

Archaeology has become an important source of information about the experiences and daily lives of Chinese railroad workers who built the first transcontinental and subsequent railroads throughout the North American west. Since the 1960s, archaeologists have studied the work camps of Chinese immigrant and Chinese American laborers. Railroad-related artifacts, sites, and landscapes provide a rich source of empirical information about the historical experiences of Chinese railroad workers. The traces that workers left behind serve as silent witnesses to the rhythms of their daily lives: where they lived, the shelters they built, how and what they ate, their health care, their social relations, and the economic networks that were required to supply and sustain the largest industrial workforce in 19th century North American history.

Although archaeologists have studied Chinese Railroad worker sites for more than 50 years, comparable information from Chinese railroad workers' home villages in China has been lacking. Through the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (chineserailroadworkers.stanford.edu), researchers at the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center invited historical archaeologists from Stanford University and other affiliated institutions to join them in investigations of Cangdong Village, a railroad workers' home village in Kaiping City, Guangdong Province (a county level city). On 24 November 2016, the Stanford Archaeology Center, the Guangdong Qiaoxiang Cultural Research Center, and the Guangdong Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of the People's Republic of China established an Intention of Cooperation to facilitate this research. Field research, involving surface survey and subsurface testing, were undertaken at Cangdong Village in December 2016 and December 2017. These investigations were highly successful, resulting in the collection of

an assemblage of material culture that represents the historic patterns of daily life in Cangdong Village during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The ultimate goal of this collaboration is a transnational understanding of the experiences and lives of Chinese railroad workers—their home villages, their travels, the places they worked and lived in North America, their communications with kin back in China, and the economic and cultural influences that transformed their home villages into the forms that they take today.

This book presents the results of this research in four parts. Part 1, *Chinese Railroad Workers in Transnational Perspective*, establishes the basis and rationale for the study as well as its methods, goals, and outcomes. Part 2, *The Archaeology of Chinese Railroad Workers in North America*, introduces the reader to the history and results of archaeological investigations of Chinese railroad worker camps. Chapter 2.1 introduces the archaeological study of Chinese railroad workers. Chapter 2.2 and Chapter 2.3 each present the results of field investigations at two important Chinese workers' camps: Summit Camp, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California; and Promontory Summit in Utah. Chapter 2.4 examines the relationships that formed between Chinese railroad workers and Native Americans. Chapter 2.5 summarizes the research that has been conducted on animal bone recovered from Chinese railroad work camps.

Part 3, *Investigation of a Railroad Worker's Home Village in Kaiping City*, presents the methods and results of the new collaborative research at Cangdong Village. Chapter 3.1 presents the rationale and plan for the investigation. Chapter 3.2 outlines the historical context of the selected case study. Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 3.4 present the methods and results of surface survey and subsurface testing, respectively, documenting the discovery of intact deposits dating to the Late Qing (1875–1912) and Early Republic (1912–1949) eras. Analysis and interpretation of

the artifacts recovered from these deposits are presented in Chapters 3.5 through 3.7, covering topics such as tableware ceramics, animal bone analysis, and plant remains analysis.

Part 4 concludes the book by comparing the material practices of Chinese Railroad Workers in North America with those living in *qiaoxiang* in Guangdong Province. This comparative research reveals six dynamics that shaped their lives and their relations to each other, and identifies new directions for continued research. These themes are: (1) Making Home away from Home; (2) Differences in Market Sources; (3) Consuming the West; (4) Transformation of Village Life; (5) Stability in Village Life; and (6) Emergence of New Cultural Forms. Taken together, these six interpretive themes provide important evidence for the study of lives of Chinese railroad workers on both sides of the Pacific Ocean, and they establish a foundation for future collaborations between North American and Chinese researchers in the years to come.