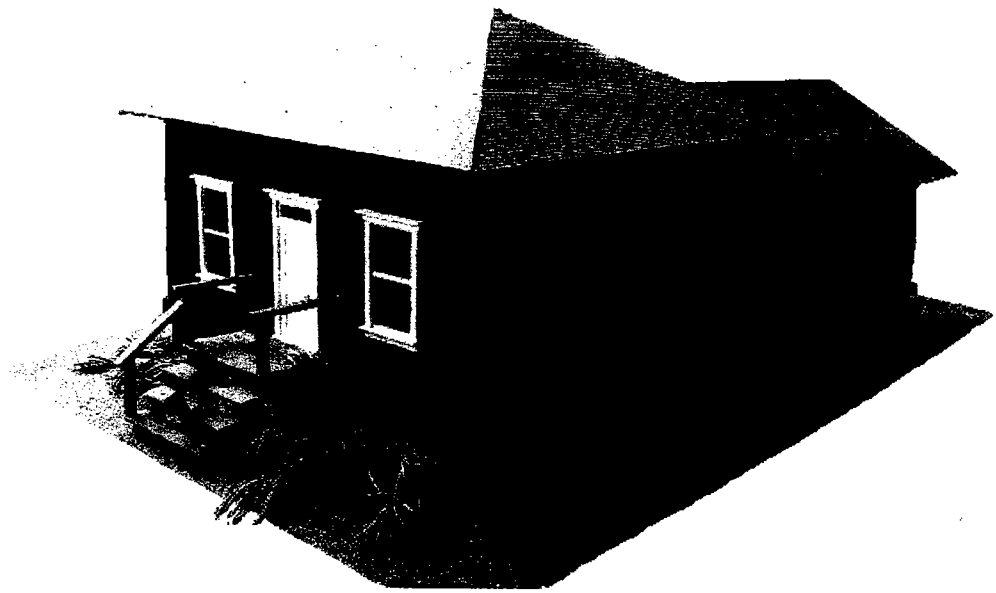
The Red House: An Historical Property in Cambria



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CONTENTS

Figures

THE RED HOUSE: AN HISTORICAL PROPERTY IN CAMBRIA

> [The Chinese Temple in Cambria] *is an important reminder of the rich diversity that characterizes the history of our state and deserves the special protection which you are attempting to provide it* (March Fong Eu 1991).

Introduction

A residence has stood at 2264 Center Street in the historical core of Cambria, San Luis Obispo County, since at least 1873 and the first deed to the property has been traced to 1870. Since that time, although title has changed hands, the 1.5 acres comprising Block C, Lots 3, 10, and 11 have remained undivided (Figure 1). By at least 1886, a group of other small structures elsewhere on the southern part of the parcel adjacent to Bridge Street was being used by Chinese fishermen and seaweed gatherers. Together, the resource has long been recognized as having historical, architectural, and archaeological values. It was first recorded as archaeological site CA-SLO-1435H in 1991, and some preliminary information was developed in 1993. As the new owners of the property, Greenspace, the Cambria Land Trust, needed additional information, evaluation, and recommendations for preservation, and retained Greenwood and Associates to assist in responsible planning. This report combines documentary, photographic, and oral historical research with detailed observations of the structure known as the Red House and limited surface survey to support management objectives.

The previous archaeological and historical consultants provided opinions that the property is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (Bertrando and Bertrando 1993; Parker and Associates 1993), although additional information was needed. This report supplements and replaces the earlier studies, and contains the information needed to evaluate the significance of the resources. Cambria is an unincorporated community, so land use is regulated through the General Plan and Local Coastal Plan of San Luis Obispo County. The County does not maintain any listing of historic properties or structures, but has an "H" (Historic) overlay in the General Plan applied to a limited number of sites, and has not addressed many in the unincorporated areas. The designation entails specific permit requirements and findings for prospective projects which may affect the designated sites. The County has already approved "H" status for the Red House, which awaits action by the Coastal Commission on a comprehensive update covering the entire North Coast Area.

Cultural Setting

The area surrounding the community of Cambria had been within the Rancho Santa Rosa granted to Julian Estrada in 1841 after secularization of the California missions in 1833. The growth of Cambria essentially began after the land was patented to Estrada in 1865.

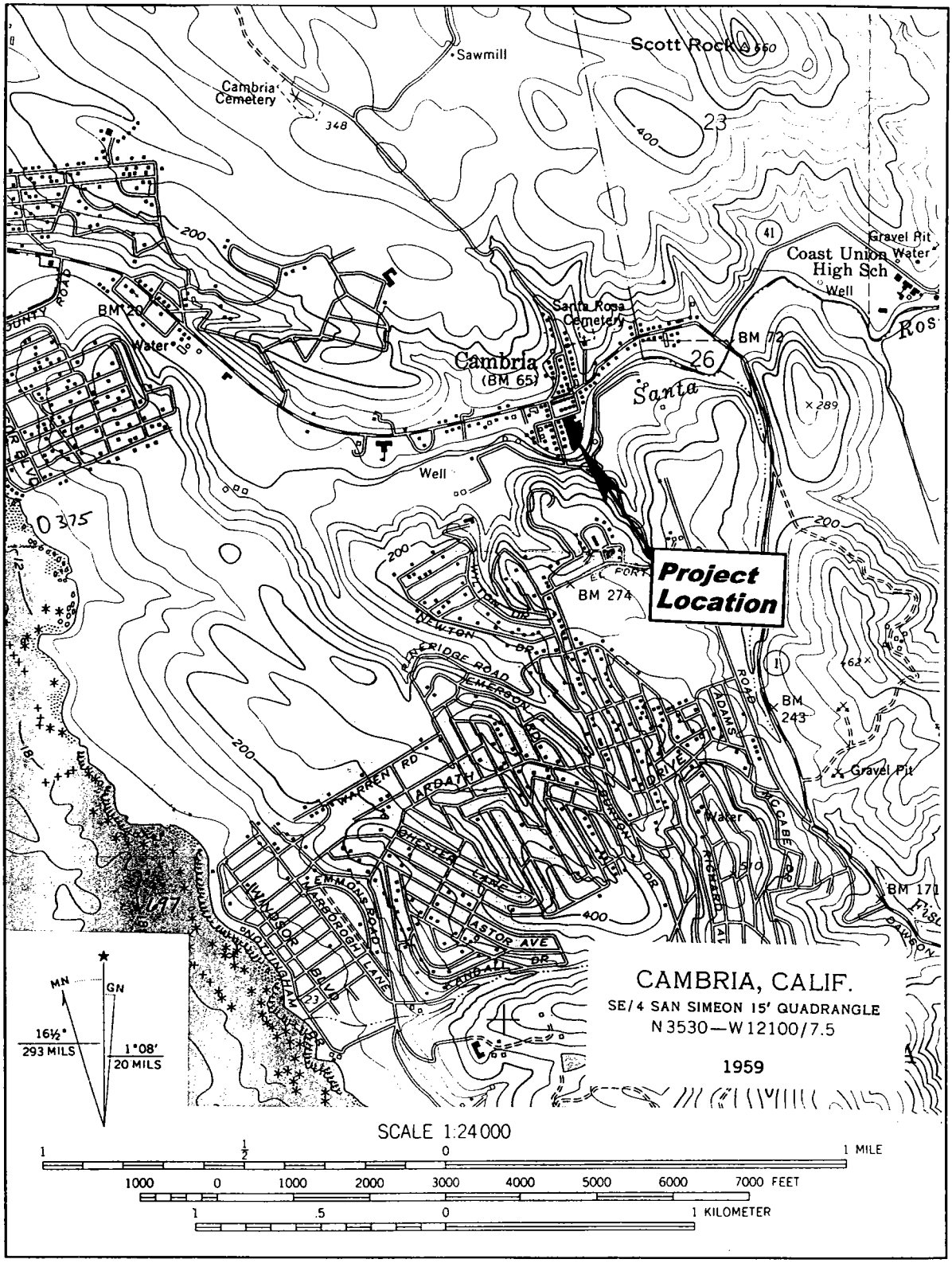

Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map

Subsequent owners of portions of the rancho included Samuel Pollard, Domingo Pujol, George Hearst, George Long, W. H. Freer, John Myers, and others (Angel 1883:214). There was already a whaling station at San Simeon by 1864, and the port at Cayucos was handling more freight at that time. Although stockraising was the predominant industry during the mission era, the dry years of 1863-1864 encouraged the shift toward agriculture. Wheat was the major crop, followed by barley, hay, and beans, and dairying grew rapidly. Trade through the port of San Simeon by 1869 "is owing mostly to the neighborhood of Cambria, whose dairy and other domestic products make up the great share of San Simeon's exports" (Angel 1883:331).

The volume of trade encouraged George Hearst to build a new, larger wharf in 1878, and this provided a further impetus to business, a telegraph line through to San Luis Obispo, and a new stage route to Cambria (Angel 1883:332). The setting of the town was amid rolling hills, fertile valleys, and clear streams. Among its assets were virgin pine forests which supplied the boards, posts, and other wooden building materials processed by two sawmills operating as early as 1869. A second class post office was established in 1870 with William Steward as first postmaster (Salley 1977:33). The discovery of quicksilver in 1871 contributed to growth, yet Cambria remained essentially an agricultural village deriving most of its population from New England and upstate New York (Angel 1883:335).

The young town had been previously called Roseville, Rosaville, Santa Rosa, San Simeon, and even Slabtown (Salley 1977:33), before the U. S. postal authorities formalized the Welsh-derived name of Cambria in 1870. By 1880, local businesses included a three-story hotel, three retail stores, two drug stores, a saddlery, furniture manufactory, butcher shop, shoemaker, two liveries, a jeweler, two wagon shops, two blacksmiths, two sawmills, three saloons, two churches, lodges of the Masons and Odd Fellows, a large public hall, one physician and one lawyer (Angel 1883:340). It was within this community that the places and events described below developed. Some of these early occupations are represented by the pioneer owners of the Center Street (Centre, on old maps) property, and the "founding of Cambria" has been associated with the acquisition by Proctor and Davis in 1870 (Hamilton 1974:5).

Field Investigation

Prior to visiting the site, existing information was reviewed, including the archaeological site record (Singer 1991), the archaeological survey report by John Parker (1993), the historical report by Bertrando (1993), and such local histories as *Where the Highway Ends* (Hamilton 1974) and Myron Angel's volume of 1883. Although the results do not reproduce well enough for inclusion, historical photographs were enhanced and enlarged to reveal small details. Oral historical accounts and reminiscences were graciously provided by Lila and Margaret Soto, Myrtle Nicholson, Dawn Dunlap, Forrest Warren, Wilfred Lyons, and Brad Seek. Their cordial reception and interest in the research is gratefully acknowledged and has added life and color to the report. The Chinese

Historical Society of Southern California had visited the site in 1990, and a video tape made on the occasion was reviewed.

Inspection of the structure took place on February 9-10, 2001 by R. S. Greenwood, RPA, and Dana N. Slawson, M. Arch., assisted by Richard Hawley, Greenspace, and Linda Bentz. Forrest Warren and Brad Seek visited, contributing insight from their personal knowledge of the property. The structural description below was prepared by Slawson, and the historical background research conducted by Linda Bentz. Surface survey was limited by rain, vegetation, and modern vehicles and debris.

As observed in February 2001, the open space was overgrown with weedy vegetation, brambles, and several mature trees. A thicket of wild berries lined the fence parallel to Hesperian Lane, and an impenetrable willow thicket obscured the southeastern portion of the property and the banks of Santa Rosa Creek. A garage, shed, trailer, an auto body and parts, and other debris were on the surface. The large trees included a Bellflower apple, plum, walnut, English walnut, and Tree of Heaven. An unusually large, mature *Dahlia imperialis* that might be 20 feet tall if supported is growing in front of the house. The dahlia was one of many flowers which had symbolic value to the Chinese, and they brought with them many seeds; this may be a Chinese variety (Chung 2001b). The Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is an exotic commonly planted by Chinese at early mining and construction sites.

