumed the lead role in Chinatown's social life, noting that its "rule was pervasive [...] none of the [clan, territorial and dialect associations] seem to have been strong enough to challenge the Hong-men society's authority."⁴³

Hong-men account books suggest that the society in the Cariboo District raised funds to celebrate at least five traditional annual Chinese festivals. In Quesnel Forks, for example, the Chee Kung Tong fundraised for the New Year, Duan Wu, and Chong Yang festivals,

and non-Hong-men sources indicate that Barkerville Chinese celebrated the Duan Wu, Yu Lan, and Chong Yang festivals as late as 1942.⁴⁴ In February 1869, the *Cariboo Sentinel* reported on the "gay time" Barkerville Chinese residents had celebrating the New Year for three days with firecrackers, feasts, and alcohol.⁴⁵ These regularly held festivals, according to Chen, "were one of [the] most important social activities in the Chinese community, join[ing] the Chinese to the different establishments that sponsored [them]."⁴⁶ In addition to traditional annual Chinese festivals, the Chee Kung Tong also raised funds and hosted Hong-men society celebrations. The Chee Kung Tong celebrated annually the Five-ancestor Festival, in memory of the original founders of the society, on the twenty-fifth day of the seventh lunar month. They also celebrated the Wan Yun-long Festival in conjunction with the traditional Chong Yang festival on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month.⁴⁷ Finally, new member initiation ceremonies were convened periodically as required. Although some of the details of the Chee Kung Tong festivals, celebrations, and ceremonies are unclear, "it is known that they all involved a feast with attendants sharing the cost. For example, during the Five-ancestor Festival held in Barkerville in 1885, 181 members of the Hong-men society attended the ceremony and donated a total of \$323.25. \$300.59 was spent for purchasing various goods, including one whole pig, some beef, a sack of rice, ten chickens, and vegetables in Chinese stores and restaurants in the Barkerville and Stanley area."⁴⁸

As numerous historians have noted, especially for the nineteenth century, North American Chinese clan, locality, and fraternal associations often supplemented membership dues (simultaneously

providing valued services to its members) by operating opium and gambling dens, as well as brothels.⁴⁹ The widespread occurrence of these activities can be explained by their historical context. As historian Peter S. Li wrote, "Given the conditions the Chinese workers lived in and the types of jobs they held, the sense of social isolation must have been immense in the absence of the family. This largely explains the popularity of opium-smoking and gambling among the Chinese workers seeking some temporary relief."⁵⁰ On the other hand, for Ying-ying Chen, both opium smoking and gambling promoted social cohesion.

Opium smoking in some measure contributed to the survival of the Chinese community as a whole. To the smokers, no matter where they smoked and for what reason, they usually conducted it in a group. The fussy preparation process involved "cooking" and then the smoking provided a context for social interchange and the exchange of information of all kinds. In addition, the availability of opium and the physical and social context of its use further tied the users to the Chinese community.⁵¹

Gambling only works when it involves a group of people. "It is, therefore," wrote Chen, "a group or social event. Historically one could find it in almost every Chinese business and Society houses [*sic*] in large Chinese settlements. It was, therefore, a highly important social activity." Besides being an occasion to demonstrate one's own luck and ability, for "the social establishments such as the Chih Kung T'ang society and other associations, gambling also served as a means to achieve social cohesion."⁵² Although it appears that there were approximately ten prostitutes affiliated to the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong between 1877 and 1895 (perhaps seeking the society's protection in what

could be a dangerous occupation), there is no evidence that the society operated a brothel in Barkerville, and no evidence that building 84 in Barkerville was in any way associated with prostitution. To the contrary, the fact that only one artefact out of more than three thousand four hundred was “related solely to females” suggests that women seldom frequented the building.⁵³

From the time of its construction in the 1870s, the Chee Kung Tong building in Barkerville was a site where Chinese miners could engage in gambling and opium smoking. According to Ying-ying Chen’s research, the earliest documentary evidence of gambling at Barkerville was in the 13 May 1867 edition of the *Cariboo Sentinel*, in which the reporter described the Chinese’s “passionate addiction” to gambling. Bill Hong recalled that “Chinese miners were willing to walk several miles into town from the mining camps in order to gamble after work. They would gamble till midnight and then walk back to camp early the next morning.” Archaeological excavation at the Chee Kung Tong building revealed “the existence of continuing gambling activity in the building between the late 1870s to the 1930s.” Analysis of the different layers of wall coverings, in which gambling rules on handbills were widespread, suggests that “the main hall downstairs of the main structure of the Chih Kung T’ang building was run as a gambling house under different names, Chang Shen, Jian Le, Jiu Li, and probably Yong He respectively from the late 1870s to the 1900s.”⁵⁴ The study of the archaeological artefacts in addition to those found with local collectors “indicates that fan-tan, dominos, and playing cards were the three major games played by Chinese gamblers.” Besides games, the lottery known as “White Pigeon Ticket” was played extensively in Barkerville.⁵⁵

By the time of the British Columbia gold rushes, opium smoking was already widespread in southern China. Opium smoking, import, and distribution were legal in Canada until 1908, and “opium smoking and related artifacts became one of the main characteristics of the Chinese communities [in the Cariboo District] throughout [the legal period].”⁵⁶ Archaeological, archival, and oral history data suggest that most Chinese men from all social strata in the Cariboo District smoked opium. Bill Hong recalled that “In these early times, most of the Chinese smoked opium. The drug sold for \$4 per 12-ounce tin, but was also available in smaller quantities for 25 cents, 50 cents, or a dollar—making it more affordable for the older users.”⁵⁷ Archaeological excavation at the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building “yielded 400 opium related artifacts including pipe bowls, smoking lamps, pipe fittings, opium needles and opium cans” (fig. 21).⁵⁸ Following archaeologists Jerry Wylie and Pamela Higgins’s Chinese opium-use typologies, Chen characterized opium use at the Chee Kung Tong building as

recreational, which is equivalent to after-work alcohol drinking in modern American culture. Opium would produce “an immediate release” from the emotional, economic and social stresses. “Smoked in the company of others and frequently involving gambling, such intensive socializing probably played an important role in reinforcing group identity, ethnicity, and male bonding.”⁵⁹

There was also “work-related or medical smoking” to treat various disorders and “as a response to heavy physical work and severe working environment,” and “social smoking” among upper-class Chinese and Chinese merchants “as a token of hospitality at social gatherings and as a part of conducting business.”⁶⁰

All that said, it appears that opium smoking was more prevalent among miners, in particular those away from Chinatowns, possibly because of their isolation. “This further suggests,” Chen concluded, “that opium smoking in mining camps was more work-related and medical, as Wylie and Higgins have proposed.”⁶¹

Local Governance, Chee Kung Tong Expansion, and Chinese National Politics

Barkerville’s Chee Kung Tong possessed a rich political culture that found expression at the international, regional, and local levels. The secret society’s *raison d’être* was to overthrow the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty and return China to Ming rule, as expressed by its well-known slogan “*Fan Qing, Fu Ming*” (Overthrow the Qing, Restore the Ming). The Chee Kung Tong’s ultimate political goal for China, however, was muted in North America until the revolutionary tide of the late 1890s and the early twentieth century, at which point the secret society played an integral role in political change in China. In the meantime, at faraway places such as Barkerville, the Chee Kung Tong focused on local issues, acting, in certain respects, as a local government for Hong-men members. Additionally, each chapter contributed to the society’s continuing expansion throughout Canada.⁶²

Local Governance and Chee Kung Tong Expansion in Canada

A large majority of Chinese in the Cariboo District in the 1870s were Hong-men society members, which explains its rise to a position of influence in Chinese self-government in the region in the 1870s. According to Ying-ying Chen, the Chee Kung Tong used its influential position to exercise power in “social, political, economic and recreational aspects of the community.” In particular, the Hong-men

society chapters prescribed how members should treat each other and how they should carry out their businesses *vis-à-vis* other members, although there is no evidence the society ever directly controlled Chinese gold-mining in the Cariboo District. The mechanism through which the society exerted its political control was the society meeting, which took place in the society hall—typically located on the second storey of a Chee Kung Tong building, as was the case in Barkerville before 1883-1885 and after 1932. Society meetings would be called by the master and counsellors and attended by available members. During the meetings, quarrels between members would be adjudicated.⁶³

The Chee Kung Tong rules recovered from the Quesnel Forks lodge indicate that the society sought to regulate its members' behaviour towards one another and to assure its own political ascendancy. With respect to the latter, everyone had a right to address the Tong provided his or her membership was paid in full, and only paid-up members were eligible for jobs at new Tong businesses. The rules called for "21 stripes" for anyone who criticized the Tong or any brother outside the meeting hall, and strictly prohibited the use of the Tong's name to intimidate. Finally, all disputes between members would be resolved in a Tong meeting, where punishment might be administered. Rules governing relations between members prohibited collecting debts from Tong brothers for outsiders. Troublemakers in the brothels or gambling houses would be punished severely "without clemency." Members were admonished to apply fair business practices, and were warned that "[a]nyone who uses an advantageous position in business to oppress our countrymen will be brought back for punishment in accordance with the constitution." The



FIG. 21. OPIUM-SMOKING ARTEFACTS RECOVERED FROM THE BARKERVILLE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

principle of first come, first served was to prevail when buying and selling businesses and mines. Members were prohibited from reducing their wages or spreading slander about others when competing for employment. Speaking to miners' conduct specifically, the rules prescribed severe corporal punishment for those members who used underhanded measures to invade another brother's mining claims. The rules also limited productive mines to one hundred feet in length, presumably to ensure equitable access to other brothers. As with Quesnel Forks, the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong's social control would have been centred in the society hall on the second storey of building 84A before 1883-1885 and after 1932.⁶⁴

In addition to these regional concerns, Chee Kung Tong members in the Cariboo District actively engaged in the society's expansion within British Columbia and, indeed, throughout Canada. Although each chapter was autonomous, Ying-ying Chen noted that "the Hong-men society still acted as a whole on some occasions,

especially in the financial realm and in affairs concerning other chapters of the society outside of the North Cariboo."⁶⁵ For example, in 1880 the Barkerville lodge appears to have contributed to the purchase of a building in Quesnel for the Quesnel Forks and the Quesnel lodges' commercial company.⁶⁶ As another example, Cariboo District Hong-men society lodges held eighteen ceremonies to admit new members outside its immediate vicinity between 1883 and 1890, including Soda Creek, 150 Mile House, Dog Creek, and two other unknown locations, swelling the Hong-men ranks by some four hundred and twenty-four persons.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, Chen did not specify which of these meetings were convened in Barkerville; in any case, initiation ceremonies held in Barkerville during the period from 1883 to 1890 almost certainly took place in the "Main Hall" down the road from the subject building.⁶⁸ The Cariboo Hong-men also maintained relationships with Vancouver and Victoria, donating funds for the construction of each chapter's buildings, in 1892 and 1885-1886 respectively.⁶⁹



FIG. 22. CHEE KUNG TONG ALTAR. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.