Two areas of archaeological potential were observed (Figure 2). South of the structure is a circle of stones about 2 feet in diameter which coincides with oral history of an old well (F. Warren, pers. comm. 2001). Probing indicated that the stones continued below the surface in the same round configuration.

Southeast of the flagpole, that was moved to the property from the old Santa Rosa Creek (or Hyperion) school, is a mound containing bricks, both old/burned and new, animal bone, and other debris. This is the approximated location within the Chinese occupation that has been pointed out by residents as the location of a brick oven.

Historical Background

Local Chinese History

During the later years of the nineteenth century, a small cluster of Chinese structures existed along Santa Rosa Creek in downtown Cambria. Chinese pioneers worked in the general area as miners in the local quicksilver mines, laborers, and gatherers of abalone and seaweed. These hard-working men created a refuge away from the immediate coast where they could rest, interact, and practice traditional ways and ceremonies on weekends, holidays and during inclement weather. A retreat which has come to be called

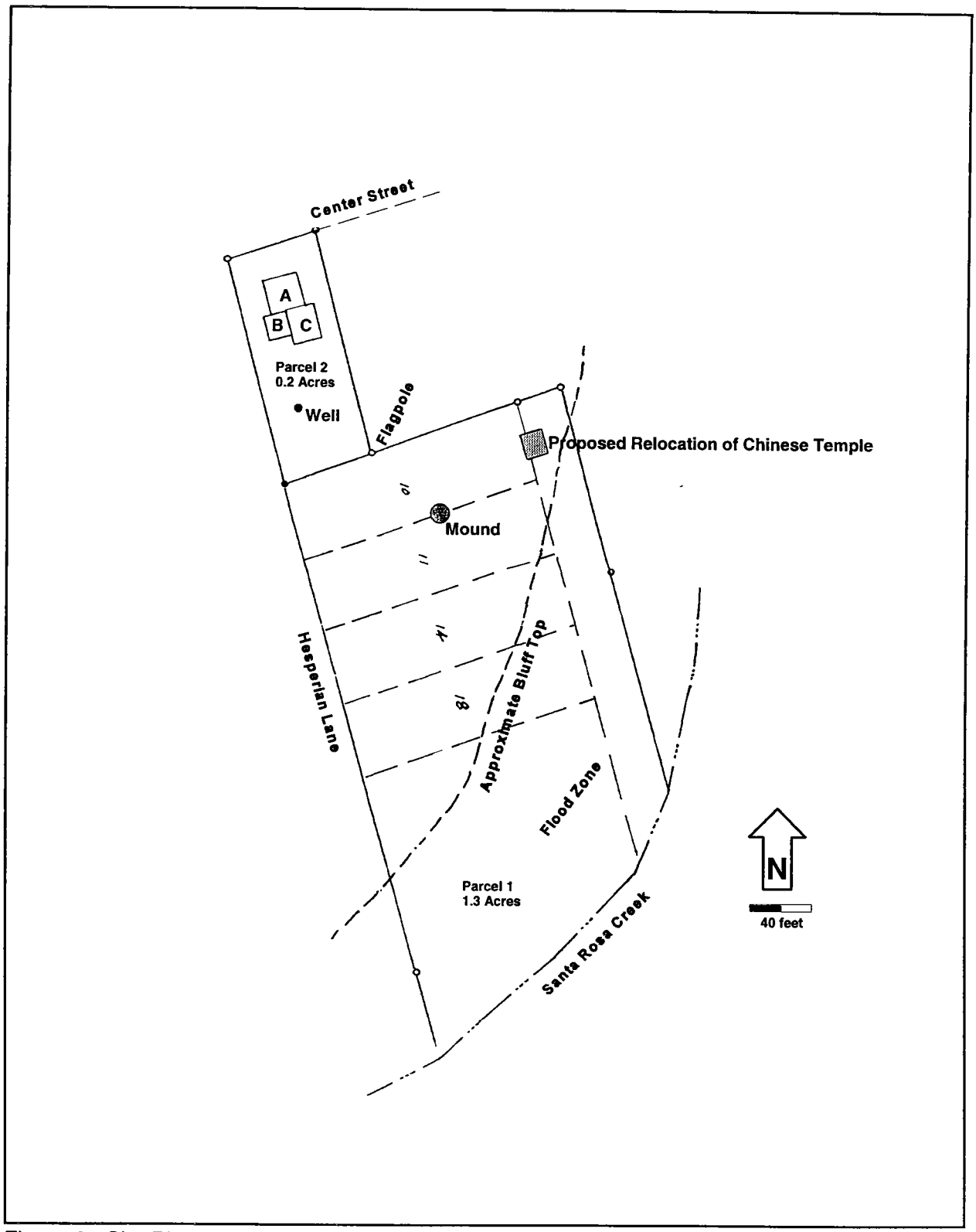

Figure 2. Site Plan

Chinese Center grew up on both sides of Bridge Street to serve these purposes. It appears that Chinese workers visited the center from the 1880s until the Warren family acquired the family. The number, placement, and even the identification of buildings changed over time. Contemporary maps from 1886 until 1913 label the structures as laundries, cabins, and a "joss house." Local citizens and writers have named bunkhouses and described a large brick oven. All the buildings were gone from this portion of the parcel prior to 1926.

Local lore perceived the Joss House as a Buddhist temple. Yet historical research suggests the Euroamerican residents of Cambria may have been deceived by appearances. At least from 1899 until its removal in about 1925, the building called a temple was probably either consecutively or concurrently a lodge of the Chee Kung Tong. This Chinese structure has miraculously survived the years in Cambria's historic neighborhood although not in its original location. By 1925, after Chinese had abandoned the area, the building was added to two others to complete the Warren family residence, commonly known as the Red House located at 2264 Center Street.

It is unclear when Chinese first came to the Central Coast. There were no Chinese enumerated on the 1860 census for San Luis Obispo County. Yet by 1869, $3,000 worth of "Chinese produce, etc." was shipped from San Simeon (Angel 1883:331). One early mention of Chinese in the county comes from a newspaper account of the wreck of the *Sierra Nevada* in 1869. Chinese fishermen traveling from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo, with their own vessel aboard the *Sierra Nevada,* were perhaps planning to fish the Central Coast. When the ship began to sink, the Chinese fishermen tried in vain to save their own vessel although they were ultimately rescued from the sinking ship (San Luis Obispo *Tribune* 1869).

The 1870 census for Cambria (referred to as Santa Rosa) enumerated one Chinese youth, Sam Su, who was 13 years old. In Arroyo Grande, 50 miles away in south San Luis Obispo County, 34 Chinese men were counted. They included 13 fishermen, and the others were cooks, domestic laborers, laundrymen, and a sheepherder. In San Luis Obispo Township (possibly Avila which is 25 miles south of Cambria), 14 Chinese men were enumerated, 8 fishermen and cooks, domestic workers, and a shepherd. The boundaries of the census areas are uncertain and changed with each census period.

In 1880, Cambria was referred to as San Simeon and the listings may have included the port of San Simeon. The census reported 61 Chinese in this broad area whose boundaries have not been defined: 58 males and 3 females. A laundryman named Ah Gee was named with his wife, son, and daughter. Ah Ying, a farm laborer, was counted with his wife. The listed occupations included 25 fishermen, 4 miners, 11 cooks, 2 hotel clerks, 11 laundrymen, 1 servant, and 3 laborers. The population of Chinese men in Arroyo Grande had declined since 1870. Seven men were present, all cooks. During the 1880s, anti-Chinese sentiment in Arroyo Grande ran strong and many Chinese settlers were shipped out of town on railroad cars (McDannold 2000:67). The San Luis Obispo

Township (probably Avila) Chinese population grew by four with a total of 16 men and 2 wives. Occupations recorded included fishermen, cooks, and laborers.

The Chinese population in Cambria experienced a decline by 1900. The census enumerated 12 men with an average age of 37.7 years and one woman. All of the respondents stated that they rented houses. Six men listed their occupations as fishermen, plus 2 cooks, 3 day laborers, and 1 gardener. Que Lee, the single woman enumerated, gave her occupation as fisherwoman. In 1900, respondents were asked to list their year of immigration. The responses given by the Chinese in Cambria stated that Ho Wing Wo was the earliest to arrive in the United States in 1846, possibly a misprint or misunderstanding. Yee Don and Que Lee, the fisherwoman, arrived in 1864. The others immigrated between 1867 and 1887. By 1910, only six Chinese men were enumerated on the census, five fishermen and one servant. There were no Chinese listed for Arroyo Grande, and only a single Chinese cook in Arroyo Grande Township.

When Chinese arrived on the Pacific coast, they found the California fisheries overflowing with marine species that were considered delicacies in China. In the southern regions along the Pacific Coast, fishing camps were established in the early 1850s. In Baja California, a Chinese abalone camp was established in Bahia Del Sur in the 1850s, and the earliest recorded Chinese fishing camp in California was established in 1853 in Monterey (Lydon 1985:32; Berryman 1995:94). When the fisheries expanded by the 1870s, the primary fishing centers included San Francisco (where the shrimp fisheries were located), Monterey (which exploited squid, market fisheries, and abalone until the mid 1860s), and San Diego (primarily concerned with abalone and market fisheries).

Smaller fishing villages or camps were scattered along the California coast in areas such as Santa Barbara and the Channel Islands. The marine resources from these centers were sold fresh locally and shipped to Chinese communities throughout the west. Products of the sea were in great demand in China and through established markets and marketing networks, the bulk of the resources were dried and exported to China, usually through merchants in the nearest Chinatowns (Bentz 1997:132). Chinese settlers on the Central Coast were engaged in seaweed and abalone harvesting. The rocky shoreline provided the optimal habitat for abalone, which was collected at low tide, and the ideal environment for seaweed that was actually cultivated. Specific varieties, such as sea lettuce or Ulva, were allowed to grow while others were suppressed. While the preferred species occurred naturally along the Central Coast, Chinese fishermen eradicated competing forms of algae so that Ulva could reach its maximum growth potential (Hamilton 1974:86; McDannold 2000:67).

The Chinese men who worked the Central Coast lived in isolated cabins along the shore instead of in crowded urban Chinatowns. This dispersion was necessary for the gatherers to be close to the seaweed beds and have space to dry the seaweed by spreading it on the grass. For more than 100 years, seaweed gatherers worked at China Cove about two miles north of Cayucos (McDannold 2000:68). Chinese fishermen also worked at San

Simeon. Apparently San Simeon Bay, 10 miles north of Cambria, flourished with products from the sea. In 1880, 104 bales of seaweed were shipped from the George Hearst wharf (Hamilton 1974:90). A local resident, Loren Thorndike, described the seaweed before it was shipped; each bale was 8 feet long and 2 feet wide weighing 300 pounds (Squibb Collection). Loren's father, Captain Thorndike, the owner of a general merchandise store and hotel in San Simeon, interacted with Chinese fishermen in San Simeon by employing them to harvest abalone. Once the meat was separated from the shell, he provided a place to dry the mollusk which was then shipped from the Hearst wharf. The destination of the marine products is unknown (Lyons, pers. comm. 2001).

When Chinese seaweed gatherers wanted to rest and to socialize with their countrymen, they would travel to Cambria's Chinese Center; this name was apparently first applied by Hamilton (1974), and has been used since then. Since these men worked and lived independently in remote locales, interaction with others must have been greatly desired. At the Center the Chinese could celebrate traditional holidays and events, write letters home, share information, gamble, cook, and converse in their own language. By the 1920s, if not even earlier, most of the Chinese had moved on to San Francisco, and the local structures were abandoned.

Local Cambrians speak of the Chinese Center and remember some of the Chinese settlers fondly. One individual whom several residents named was "Chinese Mary." She was described as a small and aging woman who resided in the Center for many years from the late 1890s until the early 1900s. Mrs. Yrculano Soto often spoke of Chinese Mary and recalled that she was nice to the children of Cambria (Lila and Margaret Soto, pers. comms. 2000). It was Mary's job to look after the Chinese men who came to the Center. It was said that some of these men were young boys in their teens; Mary did their laundry and cared for them like a mother (Hamilton 1974:87).