FIG. 23. AN EXAMPLE OF WALL COVERINGS FROM THE BARKERVILLE CHEE KUNG TONG BUILDING. | NORMAN SHIELDS, PARKS CANADA, 2006.

The Chee Kung Tong and Chinese National Politics

Notwithstanding its important role in the social and political life of Chinese in Canada, and in particular in mining hinterlands, the Chee Kung Tong in North America is more recognized for its contributions to the Chinese revolution, which culminated on 10 October 1911. Although the Huanghuagang Uprising in April 1911 was unsuccessful, it is important in the history of overseas Chinese in Canada because they contributed as much as forty percent of the funds required.⁷⁰ The names of the organizations in Canadian towns and cities that contributed to the Huanghuagang Uprising were later inscribed on a monument in Guangzhou (Canton), China, commemorating the event.⁷¹ Obtaining support for the revolution from overseas Chinese in North America depended, as Dr. Sun Yat-sen discovered, on membership in the Chee Kung Tong. Following an unsuccessful speaking and fundraising tour of North America in the late nineteenth century, Sun joined the society in Honolulu in 1903. Thereafter, he enjoyed greater success in North America. He helped

revise the Chee Kung Tong constitution in 1904, after which the society's political goals for China resurfaced alongside its benevolent functions in Canada.⁷² Owing to the tremendous financial support he garnered in North America, Sun went so far as to call the overseas Chinese the "mother of the revolution."⁷³ Although research has not determined to what extent mining communities contributed to revolutionary fundraising and the revolutionary movement generally, signs and banners originating in Victoria and San Francisco at the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building suggest that the lodge maintained contact with the society's general headquarters located in each of those cities, and it is reasonable to assume that Hongmen brothers in the Cariboo District also made financial contributions.⁷⁴ That the Chinese in Barkerville were interested in the national politics of China is demonstrated by the fact that virtually every Chinese resident of Barkerville contributed to a fund to help repel Japanese invaders in the Siyi District in 1939.⁷⁵ In 1945, several individual Hongmen society members in the Cariboo District, including Barkerville lodge master Dea

Song, contributed to a fund to redeem the Vancouver Chee Kung Tong building, which had been mortgaged in 1911 in support of Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary cause. For Ying-ying Chen, the fact that the contributions were made individually, rather than through the lodge, is an indication of the society's imminent demise in Barkerville.⁷⁶

INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The features of the Chee Kung Tong building in Barkerville that give it historic significance include the first-storey hostel, kitchen facilities and space for socializing, the second-storey space for a society hall and altar room, and its well-preserved wooden frame construction technique, distinguishable as Chinese only by the horizontal and vertical signboards surrounding the second-storey balcony door. The building is in very good repair and its ability to convey its significance is enhanced by the historic artefacts recovered during archaeological excavation in the early 1990s, some of which are now on display in the building.

There are minor integrity issues relating to the society hall and altar (fig. 22), the interior wall coverings (fig. 23), occasional restoration work, and preparing the building for its current role as an interpretive centre. The ceremonial and meeting halls, historically located on the second storey before about 1883-1885 and after 1932, are currently inaccessible to the public. Instead, the ceremonial altar is on display in the adjacent Lee Chong Co. Store building, which houses the historic park's Chinese Museum. Moreover, it is probable that the altar on display originated in Quesnel Forks and not Barkerville. If that is the case, the whereabouts of the original altar for Barkerville is unknown. The curator of the historic park has stated that he intended to return the altar to the second storey of building 84A in the future.⁷⁷

With respect to the interior wall coverings, all of the early building stock in Barkerville had material (typically newspapers and other printed matter) pasted to the walls to prevent draughts. Because the wall coverings for the Chee Kung Tong building are considered a very valuable historical source, virtually all of them have been removed for conservation purposes. However, the use of wall coverings and their historical significance are extensively detailed at an interpretive station located in a small room adjacent to the kitchen (the former hostel dining area).

The building has undergone numerous repairs and restoration work since the early 1960s. According to Ying-ying Chen, the footings, sills, some floor beams, the north log wall of building 84B, the front porch and balcony, and the ceiling and roofing joists of all three sections of the structure were rebuilt with new materials in their original style between the 1960s and 1980s. She noted, however,

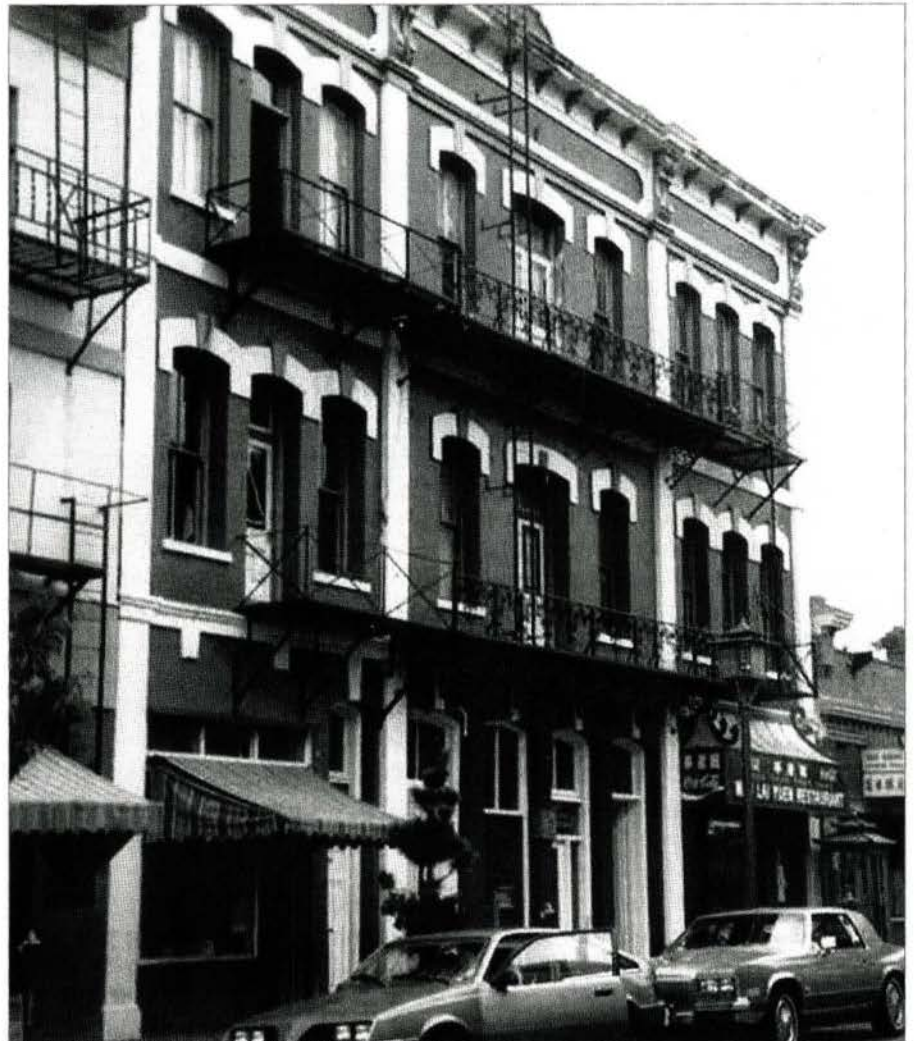


FIG. 24. THE ORIGINAL CCBA HEADQUARTERS IN VICTORIA. | EDWARD MILLS, PARKS CANADA, 1987.

that most of the structure has retained its original raw materials, construction methods and style, and is consistent with how the building would have appeared in the 1940s.⁷⁸ Finally, the interior of the building has undergone some alterations to reinforce the structure and to protect artefacts that are used to interpret the building. With respect to the latter, observer stations have been built at each of the building's three entrances that restrict access to the building but permit viewing of the interpreted kitchen, hostel, and social areas. With

respect to reinforcing the building, the second-storey walls of building 84A have been strengthened with plywood, and the floor supported with a new joist. The observer stations and reinforcements are clearly distinguishable from the building's original components.

COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

The architecture of Chinese benevolent societies and other early associations correspond broadly with the three periods of early Chinatown architecture: a wooden



FIG. 25. VICTORIA CHINESE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND CCBA HEADQUARTERS. | EDWARD MILLS, PARKS CANADA, 1995.



FIG. 26. THE GEE TUCK TONG BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION BUILDING IN VICTORIA. | EDWARD MILLS, PARKS CANADA, 1995.

frame period in British Columbia's boomtowns, followed by first- and second-phase substantial brick constructions. As noted above, the preliminary phase wooden Chinatown buildings were virtually indistinguishable from non-Chinese buildings, except for Chinese signage. They were typically two-storey wooden framed structures that were adaptable to a variety of purposes and could support lean-to additions, as required. In Victoria, wooden Chinatown structures began to be replaced by first-phase substantial brick buildings as early as 1875; by 1900, most of the wooden building stock had disappeared from Victoria.⁷⁹ In smaller Chinese settlements throughout the interior of British Columbia and on Vancouver Island, the wooden Chinatown building stock disappeared at different times. The wooden building stock survived in Nanaimo, for example, until 1960.

The first-phase brick structures in Victoria, as in Vancouver, were conventional commercial blocks, typically trimmed with Italianate features, which differed little from structures outside the Chinatown and were almost always designed and built by western architects and contractors.⁸⁰ The original Consolidated Chinese

Benevolent Association (CCBA) headquarters in Victoria, built in 1885 and lacking any distinctive Chinese motifs, is an example of first-phase benevolent association architecture (fig. 24). Second-phase Chinatown buildings were more self-consciously "Chinese." Factors such as rising population, increasing society membership revenues, and rivalry between the various Chinese organizations and societies "probably encouraged construction of this type of building during the years between 1903 and 1911." Indeed, Edward Mills listed the "number and variety" of Chinese organizations as "[t]wo of the most distinctive aspects of Chinese settlement during the 19th century,"⁸¹ and argued that "the most ornate examples [of second-phase architecture] were invariably designed and built for various fraternal or clan societies after the turn of the century."⁸² In addition, according to Mills, "four of the most conspicuous" second-phase Victoria Chinatown structures were built for three clan surname benevolent associations and for the distinctive Chinese Public School, which also housed the new headquarters of the CCBA (fig. 25). Next door to the CCBA/Chinese Public School is the Gee Tuck Tong building with distinctive arcaded recessed balconies (fig. 26). Next to the

Gee Tuck Tong building are found the Shon Yee and the Lee benevolent association buildings, "highly conspicuous landmarks" that feature recessed balconies, cheater storeys (tax-evading mezzanines inserted between the first and second floors), and tiled roofs with up-turned corners (fig. 27). The classic elements of second-phase Chinatown architecture—cheater stories, recessed upper-storey balconies, Chinese motifs and ornamentation, etc.—are particularly evident in Vancouver because its Chinatown evolved later than in Victoria (fig. 28).