It is possible that Chinese Mary's real name was Que Lee, the fisherwoman listed on the 1900 census. She was 54 years old at the time and was recorded as a head of household. She was born in January 1846 in China, and could not read, write, or speak English. Que Lee lived with a boarder named Ging Wo in a rented house. It is unknown if she moved from Cambria or died in the Chinese Center. However, a death certificate dated 1908 recorded that Ah Que, who was sometimes referred to as Mary Lee, died near Cayucos. She was 66 years old in 1908 and had been in residence for 30 years. Her exact cause of death is unknown. The witness noted on the certificate was Gin Woo, possibly the same Ging Wo, the boarder who was recorded living with Que Lee on the 1900 census (San Luis Obispo Register of Deaths 1908). Hamilton has written that the Chinese began abandoning the Center after her decline (1974:92).

Lee Bow was also remembered in Cambria. He may have become a permanent resident of the Chinese Center although according to George Steiner, who lived in San Simeon from 1887 to 1897, Lee Bow originally made his home at San Simeon Bay. There he raised a family while farming the coast to the south as far as Pico Creek. On the 1900

census he gave his age as 48 years and was married for 34 years, although his wife does not appears on the census. He immigrated to the United States in 1874 and recorded his profession as fisherman. He could read, write, and speak English. Lee Bow was apparently well known locally for gambling, and children remembered him for the candy he gave them. He was courteous to neighbors and shared offerings of roasted pig and other gifts on the Lunar New Year (Hamilton 1974:87; Margaret and Lila Soto, pers. comms. 2000).

Joaquin "Jack" Soto, a local Cambrian, proprietor of a butcher and grocery shop in 1917, also interacted with those at Chinese Center. His home was on Lee Street (currently known as Burton Street), parallel to Bridge Street, affording the Soto family close observation and ready communication with the Chinese. Local Chinese bought groceries from Mr. Soto who extended them credit. Mr. Soto helped a Chinese fisherman named Ah Fey who ran into trouble with the law in 1918. His daughters Lila and Margaret remember the incident:

> The Chinese knocked on their door early one morning because the game wardens arrested [one of them] for getting undersized abalones. The game warden would not let [him] go without paying the fine. Father paid the fine [of $50.00]. The next day the whole group of Chinese men came in and paid their bills. During those times the bills ran the whole year through, and people did not pay by the month. Our father had a good relationship with the Chinese [Lila and Margaret Soto, pers. comms. 2000].

Lunar New Year holidays were a festive time in Cambria when about 50 or 60 Chinese were said to come to the Center to celebrate and feast (Lyons, pers. comm. 2001). The Chinese purchased pigs and chickens to be roasted from the townspeople and built an outdoor barbeque pit in the Center to roast the pig (Figure 3). Another photo, not clear enough to reproduce, shows Chinese scalding the pig (*Morro Bay Sun* 1966). Mr. Soto played an important role in Lunar New Year and his daughters, Margaret and Lila Soto, described his contribution:

> During Chinese New Year father would butcher the pork for the Chinese. There was a huge brick pit that was real tall where the pork was barbequed or cooked. They often got to taste the pork and it was delicious. Chinese owned the pit. The pit was on the creek side [Lila and Margaret Soto, pers. comms. 2000].

The food was brought to the "joss house" and spread on a long table in front of the building. The people in attendance drank rice wine, ate, conversed, and gambled throughout the day.

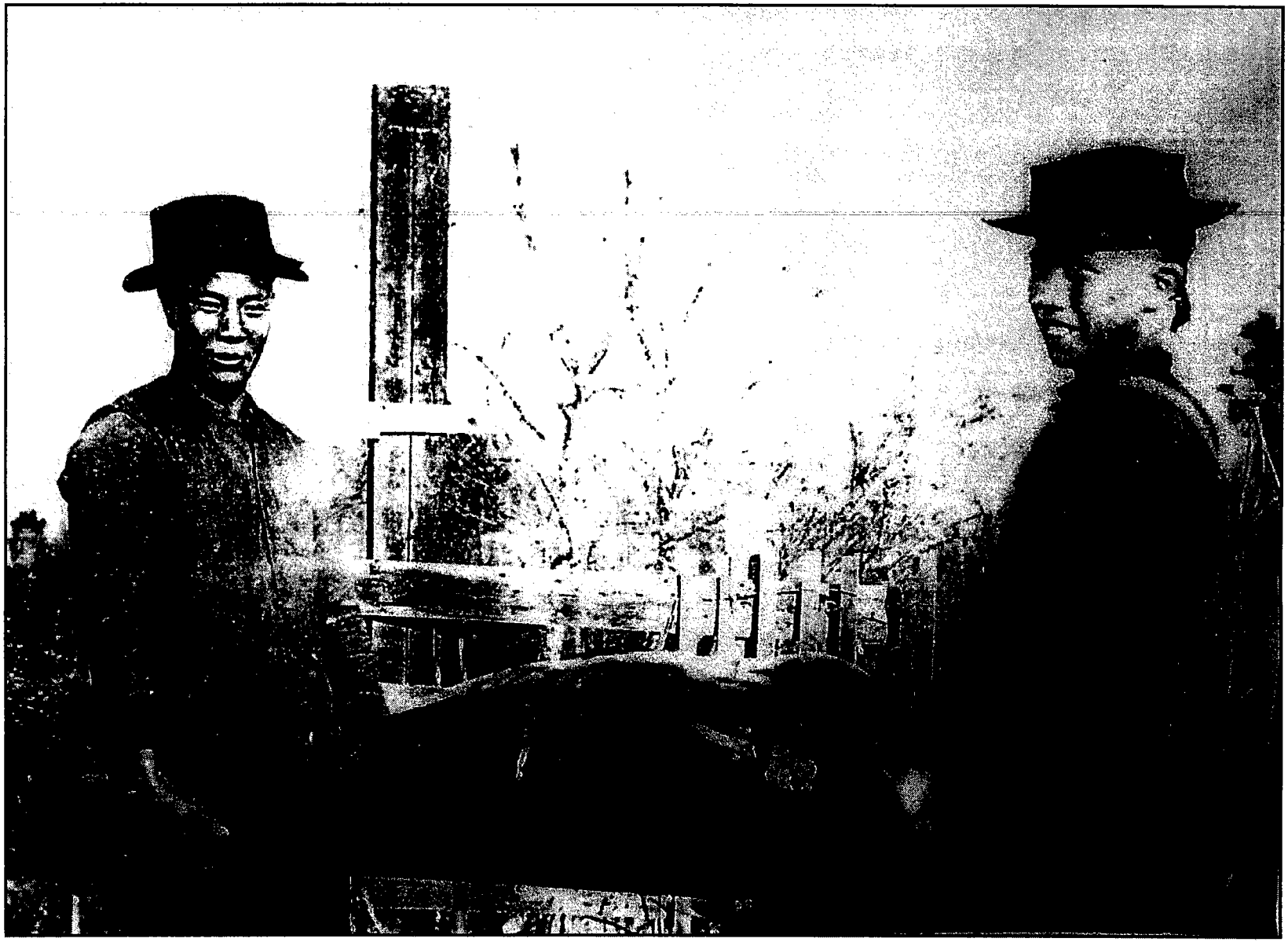

Figure 3. Roast pig for New Year's Feast at Chinese Center (Paul Squibb photo in Hamilton 1974:ff 93)

Chinese Center was located on lower Bridge Street on the southern portion of Block C, east side of Lots 10 and 11. One historian described the community as consisting of a Buddhist and Taoist temple, a bunk house, and a few small structures used on a periodic basis (Wey 1988:103). Others described the maximum number of structures in Chinese Center as a square temple, a larger bunkhouse, and cabins (M. Soto, pers. comm. 2000); or, two laundries, several residences, the Joss House, a social hall, and a small opium den (Dunlap, pers. comm. 2001). The Chinese community in Cambria changed over time, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps for 1886, 1892, 1895, 1913, and 1926 display changing activities and the movement of buildings, but none identified the cluster as Chinatown.

The Sanborn map drawn in 1886 (Figure 4) shows three Chinese buildings on this property and another cluster on the east side of Bridge Street. The buildings at 16, 17, and 18 Bridge Street are simply identified as Chinese and appear to be in close proximity to each other. These structures face Bridge Street, which is quite wide and expands toward Santa Rosa Creek. The fourth building located across the street at 1 Bridge Street is labeled Chinese Washhouse with a shed abutting the north side. This structure is on the bank of Santa Rosa Creek with an attached drying platform on the south.

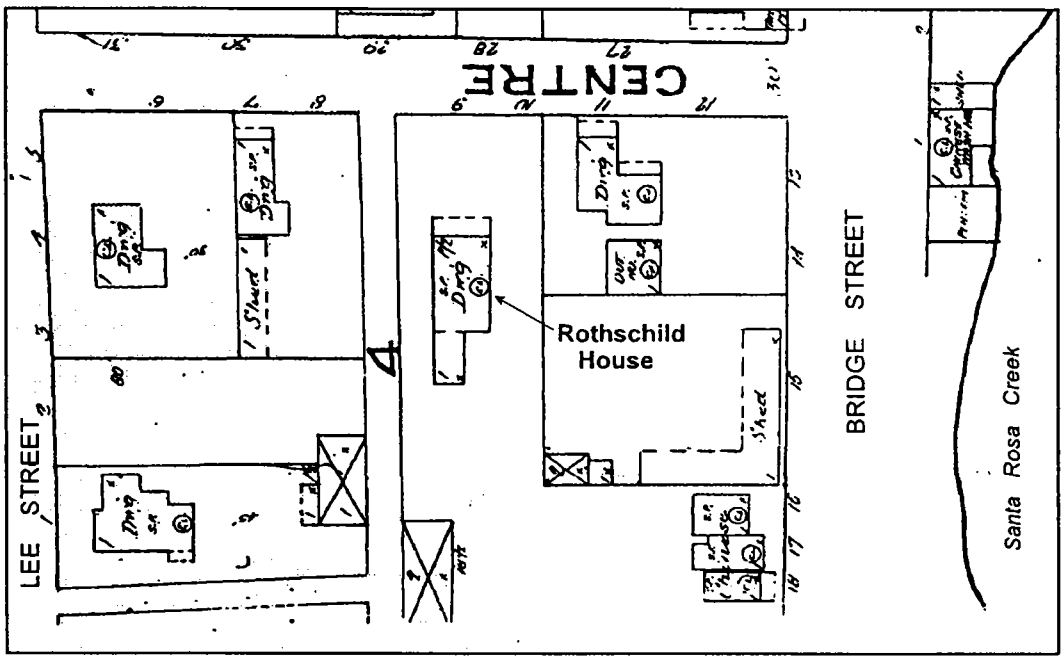

Figure 4. Excerpt, Sanborn Map 1886

In 1892, the Sanborn map shows three Chinese buildings at 18, 19, and 20 Bridge Street. It appears that the buildings are in the same approximate location as in 1886, although the street numbering has changed. The buildings at 18 and 19 Bridge Street are labeled Chinese Laundry and remain attached. The building at 20 Bridge Street appears slightly separated from the other two and has a small detached outbuilding at the rear. Bridge Street is irregular and called "inclined road to creek." The Chinese washhouse remains but

is referred to as Chinese laundry. This business occupies 1 and 2 Bridge Street and remains virtually the same as in 1886 except that the drying platform is larger.

The Sanborn map for 1895 (Figure 5) shows the three Chinese structures located at 19, 20, and 21 Bridge Street. The two attached buildings at 19 and 20 Bridge Street continue to be labeled as Chinese Laundry. An address has been added and a structure set obliquely to 21 Bridge Street, labeled Joss House, a Euroamerican term denoting a temple. The small structure behind 20 Bridge Street in 1892 is still present. The inclined road to the creek remains as in 1892. The Chinese laundry at 1 and 2 Bridge Street is shown the same as in previous years.