Other national historic designations that speak to the history of Chinese Canadians include the Oak Bay Chinese Cemetery at Harling Point, British Columbia (National Historic Site, 1995), Victoria's Chinatown (National Historic Site, 1995), and the Chinese construction workers on the Canadian Pacific Railway (National Historic Event, 1977). Additionally, the Beechwood Cemetery (National Historic Site, 2000) in Ottawa was designated in part on the basis of the Chinese design in one section of the cemetery.

Recently, there have been two religious sites commemorated under HSMBC



FIG. 27. THE SHON YEE AND LEE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION BUILDINGS IN VICTORIA. | EDWARD MILLS, PARKS CANADA, 1995.



FIG. 28. AN EXAMPLE OF SECOND-PHASE CHINATOWN ARCHITECTURE IN VANCOUVER. | MICHEL PELLETIER, PARKS CANADA, 2007.

Criterion 1(b) that are comparable to the mutual aid and social significance that the Chee Kung Tong represents for the Chinese in Canada. The Abbotsford Sikh Temple (National Historic Site, 2002) acted as a place of worship and centre for the social and political life of South Asian immigrants, helping them forge a vibrant community. The R. Nathaniel Dett Chapel, British Methodist Episcopal Church (National Historic Site, 1999), provided newly arrived Underground Railroad refugees with reception, shelter, and assistance. Like the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong building, both are architecturally humble structures.

THREAT(S)

Owned by the Province of British Columbia, and located within a historic

park, there are no notable threats to the building. Like all wooden structures, it is vulnerable to the elements.⁸³

OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The Barkerville Historic Town has been designated a Provincial Historic Park by the Province of British Columbia. The Cariboo Gold Fields (National Historic Event, 1924) was designated of national significance "in view of its connection with social and economic development, and as a gold mining centre, also as the terminus of the famous road of British Columbia."⁸⁴ The HSMBC plaque is situated at the entrance to the Barkerville Historic Town. The HSMBC plaque commemorating the northern terminus of the Cariboo Wagon Road (National Historic Event, 1923) is also located

near the entrance to the Barkerville Historic Town.

COMMUNITY VALUE

According to Bill Quackenbush, curator of the Barkerville Historic Town, the historic park has maintained good relations with the existing Chinese Freemasons of Canada. In 2003, the Chinese Freemasons erected a monument to the memory of Chinese who are still buried in the Chinese and Roman Catholic Cemetery and performed ceremonies as part of their celebrations for the one hundred and fortieth anniversary of the Chee Kung Tong in Canada. The Chee Kung Tong building is one of the prominent structures in the Chinatown, and its significance to the history of Chinese miners is highlighted in the Chinese Museum,

situated in the adjacent Lee Chong Co. Store building. The Chinese Freemasons Headquarters of Canada supported the HSMBC nomination because the building “provides an invaluable visual phenomenon to Canadians on how the pioneer Chinese immigrants had lived in the 1870’s.”⁸⁵ The Chinese Canadian Historical Society also supported the nomination because the building “was a place of support, comfort and security” for Chinese miners that were lonely and often ostracized by the non-Chinese, and because it “is a reminder of how the early Chinese lived and worked in the wilderness of the Cariboo.”⁸⁶

NOTES

1. Dr. Tim Stanley, University of Ottawa, provided valuable comments on an earlier version of this report; any errors that remain are my own. Historical archaeologist Ying-ying Chen’s graduate research on the Chinese in the North Cariboo has been instrumental for completing the present report. In particular, an unpublished report for the Department of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University and her doctoral dissertation have provided detailed archaeological evidence on the Chee Kung Tong’s social and political roles in the North Cariboo District. (Chen, Ying-ying, 1992, *Building No. 84: A Symbol of the Early Chinese Freemasons in Barkerville, British Columbia*, unpublished manuscript, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University; Chen, Ying-ying, 2001, *In the Colonies of T’ang: Historical Archaeology of Chinese Communities in the North Cariboo District, British Columbia (1860s-1940s)*, PhD dissertation, Simon Fraser University.)
2. The authors of *From China to Canada* wrote that “The original building of the secret society was destroyed by the fire that swept through Barkerville in 1868,” and that Barkerville’s Hong Shun Tang was established by Huang Shengui in 1863. (Con, Harry, Ronald J. Con, Graham Johnson, Edgar Wickberg, and William E. Willmott, 1982, *From China to Canada: A History of Chinese Communities in Canada*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., p. 30.)
3. Chen, 1992 : i-ii.
4. See Wickberg, Edgar, 1979, « Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Canada, 1923-1937 », *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 90; Li, Peter S., 1988, *The Chinese in Canada*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, p. 71; Willmott, William E., 1964, « Chinese Clan Associations in Vancouver », *Man*, no. 49, p. 34.
5. L. Eve Armentrout Ma distinguished between “open” and “restrictive” Chinese associations in Ma, L. Eve Armentrout, 1990, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns: Chinese Politics in the Americas and the 1911 Revolution*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, p. 14.
6. Cai Shaoqing (2002 [trans. Duncan Campbell], « On the Overseas Chinese Secret Societies of Australia », *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 35) stated 1761. David Chuenyan Lai (1982, « Contribution of the Zhigongtang in Canada to the Huanghuagang Uprising in Canton, 1911 », *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 98) also stated the society was formed in the 1760s. Ying-ying Chen (2001 : 315), however, dated the society to 1674: “the society was established on the 25th day of the seventh lunar month, Year Jia Yin (1674).”
7. For Australia, see Shaoqing : 30.
8. *Id.* : 35.
9. Cited in *id.* : 30.
10. *Id.* : 40.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Ma, 1990 : 21-22.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Lyman, Stanford M., 1977, « Chinese Secret Societies in the Occident: Notes and Suggestions for Research in the Sociology of Secrecy », In Stanford M. Lyman (ed.), *The Asian in North America*, Santa Barbara, California, Clio Press, p. 87.
15. Ramsey, Bruce, 1987, *Barkerville: A Guide to the Fabulous Cariboo Gold Camp*, Langley, British Columbia, Sunfire Publications Ltd., p. 39, 50.
16. Lai, David Chuenyan, 1988, *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, p. 40.
17. See, for example, Willmott, W.E., 1970, « Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in British Columbia », *BC Studies*, no. 4, p. 44-45; Ma, 1990 : 23-24, 26, 28; Chen, 2001 : 197; Li : 73-74; Chow, Lily, 1996, *Sojourners in the North*, Prince George, British Columbia, Caitlin Press Inc., p. 90-93; Chu, Yung-deh Richard, 1973, “Chinese Secret Societies in America: A Historical Survey,” *Asian Profile*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 37.
18. Lai, 1988 : 83, 89-90, 95, 97, 101, 192, 205; Con *et al.* : 32, 92-93; Willmott, 1970 : 49-50. The metaphor “warp and woof” belongs to anthropologist T’ien Ju-k’ang, cited in Willmott, 1964 : 36.
19. Chen, 2001 : table 51; Con *et al.* : 110-111.
20. Mills, Edward, 1995, « Chinatown Historic District, Victoria, British Columbia », HSMBC, Agenda Paper 1995-30, p. 1086; Mills, Edward, 1988, « Chinatown, Victoria, British Columbia », HSMBC, Agenda Paper 1988-36, p. 141-142. Wooden Chinatown buildings differed from buildings built in the “boomtown” style in one significant respect: namely, they seldom had a false front on the second storey.
21. Chen, 1992 : 194.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Personal communication with Bill Quackenbush, curator, Barkerville Historic Town, 19 July 2006. For additional information on the Quesnel Forks structure, see Lai, David Chuenyan, 1990, « Classification and Analysis of Chinese Documents and Field Surveys », Barkerville Library and Archives, 305.8951 LAI, p. 29-39.
24. Brian Giesbrecht, Likely (British Columbia) Cemetery Society, telephone conversation with the author, 8 September 2006. David Chuenyan Lai warned against such an eventuality in a 1990 report commissioned for the Barkerville Library and Archives (1990 : 34).
25. Mills, 1988 : 141-142.
26. Dr. Sun Yat-sen organized the Kuomintang, a political party, after the revolution. The Chee Kung Tong felt betrayed by Sun because the Hong-men society in North America also aspired to political party status. Thereafter, the Chee Kung Tong and the Kuomintang were rival political forces wherever there were Chinese communities in Canada, occasionally leading to violence.
27. Mills, 1988 : 142-143. In 1991, David Chuenyan Lai described Chinatown architecture features as follows: “The common structural and decorative elements of Chinatown buildings include: (1) a flagpole on which a Chinese flag is sometimes flown; (2) a parapet wall bearing an inscription and/or the date of construction of the building; (3) sloping tiles roofs; (4) upturned eaves and roof corners; (5) extended eaves over balconies;