In 1913, the Chinese laundry is no longer outlined on the Sanborn map at 19 and 20 Bridge Street. Instead, the same or another Joss House is shown at 19 Bridge Street, seemingly reoriented toward the creek (Figure 6). Two new buildings labeled Chinese Cabins are drawn south of 21 Bridge Street, a distance apart and situated diagonally from each other. It is unclear which may be the same buildings present on the Sanborn maps of 1886, 1892, and 1895. On the earlier maps, the structures at 18 and 19 Bridge Street are colored green on the Sanborns, which is keyed as "special" but not otherwise identified. Number 20 and the outbuilding are shown in yellow, denoting a wood frame structure. In 1913, all the buildings are colored yellow and keyed as wood frame, one-story, and roofed with shingles. The number and positioning of both the Chinese and Euroamerican structures correspond closely to buildings visible on a photograph ascribed to 1906.

The inclined road to the creek is no longer present or simply not labeled. The laundry located at 1 Bridge Street in 1895, as well as the bridge, could have been washed out by any of the flooding that has repeatedly altered the streambed and banks of Santa Rosa Creek. In 1914, for example, the volume of floodwaters was great enough to wash out the bridge over the creek, delay the mail, and cut off telephone/telegraph communications (*Telegram* 1914:8). The event was catastrophic for Cambria and "homes bordering the creek suffered the most damage" (Hamilton 1974:26). It is possible that the flood hastened the decline of Chinese Center, as well as better economic opportunities elsewhere. Maps and photographs, even when the dates are uncertain, demonstrate the degree to which the creek has altered its course. A map drawn about 1877 depicts the creek as 200 feet from the southwest corner of Center and Bridge Streets, while another estimated to represent conditions of approximately 1915-1920 shows 387 feet for the same span (Cambria n.d.). See and compare, also, Figures 5 and 6.

By the 1926 Sanborn map, no structures were present on the south side of the property. When the Chinese community diminished around the 1920s, the buildings that they formerly utilized sat empty. The owners of the property during the period, the Warren family, relocated or demolished the less stable Chinese buildings (*The Cambrian* 1990) and attached the one assumed to be the joss house to the rear of their own home.

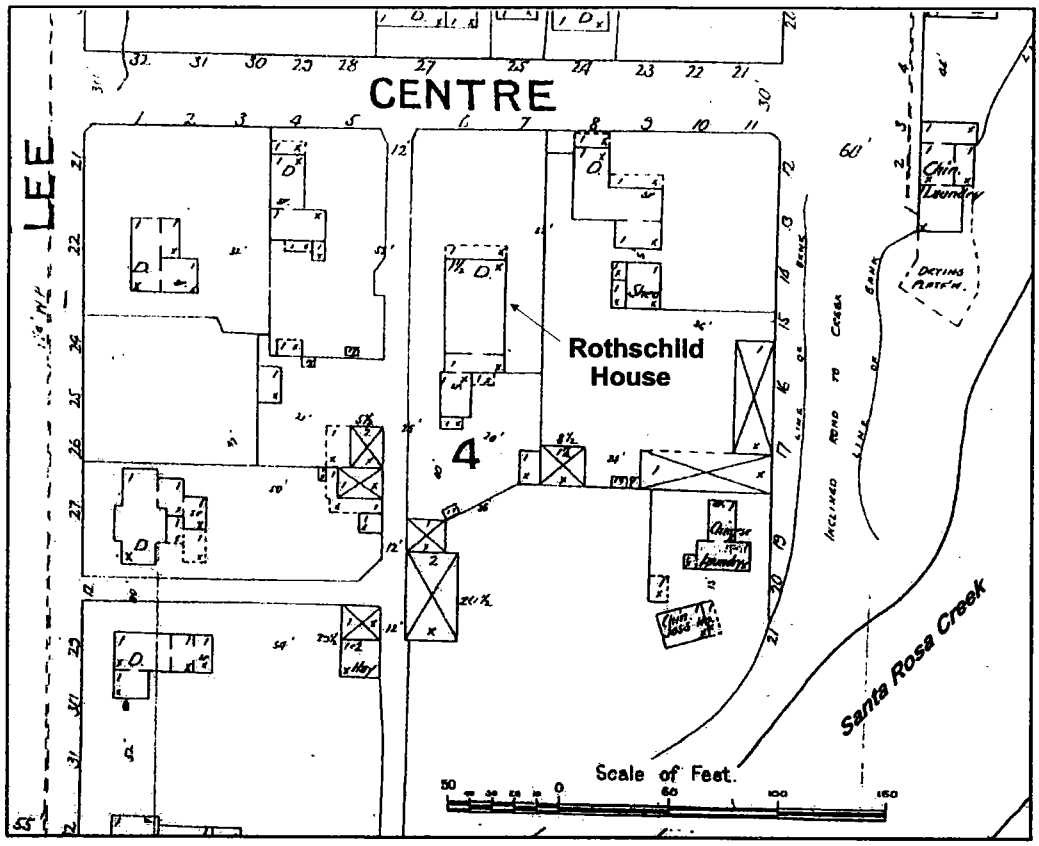

Figure 5. Excerpt, Sanborn Map1895.

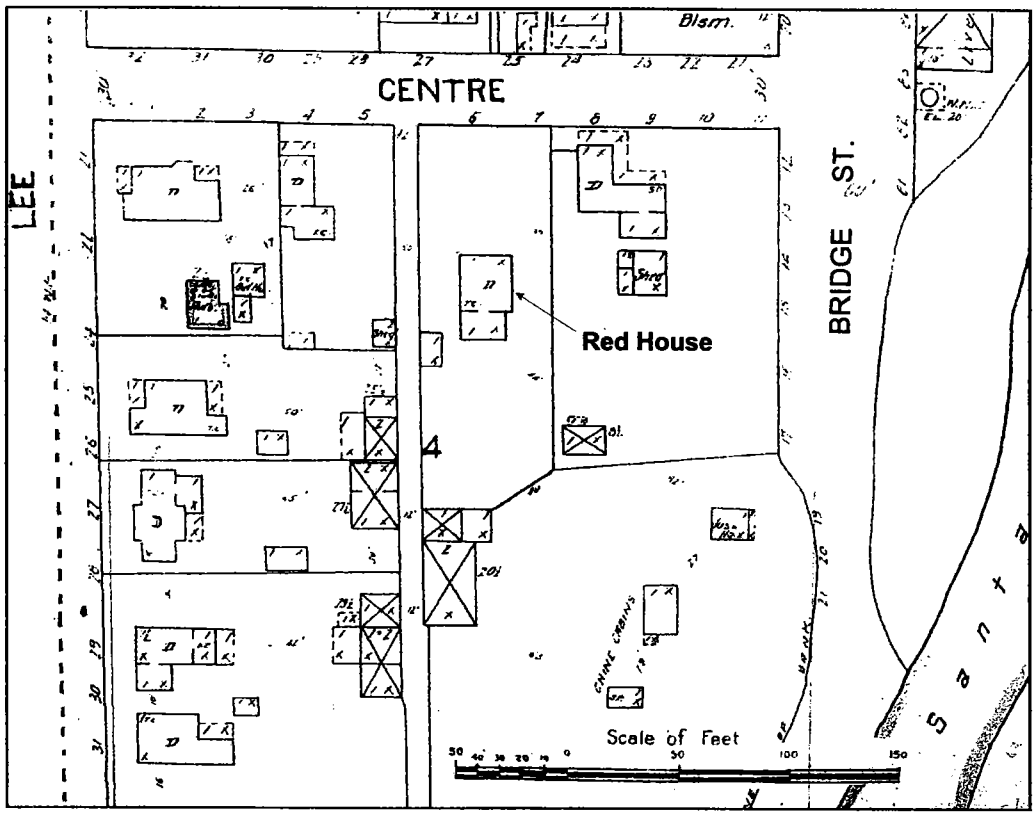

Figure 6. Excerpt, Sanborn Map 1913.

Chinese workers occupied the place that is now called Chinese Center from approximately the 1880s until the 1920s. It is unknown if they leased the land on Bridge Street or were simply allowed to use it. It has been suggested that two of the former owners, Johanna Gans and William Warren, allowed the Chinese to use the property free of charge (Forrest Warren, Dunlap, Nicholson, pers. comms. 2001).

The Chinese in Cambria were a small number who lived apart from the miners at China Flat and those living on the Sibley Ranch. The local group included "about a dozen men" who gathered seaweed and laid it out on the grass to dry; they occupied little cabins along the coast during the week and would come in to stay in the bunkhouse and visit the temple (Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000). There were a few others who may have more permanent residents, some "older men in the community" (Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000), Old Sam who operated a laundry (Hamilton 1974:92), and Chinese Mary who was known ca. 1900 (M. Soto, pers. comm. 2000). The Soto sisters recalled Chinese boys in the Cambria School, but no girls (Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000). These may have been the sons of George Lum, who actually lived on the Sibley Ranch (M. Soto, pers. comm. 2000). During their childhood, the Soto sisters were not aware of any women in Chinese Center (Tape, CHSSC 1990). While the population would have been greater during weekends or bad weather, there is no indication of a great number of people or whole families. "Center residents, for the most part, were never a stable group but came for a day, week or month, then left to return to their own abodes" (Hamilton 1974:92). Given the small and transient nature of the population, there would not be the need or financial support for a grandiose building, and the temple would have served many social and integrating functions for persons who worked and lived along the coast in some degree of isolation.

Land Ownership

During the period of Chinese presence, Lots 3, 10, and 11 were owned by at least three families. A home was located on Lot 3 at 2264 Center Street, between Bridge Street and Hesperian Lane. The succession of land ownership and the sequence of buildings follow:

- April 1870: George W. Proctor (blacksmith), George S. Davis (blacksmith and hotel), and their wives sold Block C, Lots 3, 10, and 11, to Fountain Fox Letcher (sawmill) for $400 (Book of Deeds C:16).

- July 1873: Drury W. James (merchant) purchases property from Fountain Fox Letcher for $1,000 in gold (Book of Deeds E:205).

- August 1873: George Rothschild (merchant) purchases property from Drury W. James for $500 in gold. Legend holds that he built a home on the property for his new wife Bertha. Rothschild also owned a store on Main Street, Block A, Lot 2 (Book of Deeds E: 207).

- December 1873: Abram Gans (merchant) purchases from George Rothschild one-half of all real property on Center Street and the store on Main Street for $600 (Book of Deeds E:355).

- December 1875: Samuel Frank (merchant) purchases from the widowed Bertha Rothschild (serving as guardian to her daughter Georgiana) the undivided interest in the property on Center Street and the store on Main Street for $1,650 (Book of Deeds H:259).

- January 1877: Abram Gans purchases from Samuel Frank the undivided interest in the property on Center Street and the store on Main Street. Gans now owned all of these properties (Book of Deeds I:392).

- January 1894: Abram Gans dies and his property is willed to his family: Mrs. Johanna Gans, Mary Gans, Lee Gans, and Eva Gans (Book of Deeds 22:359-361).

- Between 1895 and 1906: According to map and photographic analysis, the home supposedly built by George Rothschild disappears, and the house currently located on Center Street, the Red House, is in place. This range is definitely supported by a photograph that shows the Red House in its present siting with the old schoolhouse visible in the background. If the date ascribed to the picture is correct, then the Red House could have been at this location in 1895.

- August 1919: William Warren purchases the property on Center Street from the Gans Estate for $10. William Warren, his wife Lilly, and their children (Walter born in 1912, Myrtle born in 1914, Willis born in 1921 in the house, Elden born in 1924) occupy the property on Center Street. Calista Warren, William's mother, lives on the property as well (Book of Deeds 135:118; Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001).

- 1919: A building was moved from "up town" (possibly the corner of Lee and Main Street) and joined with the Red House. This building formed the kitchen (Myrtle Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000).

- 1925-1926: The Joss House was attached to Red House on Center Street.

- December 1936: Calista Warren's brother, Clarence Stilts, purchases the property on Center Street from William Warren. Clarence and his wife Bettie Stilts and her daughter Clara Luvina Beasley occupy the Red House (Book of Deeds 211:106).

- January 1944: Forrester Warren and his brother Stuart are named as joint tenants in the property on Center Street by the estate of Clarence Stilts (Book of Deeds 358: 358).