- (6) decorative balustrades and ornamental fretwork; (7) smooth or carved columns topped with *Don Gong*, a cantilevered cluster of beams; (8) a recessed or projecting balcony in the front and/or at the back of a building; (9) cheater storeys; (10) moon-shaped doors and/or windows overlain with ornate lattice work; (11) horizontal and vertical signboards bearing Chinese characters; (12) a colour scheme of gold, red, green, yellow, and other brilliant colours; (13) animal motifs of dragons, phoenixes, lions, and so on; (14) plant motifs of pine, bamboo, plum, and the like; (15) other decorative motifs such as pagodas, lanterns, bowls, and chopsticks; and (16) Chinese fittings such as *Baqua* (the Eight Trigrams), Chinese lanterns, banners, and bunting." (Lai, David Chuenyan, 1991, *The Forbidden City Within Victoria: Myth, Symbol and Streetscape of Canada's Earliest Chinatown*, Victoria, British Columbia, Orca Books, p. 90-92.) In 1997, Lai consolidated his list as follows: "Some of the common structural features of Chinatown buildings include: (a) a recessed balcony on the front of the building; (b) a wrought-iron projecting balcony on the front and/or at the back of a building; (c) a parapet wall bearing an inscription and/or date of construction of the building; (d) decorative balustrades and ornamental fretwork; (e) a sloping tiled roof with upturned eaves and corners; and f) a cheater floor." (Lai, David Chuenyan, and Pamela Madoff, 1997, *Building and Rebuilding Harmony: The Gateway to Victoria's Chinatown*, Victoria, British Columbia, Western Geographical Series, p. 61.)
28. Mills, 1988 : 142-143.
29. For the provision of rentable commercial space on the ground floor of Chinatown buildings, see, Lai, 1988 : 70, 227.
30. Chen, 2001 : 306-307.
31. Applying Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong data laterally to Barkerville seems defensible for several reasons. First, it is well known that the early Chinese miners everywhere in the Cariboo District were overwhelmingly from the Pearl River Delta counties, where they had extensive experience with the Hong-men secret societies. Second, account book and archaeological data show that, although they were autonomous branches of the society, the Cariboo District Chee Kung Tong interacted and co-operated with each other and with other branches outside the region. Third, Quesnel Forks and Barkerville were in close proximity to each other and shared virtually identical socio-economic contexts. Finally, the rules promulgated at the Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong explicitly state that they were based on general Hong-men principles (see note 35).
32. Chen, 2001 : 67.
33. *Id.* : 24-27.
34. *Id.* : 9.
35. Rule 7 of the "Mining Regulations" stated: "Since the establishment of the chapter in this town, the regulations of the T'ang have been based mainly on the constitution of the *Chih-kung T'ang*, supplemented by regulations adapted to suit local conditions." (Lyman, Stanford M., with W.E. Willmott and Berching Ho, 1977, « Rules of a Chinese Secret Society in British Columbia », In Lyman (ed.), *The Asian in North America*, op. cit., p. 100.)
36. Lyman et al., 1977 : 100-101.
37. Hong, William M., 1978, *And So... That's How it Happened: Recollections of Stanley-Barkerville, 1900-1975*, Wells, British Columbia, W.M. Hong, p. 191.
38. Although certain sub-classifications clearly overlap with the social space provided by the Chee Kung Tong, notably alcohol and opium paraphernalia (Chen, 2001 : 26).
39. Lyman et al., 1977 : 98. Chen, 2001 : 291, 307-308, 316.
40. Chen, 2001 : 316-317.
41. Rule 8 of the "Regulations of the T'ang" stated: "In the events of Red and White a donation may be suggested but such a donation must be voluntary. Public accounts of the T'ang will not be spent for these purposes." According to Lyman et al. (1977 : 98), "Red and white are the customary colours used in connection with the *rites de passage* in China; red for marriage, birth, or birthdays; white for death and funerals." Many of the mourners in historical photographs of funeral ceremonies in Barkerville are wearing white robes.
42. These categories are derived directly from Ying-ying Chen (2001 : 377): "Community life consisted of mainly two categories of activities. The Hong-men society was involved with the celebration of traditional Chinese festivals, taking care of funerals and various ceremonies. The other type of activities was mainly social—or business related, such as gambling, opium smoking and prostitution."
43. By cross-referencing Hong-men society lists for the Cariboo District with other census data, Chen (2001 : 295, 377) concluded that, in the 1880s, 80.5 percent of Barkerville Chinese were members of the Hong-men society, and on that basis argued that the Chee Kung Tong, rather than clan, district or dialect associations, provided the primary leadership in the social realm. She added, however, that the "existence of two sets of authorities, the Hong-men society and the clan associations in the North Cariboo during this period [beginning in the 1870s] shows that the Hong-men society was not the sole power in position in Chinese communities. It appears that the position attained by the Hong-men society in a given Chinese community depended on a) whether or not it answered the needs of the majority, b) whether the merchant class was involved, and c) whether it had the support of the major clans in the community." With respect to "support of the major clans," consider the example of Quesnel, where the Chow clan formed half of the Chinese population in the 1880s. Less than five percent of the Chow clan joined the Hong-men society in Quesnel. The absence of support from the Chow clan rippled through the rest of the community, so that the Hong-men society mustered barely twenty percent membership in Quesnel (*Id.* : 309).
44. New Year, Duan Wu, Yu Lan, and the Chong Yang festivals are briefly described in Chen (2001 : 312-314). New Year is held on the first day of the first lunar month each year and "is the most important festival to the Chinese." Duan Yu is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month; there are various stories about the festival's origins, but the most popular is that it commemorates Qu Yan, "a famous poet of the Chu kingdom, who drowned himself on the 5th day of the 5th month of 277 B.C." Yu Lan (also known as Zhong Yuan or Ghost Festival) is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month and "is one of the four major festivals for offering sacrifices to gods and ancestors but it is also the date for dispersing ghosts and expiating the sins of the dead." Finally, Chong Yang is celebrated on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month and features a final opportunity for outdoor activities while "the sky is free from overcast and the weather is still pleasant."
45. Chen, 2001 : 314.
46. *Ibid.*
47. The Wan Yun-long and the Five-ancestor festivals commemorated the founding of the Hong-men society (Chen, 2001 : 315).
48. Chen, 2001 : 315. William Hong, a resident of Barkerville almost continuously from 1916 to the 1940s (but who does not appear to have been a Hong-men member), stated that new