- The Red House remained vacant for a period of time.

- 1953: Forrester Warren and Mary Ellen Millard Warren's family move in to Red House with their children, Forrest and Linda (Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001).

- 1970: House used for storage; the family had moved next door.

- 1975: Stuart Warren's interest bought by Forrester Warren.

- 1992: Forrester Warren dies and Linda and Brad Seek inherit property.

- 1999: Property sold to Greenspace by Brad Seek after Linda's death.

The earliest owners, Proctor, Davis, Letcher, James, Rothschild, and Frank, were partners or proprietors in the founding enterprises of Cambria; most were merchants or figured in such pioneer trades as blacksmithing, hotel or saw mill operations. William Warren was first known as a miner employed at the Bank Mine in 1903. At the age of 21, he worked and lived at Rigdon's cinnabar mine for 33 months, receiving $ 2.50 per nine-hour shift and paying $18 per month for board and room. He later worked at the Oceanic mine (Hamilton 1974:79-82). His father, Joseph, had shipped from Connecticut to California, walking across the Isthmus of Panama, and was known as a horse trader from San Francisco. He listed his occupation as farm laborer in the 1900 Census. William's son Walter spent most of his 81 years ranching along upper San Simeon Creek (*Cambrian* 1994). Over the years, the family moved back and forth between Center Street and one or another of the outlying ranches, living in Cambria at times so that children could attend school or for other purposes (Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001).

Why the widow Gans and her children sold the parcel to William Warren for only $10 remains a mystery, since no familial relationship has been found. The subsequent transfers between 1936 and 1944 for a token sum of $10 would seem to illustrate the Warrens' wish to keep the property in the family. William and Lilly May Warren and their children, Walter, Myrtle, Willis, and Elden, lived in the Red House from 1919 (or 1917) until 1936. The wing containing the kitchen, pantry, and a bedroom located on the back of the house was removed to another location on the lot to house William's mother, Calista Stilts (also spelled Stiltz). William Warren moved a building thought to have stood on the corner of Lee and Main Street around 1919 and added it to the rear of the Red House to become the replacement kitchen. This would have occurred "right after my Dad moved the kitchen" since "there was a wall missing between the house and the former kitchen" (M. Nicholson, pers. comm. 2001). Walter Warren recalled when the building was moved:

> I always remember the front part being there, you know the part that's painted red today. But I recollect real well when he [William Warren] added the side and back sections. He put those additions on rollers and barrels and then rolled them over to Center Street [*The Cambrian* 1990].

Based on the Sanborn maps, historic photos, and oral history, an abandoned Chinese structure was moved ca. 1925-1926 from the southeast side of the property and joined to the Red House as well. William Warren added two windows to the windowless building and a second door to the structure to make it more suitable as the livingroom.

Clarence Stilts, Calista's brother, bought the house in 1936 and lived there with his wife Bettie and her daughter Clara. Upon his death, there ensued a series of transfers, back to William Warren, from William to George (1942), and from George Warren and Clara Beasley, in separate deeds, to Stuart Warren on January 15, 1944. Forrester and Stuart Warren were named as joint tenants two weeks later. Forrester Warren, his wife Mary Ellen, and their children Forrest and Linda moved to the property in 1953. Later, the family moved to the white house next door, using the Red House for storage. Linda Warren Seek and her husband Brad were the last to occupy the house, from 1959 to 1964 (Seek, pers. comm. 2001), and she inherited the property outright after Forrester's death in 1992. Upon Linda Seek's death, the property was sold in 1999 to Greenspace, a Land Conservancy, ending the span of 80 years of use by the several members of the Warren family.

Land Use

While the data from Deeds about the legal transfers may be accepted, the oral histories differ in the details about who lived where, and did what, when. Information regarding the immediate neighborhood of the buildings on Center Street is gradually emerging. Hesperian Lane was not drawn or identified on the Harris map of 1874, but it was clearly defined and formed the western property boundary at some time during the Gans ownership (Cambria n.d.). The Sanborn maps that span the period from 1886 to 1895 and variously attributed photographs illustrate a large one and one-half story dwelling with a gable roof (Figure 7), substantially longer north-south than it is wide, located on the property slightly back from the street. This was the home supposedly built by George Rothschild for his wife Bertha.

The 1913 Sanborn map and photographs taken later than 1895 depict a totally different dwelling, a smaller one-story structure nearly square with a crested hip roof. Contemporary photographs and measurements confirm that the building depicted on the 1913 map is the dwelling currently located on Center Street and known as the Red House. One source reported that Widow Gans rented the house in 1918 to William and Lily Warren prior to their purchase (Seek, pers. comm. 2001). The residence consisted of four rooms and a low shed wing at the south side of the house which was likely the original kitchen later detached by William Warren soon after his acquisition in 1919, and moved to another location on the lot to house Calista Stilts Warren (Myrtle Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000). This would have prompted the addition of Room C to serve as the kitchen.

The 1913 Sanborn Map depicts the Red House set farther back from Center Street than the present siting. It still had its original kitchen and neither of the two additions. By 1926,

Figure 7. Cambria, ca. 1875. Rothschild/Gans house is at center of photo.

the Red House had been moved forward on the lot, and attained its current configuration. It is possible that the four-room core was moved and set onto a new foundation when either of the additions was joined. It now contained the front portion, consisting of four rooms (Section A), the Joss House, and a kitchen (Room C). The Joss House, Room B, was moved about 200 feet from the back of the property and attached to the Warren family residence prior to drawing this map . The Chinese apparently abandoned the buildings of the Chinese Center during or prior to the early 1920s, and William Warren razed the others. During the period of the Warren occupation, Room B became a diningroom (Nicholson, pers. comm. 2000), living room and later an office, and Room C continued to function as the kitchen and diningroom (Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001).

Inside the house, William Warren operated the private Cambria Telephone Company for a time with three operators. The service included a phone, batteries, and upkeep of the line for $1.00 per month, or simple hook-ups for 50 cents a month if the subscribers owned their own phones (Hamilton 1974:35). Forrester Warren did some planting on the property, cultivating to about 6 to 8 inches and regularly finding clay marbles, Chinese coins, and doll parts. The family also raised sheep near the creek ca. 1953-1960. On the west side near Hesperian Lane, was a large horse barn, later used for storage with a loading dock and the family dumping area. The willow thicket along the western bank grew from a row of saplings which Forrester had planted as a fence line (Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001).

Not all shown on the Sanborn maps but visible on photographs of various dates is a clutter of outbuildings on the property in back of the residence. They seem to represent barns, later garages, and other outbuildings. The County Residential Building Record, updated to 1970, noted that two sheds and a barn had been removed by 1953, and two sheds and a garage were still present. On historical photos where the Chinese structures are visible, the one called the joss house has a porch, asymmetrical vents under the gables, and a parapet, or false front. Two possible privies may be discerned in their vicinity along with several board fences (Figures 8 and 9).

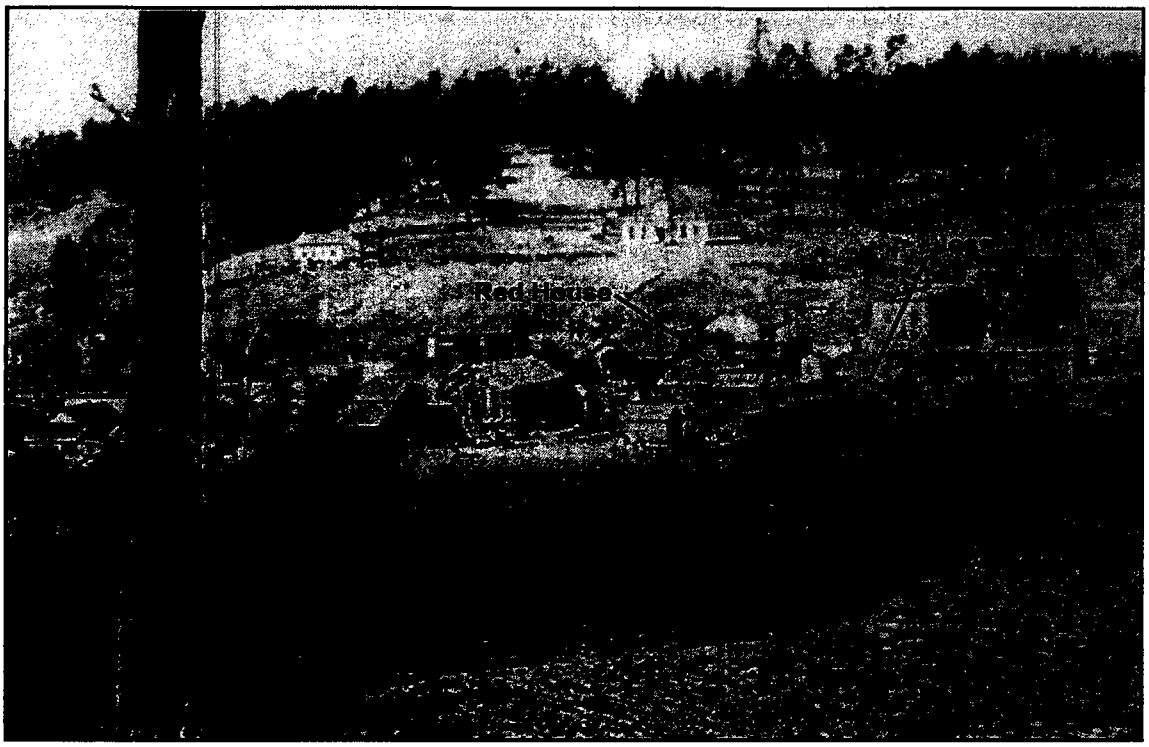

Figure 8. Chinese Center in 1906.

Figure 9. Chinese Center in 1925.

Interpretation

Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, of the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, has commented that the temple building was probably a branch of the Chee Kung [variously spelled Kong] Tong. Dr. Chung further observed that Santa Rosa Creek runs in front of the structure, therefore it complies with the ideal in *feng shui*. On viewing pictures of the altar, the original turquoise paint on the interior walls, and the red paint on the interior altar seat, she noted that the design of the altar appears to be similar to one found at the Chee Kung Tong building in Dutch Flat Museum, Placer County, California. The altar in Cambria was also comparable in its simplicity to others found in the small Chinese enclaves of Eureka, Nevada and Silver City, Montana. The altar in Cambria would have been decorated with two candlesticks, incense bowls, a rectangular bowl, and a pair of vases containing flowers. As for the exterior color, tong buildings were typically painted red (Chung, pers. comm. 2001a).

Dr. Chung analyzed the sign fragment displaying Chinese characters that was reused as a drain board in the kitchen of the Warren home. The large character in the center of the sign was translated as *Wu*, which means military and is the principal reference to the god figure *Guandi* (also spelled *Kuan Ti*), the God of War, a deity not found in Buddhist temples (Chace 1990). In this case it refers to the continuation of Chinese rulers. The King of Wu, who was the first ruler of the Zhou Dynasty, represents the beginning of the tradition of continuous rule in China. During the period when Chinese came to Chinese Center, the homeland was under the rule of the Manchu government. The date found on the sign was transcribed as Guangxu (the year of Emperor) twenty-fourth year or 1899 on the Western calendar.

Since a structure labeled "joss house" is drawn on the Sanborn map of 1895, the year 1899 on the sign may refer to a replacement of an older structure, or to a rededication to *Guandi* during the peak of Chee Kung Tong activities in California. *Guandi* was the primary deity for all the branches of the Chee Kung Tong from 1870s to 1914. He symbolized unity and brotherhood and represents the spiritual strength and sacredness of their cause.

The history of the Chee Kung, or *Zhigongtang*, spans more than 200 years. The tong, also known as the Active Justice Society, was one of many secret fraternal societies that provided for the needs of Chinese living in the United States. The origin of this society can be traced to the Hongmen of Guangdong province of southeastern China. It was established in 1674 as an anti-Manchu organization dedicated to the overthrow of the Manchu Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Their goal was to re-establish the Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The Chinese were accustomed to organizing into groups such as kinship and district associations, fraternities and religious affiliations to protect against external dangers. These groups also shared information from within China and outside of China. In the

United States the Chee Kung Tong provided services to members regardless of kinship or birthplace requirements, so any Chinese in the vicinity could join. By the 1870s and 1890s, practically every Chinese community in the United States had a branch of this or a comparable organization. When Dr. Sun Yat-sen began his fund-raising for the Chinese revolution after the turn of the century, he turned to the Chee Kung Tongs in the United States for donations and received much support (Chung 1999:1-8).

The Chee Kung Tong built impressive lodges in the cities. In the 1870s and 1880s, two-story structures were built, such as those found in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and Monterey, California and Tuscarora, Nevada. The first floor typically comprised areas for recreation, cooking, and a dorm room for travelers and the caretaker. The caretakers were typically old men, who were selected in a variety of ways, employed to take care of the association hall. A Chee Kung Tong lodge doesn't have a priest, yet its practices are similar to the Masonic Order in that a member familiar with the rituals officiates. The leaders of the tongs were usually local men who held wealth and status within the Chinese community. A single-story tong building, like the one in Cambria, would have the altar and deity toward the back of the room (Chung, pers. comm. 2001a).

In urban areas the Chinese Six Companies performed political and commercial activities, while in rural Chinese communities the Chee Kung Tong took their place and served as the local meeting hall, acted as an intermediary between the Chinese and the host community. and as the government in absentia. Other services performed by the Chee Kung Tong provided community protection, an artificial family, lodging for travelers, an employment agency, financial aid (credit could be given for the establishment of businesses), and assistance with funeral and burial arrangements. Death insurance was part of the annual fee paid to the society by members. This tong also sponsored recreational activities such as gambling and the celebration of festivals and holidays. The Chee Kung Tong continued their political activities in the United States from approximately 1854 until they achieved their goal of overthrowing the Manchu government in 1911. Afterward the tong buildings housed different activities.

Primary source material regarding the Chinese in Cambria has not been found to date, so historians and archaeologists must interpret the available material. The data suggest that the building known as the Chinese temple or joss house was also a branch of the Chee Kung Tong. However, this building could have simply been an informal social or community center for Chinese in the vicinity. Wilfred Lyons, local resident, suggested another configuration of the Chinese building known as the joss house. He recalled the building as a two-room structure (pers. comm. 2001). If the building were a two-room structure while occupied by the Chinese, then the first room, where people entered, would have been used for exchanging news, gambling, and socializing. It would have contained plain walls with little decoration other than the names of the donors. The second room would be more expensively decorated, the best the community could buy. However, there is presently no evidence in the Red House that this addition ever had a partition within the one room, or that a second chamber had been detached from it incident to the relocation.

Both the east wall, that contains the double doors marking the original entrance, and the west wall are integral to Room B and show no signs of modification.

The Chinese workers who came to Cambria on the weekends and holidays and congregated in the Chinese Center as a place where they could relax away from work and interact with their countrymen. In these buildings they could gamble, cook, and speak in their native language. In the association hall they were able to maintain their connection to their homeland by continuing their political and spiritual beliefs. Here they also practiced their traditional ways and ceremonies, such as the celebration of the Lunar New Year, *Ching Ming*, and other ceremonies.

It appears that these Chinese enjoyed at least a superficially pleasant relationship with their neighbors in Cambria, although episodes of hostility are reported at the mines and the laundry on Bridge Street (Hamilton 1974:82, 92). Chinese at the Center bought chickens and pigs from the local merchants and ranchers and shared candy with the children of the township. The Soto sisters and Myrtle Nicholson share fond childhood memories of the men who lived at the Chinese Center. Moreover, at least one of the local residents of Cambria, Mr. Soto, gave assistance, extended credit, and was trusted by Chinese abalone gatherers when they experienced trouble with the law.

These first generation pioneers were hard-working men who continued their ties to their homeland. By combining archival, architectural, and archaeological information, a more complete picture of the Chinese and a way of life in Cambria will be recorded, explored, and interpreted for future generations.

The Structure

As seen in February 2001, the structure called the Red House has undergone additional deterioration from the conditions reported by Parker in 1993. His designations of areas A, B, and C (Figure 10) will be used in the description for the sake of continuity. Some details of the exterior were obscured by the dense growth of roses, honeysuckle, and nasturtium, while portions of the original interiors were inaccessible because of roof-fall, fire damage, modification, and unstable flooring. The roof over Room C, apparently intact in 1993, has now fallen in, and the eastern wall of Area A has fallen outward in the northeast portion. For ease of reference in the discussion, north is assumed to be Center Street, and west is Hesperian Lane.

As a generalization, all lumber observed in the three sections is dimensional, and the only nominal pieces are within the modifications made by the Warren family. Milling was accomplished with circular saws, and no square section nails were observed anywhere in either the superstructure or substructure. All sections utilized a construction technique sometimes referred to as box-and-strip, applied where vertical planks are nailed to a bottom sill and top plate, with the cracks covered with thin batten strips, and no framing

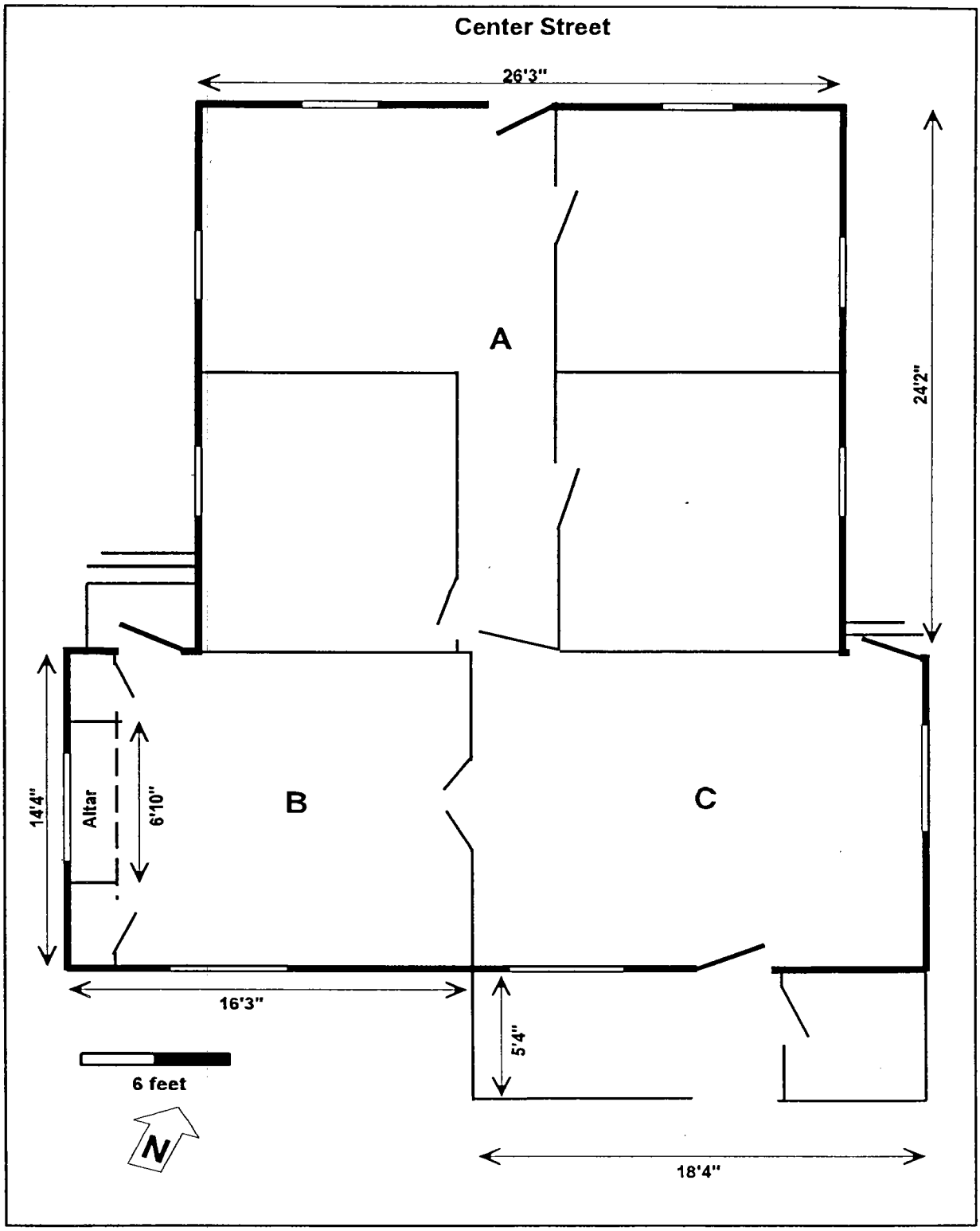

Figure 10. Floor Plan

members used underneath. The method requires a minimum of wood and was popular in the western states beginning in the late nineteenth century (Carley 1994:176).

Various considerations were utilized in the relative dating of the structural elements. The round wire nails observed in all parts of the Red House were first produced in the U. S. in the 1870s and in universal use by ca. 1900 (Howard 1989:55). Rim locks were available from ca. 1840 until 1925; the types found in all sections of the Red House are typical of the period 1890-1910. The same range applies to the jet and porcelain doorknobs. The window hardware, including the cast iron sash locks in Area A were in use by the 1870s, and the prefabricated sash units were available throughout California in the 1880s. Concrete was not commonly in use for residential construction until 1900-1905. The three parts are described individually below.

Area A

Figure 11. Red House, Area A

Area A is the "front" of the composite structure which faces Center Street. It is one story, with a hip roof of moderate pitch (Figure 11). This portion is a four-square form composed of four rooms each measuring approximately 11 ft 10 inches by 12 feet 1 inch, divided by a center hall 2 feet 7 inches wide. - The front elevation is a three bay symmetrical facade with a central door flanked by a 2-over-2 double hung sash window on each side. The door has five panels with reeded molding and a one light horizontal transom overhead. The door has a rim lock with a jet knob, rosette, and key plate only on the exterior. The front steps are missing. The door and window trims are composed of 5½ inch plain board with cornice heads. All door openings are 6 feet 5 inches high. The eaves are boxed and overhang approximately 12 to 14 inches.

The walls of the structure are 1 x 12 inch planks joined with thin beveled battens 3 inches wide. These walls are one plank thick, made of Cambria pine (R. Hawley, pers. comm. 2001), and extremely termite eaten. Beveled baseboards 9½ inches wide are used along the base of the planks on the north wall, extending around the west wall to the edge of the northern window, to strengthen the connection. These were integral to the structure, as the battens stop at the baseboard. Similar baseboards are applied to the interior in all rooms and the hall. A skirt of two horizontal 10-12 inch planks extends from the baseboards to the ground, masking the substructure. At the top of the walls, a frieze band

10 inches wide has been placed over the wall planks. The sill plate of the north wall is 6 x 6 inch lumber, lap jointed at the corners, while the east sill is made of 4 x 6 inch members. There are no corner posts or other structural elements in any of the walls of Area A other than the vertical wall planks.

The roof rafters are 2 x 4 inches, with wood shingle roofing over the planks. Historical photos show a hip roof with a short east-west ridge and some sort of ornamental cresting - a typical Victorian decorative element.

The interior has high ceilings of 12-13 feet, formed of 8 inch planks. Interior partitions are also made of 8 inch vertical planks, one plank thick, and these are largely responsible for holding up the ceiling. The floor joists are 2 x 5 inches, 24 inches apart on center, supporting 5 inch floor boards which are butt jointed and very susceptible to cave-in in their present condition. The floors have been covered with a linoleum typical of the 1930s-1940s. A 1938 newspaper fragment was observed under the linoleum in the southwest room.

There is no east wall to the northwest room, nor is there evidence of having been one. In the original configuration, this was most likely the livingroom or a parlor. Doors from the center hall into the southwest and southeast rooms are offset, i.e., do not face each other.