- member initiations were "once a year only." (Hong : 191)
49. See, for example, Lai, 1991 : 55; and Lai and Madoff : 46-50.
50. Li : 81.
51. Chen, 2001 : 335, 342.
52. *Id.* : 321-327.
53. Chinese prostitution began in British Columbia and grew rapidly following the influx of Canadian Pacific Railway workers in the 1880s. The first documentary evidence of the presence of Chinese prostitutes in Barkerville was in the 1871 *BC Guide*, which noted the existence of several Chinese brothels. Hongmen account books provide evidence for at least ten women in Barkerville between 1877 and 1895. Ying-ying Chen suspected they were prostitutes because only one gave a last name and they seldom appeared under a man's name in the account books, "suggesting that none of them were really married to the men they were living with." Apparently, all had come to the Cariboo and become members before 1876, because no women were admitted between that date and 1889 (Chen, 2001 : 329-332, 26).
54. *Id.* : 321. There seems to be some confusion regarding the original and lasting purpose of the downstairs of the principal building (84A). In this case, Chen implied that the ground-level main room was used as successive gambling houses, but in 1992 (p. 192) she characterized the room as "living and bedroom." Elsewhere in her doctoral thesis, Chen (2001 : 17) states the main room on the ground level of building 84 was used "as a hostel run by the Hongmen society." The Barkerville Historic Town interprets the room to be the hostel. Ron Candy, former conservationist at the historic park between 1974 and 1991, could not confirm the original use for the room, but conceded that he did discover a fan tan bead under the room's floorboards (Ron Candy, telephone conversation with the author, 31 August 2006). Chen's characterization of the room as successive gambling dens is based almost solely on gambling rules from each generation of gambling house being pasted to the walls. It seems plausible that, given the centrality of gambling to Chinese socializing, the society's gambling rules were pasted in its hostel as a matter of course.
55. Chen, 2001 : 320-321, 325-326.
56. *Id.* : 334. Chen wrote 1907, but Canada's anti-opium legislation was enacted only in 1908.
57. Cited in *id.* : 337.
58. *Id.* : 337.
59. *Id.* : 338.
60. It is not clear whether or not either of the latter two types of opium smoking took place at the Chee Kung Tong building (Chen, 2001 : 340-342).
61. *Id.* : 342.
62. According to L. Eve Armentrout Ma (1990 : 24), "By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, the [Hong-men] emphasized the bond of brotherhood more than the aim of restoring the Ming dynasty. Anti-Manchuism, however (and/or feeling of antagonism toward the Chinese government and its officials), remained strong among them."
63. Chen, 2001 : 197-198, 305, 309.
64. Lyman *et al.*, 1977 : 98-100. Between ca. 1883-1885 and 1932, Barkerville Chee Kung Tong meetings and ceremonies would have taken place in the "Main Hall" building (no longer extant).
65. Chen, 2001 : 291.
66. Chen, 1992 : 191.
67. Chen, 2001 : 292.
68. Chen (1992 : 196) theorized that the erection of the "Main Hall" between 1883 and 1885 reflected the Barkerville Chee Kung Tong's status as the society's headquarters in the Cariboo District).
69. Chen, 2001 : 293-294.
70. Lai, 1982 : 97, 103.
71. *Id.*, p. 96; Con *et al.* : 103; Wickberg, Edgar, 1980, « Chinese and Canadian Influences on Chinese Politics in Vancouver, 1900-1947 », *BC Studies*, no. 45, p. 43-44.
72. Ma, Ching, 1977, *Chinese Pioneers: Materials Concerning the Immigration of Chinese to Canada and Sino-Canadian Relations*, Vancouver, Versatile Publishing Co., p. 19; Chu : 30.
73. Ma, 1990 : 5.
74. Chen, 2001 : 293-294. David Chuenyan Lai (1982 : 98) calculated that Chinese in Canada contributed 64,000 Hong Kong dollars to the April 1911 uprising—19,000 from Vancouver, 34,000 from Victoria, and 11,000 from Montréal. Those figures must represent total regional contributions because Lai noted that, after fundraising in Victoria and Vancouver, Sun Yat-sen travelled to Nanaimo, Cumberland, New Westminster, Kamloops, Ashcroft, Kelowna, Revelstoke, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto, collecting 17,960 Hong Kong dollars and enthusiastic receptions all along the way. He also noted that the Montréal members raised 6000 (not 11,000) Hong Kong dollars during his visit to that city.
75. Although the fund was not administered by the Chee Kung Tong (Chen, 2001 : 359).
76. Chen, 2001 : 364.
77. Personal communication with Bill Quackenbush, curator, Barkerville Historic Town, 19 July 2006. Close comparison with a photograph of the Quesnel Forks Chee Kung Tong altar discovered by Irene Stangoe of the Friends of the Barkerville Historical Society and on display in the Chinese Museum at the Barkerville Historic Town suggests that the altar and table in Barkerville are original to Quesnel Forks.
78. Chen, 1992 : 28.
79. Mills, 1988 : 141-142.
80. *Ibid.* As noted by David Chuenyan Lai and in previous Submission Reports to the Board, characteristics of Chinatown architecture and construction methods varied according to time and locale. According to Edward Mills, "substantial and architecturally distinctive Chinatowns were confined to the major ports of entry on the west coast [of North America]," and "only Victoria's now retains a sizable grouping of buildings dating from the 19th century." (Mills, 1988 : 141; see also, Mills, 1995 : 1086.) San Francisco's Chinatown building stock was destroyed by earthquake and fire in 1906.
81. Mills, 1995 : 1081, 1089.
82. Mills, 1988 : 142.
83. The structure is occasionally treated with clear stain for protection against ultraviolet radiation. Some minor brown rot appears in a few locations of the north log wall.
84. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes, 1924.
85. Chuck Chang, chairman, The Chinese Freemasons Headquarters of Canada, to Michel Audy, executive secretary, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 24 May 2005.
86. Larry Wong, president, Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, to Michel Audy, executive secretary, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 6 May 2005.