The walls and ceiling have been lined with a thin linen/muslin to which two or three layers of wallpaper have been applied. The southeast room has been surfaced with modern plywood panels, but there is probably wallpaper underneath. Samples were taken from the hall and the southwest room. Although different, both have a tan background with a pattern of alternating stripes and floral elements (Figure 12). These were common late Victorian patterns but the examples were too small to identify exact date or manufacturer. The sample from the southwest room is three layers thick, with the most recent being tan with green foliage and fugitive red flowers.

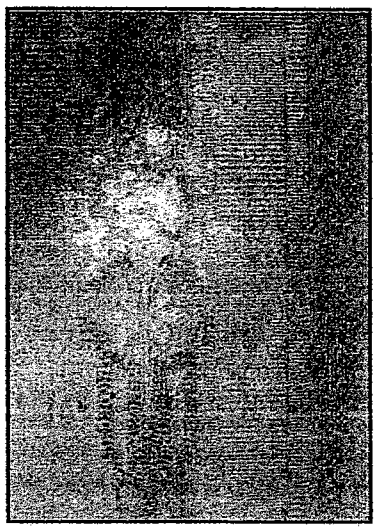

Figure 12. Wallpaper, southwest room, Area A

There are two windows in the west wall, one in each room. Both are 2-over-2, pre-fabricated units, protruding 4 inches into each room out from the plank walls. They have patterned cast iron sash locks. It is likely that there was similar fenestration in the two east rooms.

Room B

This section is the single room joined to the southwest corner of Area A, which been called the Chinese temple (Figure 13). It is a one story gabled structure whose ridgeline runs north-south. It is board and batten construction with wall planks 1 x 8 inches, thin 3 inch batten strips, and 6 inch corner boards, all fastened with round wire nails. In contrast

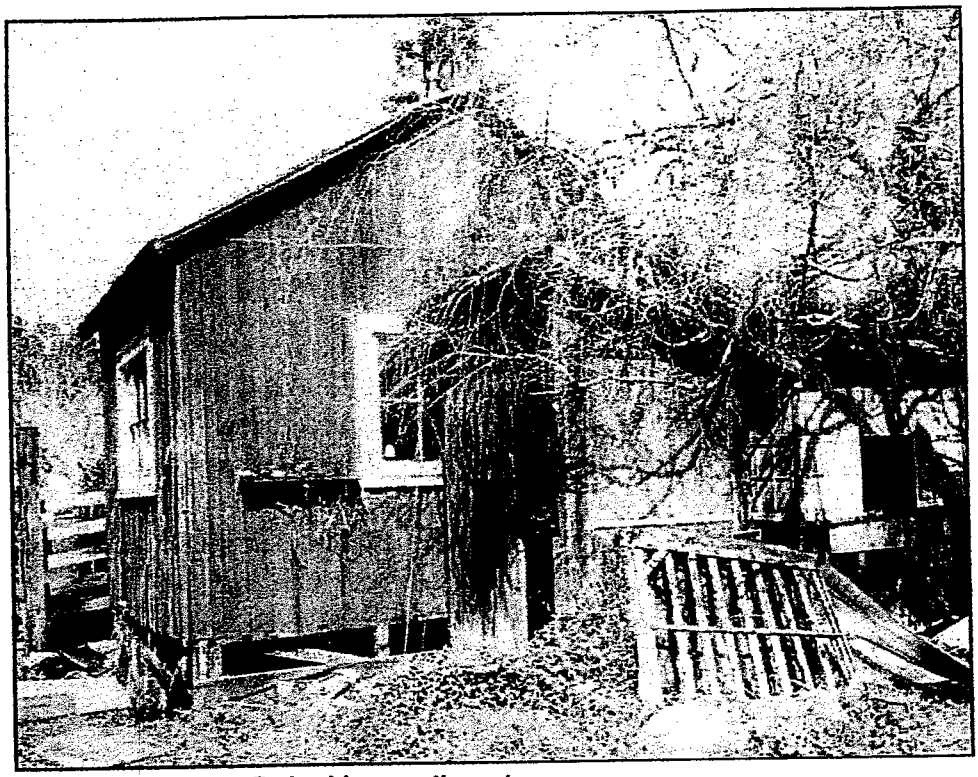

Figure 13. Room B, looking northeast

to Area A, the planks are redwood, rather than pine. There are no corner posts or other vertical structure.

The roof is clad with wood shingles on the west slope, with some roll roofing near the peak. On the east slope, wood shingles are present under metal sheet roofing. The overhang of the boxed eaves is approximately 8 inches. On the south eave, there is a short section of molding identical to the crown molding used in the interior. The rafters appear to be 2 x 4s reduced at the eave overhangs to 1½ inch depth.

The present entrance is at the west end of the north side, approached by a framed landing and steps. The corner post of the landing rests on a concrete pad inscribed "July 1977." This replaced a direct drop from the door, without a landing (F. Warren, pers. comm. 2001). The door is a four panel type, two long vertical panels, molded and raised, over two smaller vertical panels. The trim is 3 inch plain board. There is a rim lock with rounded corners on the interior, a rosette and key plate on the outside, and white porcelain knobs. The cast iron hinges have a dendritic filigree and tapered finial pins (Figure 14).

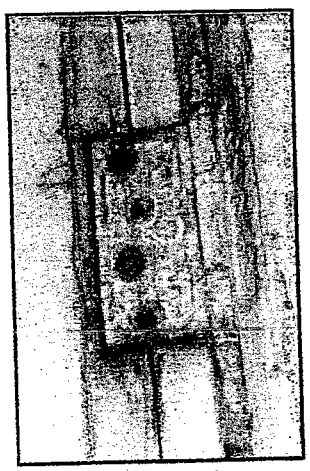

Figure 14. Cast iron hinge.

A pair of double doors is centered on the east wall, now connecting to Room C. Each leaf is narrow, 20½ inches wide, with one glass panel over one square panel over two vertical panels with applied

moldings (Figure 15). The northern leaf has a mortised lockset with stamped steel knob and escutcheon plate, and cast iron hinges similar to those on the door to the exterior; the south leaf has a spring-loaded cast iron latch with a pull chain at the top. The latch is embossed SARGENT & CO. The door trim is 6 inch plain board. These doors are 6 feet 11 inches high, compared to all other doors in the three structures which are uniformly 6 feet 5 inches.

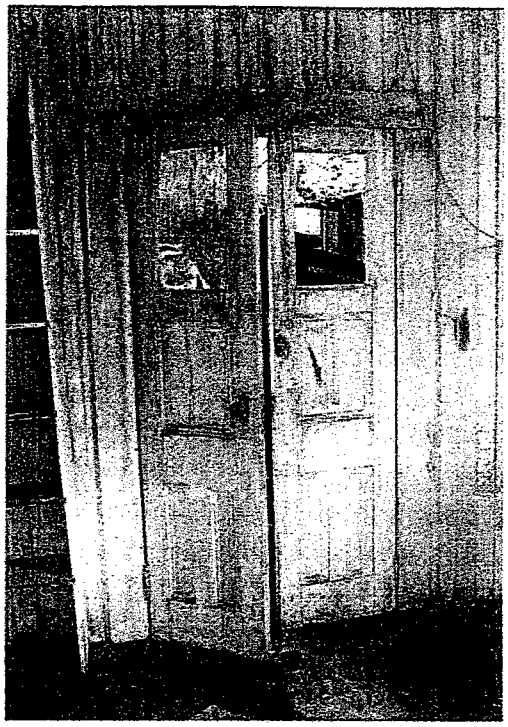
Figure 15. Room B, double door.

All the interior walls and the ceiling are clad with 3¼ inch beaded tongue-and-groove redwood, vertical on the walls and running north-south on the ceiling. There is crown molding at all of the wall-ceiling junctions, also used to frame the alcove at the west end of the room. The ceiling follows the slope of the roof on the east and west side for the width of 17-18 board widths, and then is flat. At the center of the room, the ceiling is 11 feet 5½ inches high. At the east wall, the height from floor to the top of the crown molding is 8 feet 11 inches. There is a single lighting fixture at present, a suspended 2-tube fluorescent typical of the 1940s, plus dangling wires which apparently once held a second fixture.

There is a rectangular vent with 3 inch trim and mortised louvers set high on the north wall, east of center. On the south wall, in mirror placement, is a similar vent which has been modified. The louvers have been removed and infilled with drywall with a circular cut-out to accommodate a stovepipe.

The floorboards are 5¼ inch tongue-and-groove. The structure originally rested on a wood sill of 4 x 4s, but is now supported by plank-clad stud cripple walls on a poured in place concrete perimeter sill. The stem wall is made of 2 x 4s clad with horizontal planks. These features, along with the 4 x 4 inch intermediate posts which support the floor, would date to the time when the structure was moved to this location. The posts rest on tapered cylindrical poured plinths. Some of the latter appear polygonal, as if small nail kegs might have been used as forms. The posts placed along the center line of Room B support the east-west floor beam which, in turn, supports north-south joists. The floor joists are set 28 inches on center. The vertical wall planks are nailed directly to the sill plate. An alcove has been created at the center of the west wall by flanking floor to ceiling cabinets (Figure 16). The niche is 2 feet 2 inches deep and 6 feet 10 inches wide. The cabinets on either side are made of the same beaded 3¼ inch tongue-and-groove used throughout the structure and rise 10 feet 3 inches to the slope of the ceiling. Doors 6 feet 5½ inches tall have been cut into each cabinet secured by patterned cast iron latches. They are constructed with beveled horizontal cleats, and one of the shelves within is a continuation

of the shelf in the niche. Between the cabinets is a shelf or bench 6 foot 10 inches wide surfaced with 5¼ inch tongue-and-groove boards running east-west. Below this are two additional cabinets cut into the wall plane; their doors are made with horizontal cleats braced by diagonal lengths of the tongue-and-groove. They lack latches and are hung with strap hinges. The surface of the counter rests on a 2 x 4 which runs clear across the wall through both of the side cabinets. The same tongue-and-groove boards are laid on the beam within the closets, but these are unpainted.

Figure 16. Room B, Altar area

The top of the niche is formed by the sloped ceiling, and the whole is framed by a narrow (1¾ inch) recurved molding which is a continuation of the crown molding along the top of the walls. This descends along both edges of the niche and continues horizontally along the lower edge of a vertical 6 inch panel below the counter. Scraping revealed that under the existing white paint, the walls within and beside the niche were blue, the counter top and panel below it were red, and the moldings beside and below the niche were yellow.

Two windows have been cut into the room, one on the south wall and the other above the counter in the alcove on the west wall. Both are identical, with a fixed sash set horizontally with plain board trim and eight lights. Exterior trim on the west window is 7 inches. There is a splice in the tongue-and-groove wall above the east side of the south window 3 feet 7½ inches wide and 9½ inches high, and a comparable splice below it. The framing is centered over the vertical line of joining and also extends farther down the wall on the east side of the existing window. These observations suggest that there had been an earlier opening in this location, taller and narrower than the present one.

The structure was examined from underneath in the attempt to understand how this structure was joined to Room C. As viewed from below, the north-south 4 inch sill plate of B is visible, to which one thickness of vertical planks has been attached to the east side. Butted to these planks is a 2 x 6 inch floor joist of Room C. There are no vertical planks attached to the side of the joist, and no double wall between the buildings was visible.

Inspection from the interior in a further effort to reveal the method of joining B and C revealed only a little information from a gap in the head jamb of the double door. The east wall appears to comprise three vertical plank thicknesses, plus layers of tongue-and-groove on both sides. One of these planks must be the same wall visible from below. It is possible that one might be the remains of a false front or parapet. If so, then one of the planks of the B or C wall must be resting on top of the floor joist, rather than nailed to the

side as elsewhere. This may be resolved when viewed from above when the roofing is removed. The composite plank wall between B and C rises higher than the wall height of B. Additional information is needed about the plank dimensions to determine whether this represents the false front said to have existed, or the west wall of Room C.

The east eave is cut off even with the vertical wall plane of C. The lowest courses of wood shingles have been removed and replaced with an 8 inch wooden plank placed horizontally along the eave edge and projecting slightly beyond the plane of the wall. This seems to support the contention of a parapet. Its removal would have required removing the lowest shingles, and replacing them with roofing material comparable in thickness. The plank may have served this purpose.

Room C

The structure is a one story space joined to A and B (Figure 17). Built of vertical planks with a shed roof sloping down toward the south, it contained only round wire nails. The floorboards are 5 inch tongue-and-groove. The original exterior south wall was in line with the south wall of B, and the extension containing a bathroom is a later addition. Nail holes indicate that the original south wall did have battens. In the addition, the roof and floor members are attached to the outer side of the main section, with wider spacing of the joists and rafters. Wall planks of the addition are 10 inches wide, compared to the 1 x 12 planks used in the original portion.

Figure 17. Room C, looking northwest

A group of three six-over-six double hung windows is centered on the east wall. A fixed sash window over the sink west of center on the original south wall is a later modification, but has been blocked by the addition. There is a four panel door facing Center Street on the north side where it extends beyond the east wall of A. Identical to the other four panel doors in the building, this has a rim lock and white porcelain knobs. The door connecting the main portion of C to the addition on the south side is comparable; its knob is missing but it has a rim lock and 6 inch trim. The door of the bathroom in the addition had three long panels over three short panels with a rim lock and white porcelain knobs, matching all of the doors in section A (Figure 18). The tub is long and narrow with a sloped back and no feet. The basin is the same porcelain over iron construction. It has a double faucet with porcelain inserts typical of the early 1900s.

Viewed from below, C rests on a poured in place concrete sill with a stud stem wall of 2 x 4s clad with horizontal planks. These features would date from the time when the structure was moved to this location. They would be contemporaneous with the 4 x 4 inch intermediate posts supporting the floor, which rest on tapered cylindrical poured concrete plinths. These are identical to those in place below B, with some appearing polygonal. One post is supported on a large rock. The flooring rests on a 4 x 4 inch sill plate with wall planks nailed to the outer side. The joists are 2 x 6 inches set 24 inches on center, supported on 4 x 4 inch floor beams. The posts are along the centerline, as observed in Room B.

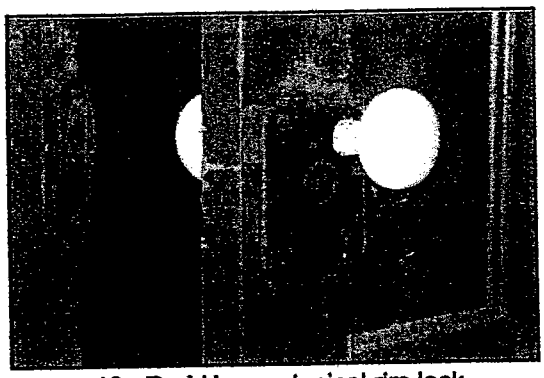

Figure 18. Red House, typical rim lock

The floor joist abutting B is a 2 x 6. There would most likely have been a heavier 4 x 4 in place in the original structure, which suggests that the historical west wall of C has been removed, and the structure somewhat shortened, to match the dimension of B.

In its most recent use, the room contained a sink on the south wall, below the window which is now blocked. It has been said that the drainboard on the east side of the basin was a wooden plank bearing Chinese characters on the underside. This was not available for viewing, but from the stain left on the floor by the sink base, it would have been approximately 2 feet 7 inches long.

Conclusions

There is satisfactory evidence that Room B was once a part of Chinese Center and that it was the structure discerned on Figures 8 and 9. It is comparable in size and board-and-batten construction, has a similar roof pitch, some residual evidence of the false front, and the same unusual off-center vents in the gables. It is most obviously distinguished from the other parts of the building by the use of redwood rather than pine, and the 6 foot 11 inch door, compared to all the others in the home which are 6 feet 5 inches. By eyewitness accounts, historical maps and photographs, and comparison to other temples built in rural settings - as opposed to the more substantial and elaborate temples and association halls in urban Chinatowns - the association of this structure with a social, fraternal, or religious function for the residents or visitors of Chinese Center is secure.

Traits in common with the temples in Marysville, Oroville, Weaverville, and Mendocino (Chace 1991) include the double entrance doors, lack of windows prior to the relocation, and the original orientation facing a flow of water which is compatible with *feng shui*. The Cambria building is less elaborate than some of the others in lacking an additional room for a caretaker; whether there were side altars or shrines cannot be known. It should be emphasized that there was only a very small, relatively short, and intermittent occupation

in Cambria, and there is no indication of family formation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the temple or lodge would be simple.

The Mendocino temple, also built of wood, is painted red with green doors, trim, and altar. Nicholson remembered that the Cambria temple was green or turquoise both inside and exterior, with a red altar seat (pers. comm. 2001). M. Soto described the altar as red, gold, and blue with a gold Buddha (pers. comm. 2000), and she told another interviewer that there was a picture over the altar, there were benches facing the altar, and the room smelled of incense (Dunlap, pers. comm. 2001). At the *Wu Ti Miao* temple in Mendocino, there is a painting of a seated *Kuan Ti* with standing white-faced and black-faced figures standing behind the representation (Chace 1991:11). Possibly there was some similar depiction in Cambria.

No documentation has been found to identify the builder of either the Red House or Room B. There are at least three other near-square, hip-roofed dwellings comparable to the Red House clearly visible on Lee Street in a turn-of-the-century photograph of Cambria; this was obviously a popular pattern. The core designated as Area A and both additions exemplify basic vernacular forms utilizing materials and techniques which were typical of the period shortly before and after the turn of the century. The most important distinction between A/C and B is the wood used in framing. The local pine of A/C is cheaper and less durable, as time has demonstrated; the choice may also suggest an earlier date of construction. The redwood of B, more resistant to termite damage, was to become widely available by the 1880s, or could have been chosen by the Chinese to reflect the importance of the building. Who actually held the hammer and nails is not known. The Chinese in Cambria were largely fishermen or seaweed harvesters, and most were said to have come to the Center on weekends, holidays, or days off work. It is possible that they built the structure. On the other hand, there is nothing in the architectural form or technology that is traditionally Chinese, and it seems more likely that they commissioned the construction by any of the many carpenters in town at the time (Dunlap, pers. comm. 2001).

What the structure is most accurately to be called - Joss House, Temple, Tong or Association Hall - remains to be decided. Joss House should not be considered, as it has had negative connotations and fallen out of use (Lydon, pers.comm. 2000). Temple is perhaps a misnomer in the sense that such structures were nondenominational, and all worshipers were welcome. The word tong has also been subject to misunderstandings. Originally denoting only a hall, parlor, or place to meet and talk (Smith 2000:n.p.), they were organized in the early days by immigrants who did not have overriding district or kinship affiliations, for benevolent protection and services. They served the same purposes as other Chinese associations, and the larger ones in the cities only later gradually moved into lucrative areas such as gambling, prostitution, or narcotics and came into conflict and disrepute as a result. Given the small size and transient nature of the Cambria population, it is altogether possible that the structure served both fraternal and religious purposes, either together or sequentially. Overlapping functions and terminology are illustrated in Salinas where the Chee Kung Tong built a "temple" (Lydon 1985:296),

or in Watsonville "as in most communities" where the fraternal hall "also doubled as a temple" and the secret society conducted highly ceremonious rituals (Lydon 1985:201). The larger structures were usually tended by a retired Chee Kung Tong member who lit incense to the deity every day and maintained the building although it was generally deserted except for lunar calendar or birthday festivals (Lydon 1985:203).

Both Myrtle Nicholson and the Soto sisters recall at least one deity representation on an altar (pers. comms. 2000), presupposing a temple function, while the translation of the drainboard fragment suggests some association with *WU*, a martial figure typically representative of the Chee Kung Tong. If the word *Miao* were present on the fragment, it would be greater evidence for a temple. At Marysville, the *Bak Kai* Temple was a *Zhigongtang* (Chinese Free Masons) headquarters before it became a temple after 1911-1916 when the revolution in China was over (Chung, e-mail 2001c). The Chee Kung Tong in Los Angeles was also known as Chinese Masonic Hall while raising funds to support the activities of Dr. Sun Yat-sen against the Manchus (Greenwood 1996:21; Smith 2000:n.p.). The sign on the Chee Kung Tong temple in Marysville read "Chinese Freemasons Hall" (Lydon 1985:267), suggesting a further association which has not been reported for Cambria. Although the American Masons usually denied any such connection, members of the Chee Kung Tong often alluded to a linking between their international organization and that of the Masonic fraternity in order to enhance their status and project an image of patriotism and power (Chung 1999:4-5). The word temple has thus been applied broadly enough that it encompasses both religious and fraternal implications and is appropriate for this structure.

In the cities, the Chee Kung Tong had the funds to construct two story headquarters, such as those in Los Angeles (Greenwood 1996:22), Monterey, and Santa Cruz (Lydon 1985:379, 267). Moving them in response to natural conditions, community pressures, or land development was not unknown. The large temple in Santa Cruz was dissassembled from one location and reconstructed elsewhere, facing the river, in 1905 (Lydon 1985:437). The temple in Monterey was moved after a fire (Lydon 1985:379). Given the frequency with which so many structures were moved around in Cambria, the relocation of this simple frame building after the Chinese were gone and the property owner had use for it to expand his own residence is neither unprecedented nor surprising.

The Residential Building Record (1970) estimated that the residence now fronting Center Street was built in 1890, Addition 1 (Room B) was built in 1900, and Addition 2 (Room C) was built in 1910 (SLO County Assessor). Whether the terms Addition 1 and Addition 2 were intended to reflect the actual sequence of construction, order of attachment, or simply administrative convenience is not clear. These estimated dates can be refined; for example, the Sanborn maps depict the temple on its first known site by 1895. The same, or a replacement, was in a different location by 1913, and the drainboard sign date of 1899 may refer to a rededication after such a move, or the inauguration of a new building. The temple building (B) was added to the main structure in 1925-1926, after Room C. The observation that the rear (south) walls of both rooms are aligned indicates that the rear wall of Room C was adjusted to match the width of Room B when the latter was added.

Based on the architectural analysis, oral histories, and available documents, it is our current opinion that the earliest front residence attributed to Rothschild was built in or about the 1870s-1880s. There is no current evidence to reveal whether it was originally built in this location or relocated here from elsewhere in Cambria. According to available photographs, It had been removed by 1895, and the core of the Red House was either built on site or moved to this location in the same year or soon thereafter. Sources differ about whether Room C was joined to it in 1917 or 1919. Room B was attached between 1925, when a historical photograph shows it still in place beside the creek, and 1926 when the Sanborn map of that year was created. The "porch" added to C that contains the bathroom was the last accretion, dating to the 1930s (Forrest Warren, pers. comm. 2001). The aviary at the rear is a relatively recent addition.

Which of the structures depicted as Chinese Center on the Sanborn maps became Room B cannot be determined with absolute certainty. However, congruent details visible in photographs, together with comparison to known temples, are presumptive evidence that the local lore and oral histories as to its identification and function are valid in this instance. It is not resolved whether the building labeled joss house on the 1895 map is the same structure, relocated, depicted on the 1913 map. Since the drainboard sign is dated 1899, the structure in place by 1895 was either relocated and rededicated, or a new one built. There is no evidence that the temple ever had two rooms, or that two Chinese structures were added to the Red House.

While the street frontage and Room C of the Red House are greatly deteriorated, Room B is intact, sturdy, and retains its original exterior and interior surfaces, hardware, double doors, and altar bench. It is clearly a very important cultural resource for the Cambria community as a rare and intact example of a religious/fraternal hall built in the vernacular tradition, for Chinese workers employed in the historical seaweed export industry. It is the last physical evidence of Chinese Center to survive, and there is more to be learned from the building. The property as a whole has archaeological potential to address many of the data gaps from all periods of land usage, as well as the historical, architectural, and ethnic values. If present, evidence under the surface can reveal what happened over the years to both the Euroamerican and Chinese populations, their ways of life, relative participation in consumer networks, interaction, changing involvement with the local and regional economies, and additional insight into this microcosm of early community development.

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n.d. Chinese with roasted pig, Cambria. Paul Squibb photograph. On file, San Luis Obispo Historical Society.

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