MARKERS I  Reprint of 1980 journal. Collection of 15 articles on topics such as recording and care of gravestones, resources for teachers, some unusual markers, and carver Ithamar Spauldin of Concord, Mass. and the Connecticut Hook-and-Eye Man. 182 pages, 100 illustrations

MARKERS II  Signed stones in New England and Atlantic coastal states; winged skull symbol in Scotland and New England; early symbols in religious and wider social perspective; Mass. carvers Joseph Barbur, Jr., Stephen and Charles Hartshorn, and carver known as "JN"; Portage County, Wisc. carvers from 1850-1900; and a contemporary carver of San Angelo, Tex. 226 pages, 168 illustrations

MARKERS III  Gravestone styles in frontier towns of Western Mass.; emblems and epitaphs on Puritan gravestones; John Hartshorn's carvings in Essex County, Mass.; and New Hampshire carvers Paul Colburn, John Ball, Josiah Coolidge Wheat, Coolidge Wheat, and Luther Hubbard. 154 pages, 80 illustrations

MARKERS IV  Delaware children's stones of 1840-1899; rural southern gravemarkers; New York and New Jersey carving traditions; camposantos of New Mexico; and death Italo-American style. 180 pages, 138 illustrations

MARKERS V  Pennsylvania German gravestones; mausoleum designs of Louis Henri Sullivan; Thomas Gold and 7 Boston carvers of 1700-1725 who signed stones with their initials; and Canadian gravestones and yards in Ontario and Kings County, Nova Scotia. 240 pages, 158 illustrations

MARKERS VI  Carver John Dwight of Shirley, Mass.; gravestones of Afro-Americans from New England to Georgia; sociological study of Chicago-area monuments; more on New Mexico camposantos; hand symbolism in Southwestern Ontario; an epitaph from ancient Turkey; and a review essay on James Slater's The Colonial Burying Grounds of Eastern Connecticut. 245 pages, 90 illustrations

MARKERS VII  A trilogy on cemetery gates and plot enclosures; the Boston Historic Burying Grounds Initiative; unusual monuments in colonial tidewater Virginia; tree stones in Southern Indiana's Limestone Belt; life and work of Virginia carver Charles Miller Walsh; carvers of Monroe County, Ind.; Celtic crosses; and monuments of the Tsimshian Indians of Western Canada. 281 pages, 158 illustrations

MARKERS VIII  A collection of the pioneering studies of Dr. Ernest Caulfield on Connecticut carvers and their work: fifteen essays edited by James A. Slater and three edited by Peter Benes. 342 pages, 206 illustrations

MARKERS IX  A tribute to the art of Francis Duval; the Mullicken Family carvers of Bradford, Mass.; the Green Man on Scottish markers; photo-essay on the Center Church Crypt, New Haven, Conn.; more on Ithamar Spauldin and his shop; the Almshouse Burial Ground, Uxbridge, Mass.; Thomas Crawford's monument for Amos Binney; Salt Lake City Temple symbols on Mormon tombstones; language codes in Texas German cemeteries; and the disappearing Shaker cemetery. 281 pages, 176 illustrations
People from China have lived in St. Louis, Missouri for almost one hundred and fifty years, but very little material evidence of their early settlement and way of life has remained and very little effort has been made to research their past. One of the few sources that is both accessible and rich in evidence is Valhalla, a large suburban cemetery where the remains of more than two hundred deceased members of the Chinese community are buried. Visitors to this and other cemeteries have long been intrigued by what the gravemarkers, inscriptions and engravings tell about the people who produced them.\(^\text{1}\) Anthropologists, along with scholars from other disciplines, have extended this interest in systematic studies aimed at showing how cemeteries express the beliefs, values and structures of American communities.\(^\text{2}\) The Chinese gravestones in Valhalla add yet another case study, if not another dimension, to this tradition of popular curiosity and scholarly research. The Chinese gravestones allow us to see some of the manifold ways in which members of a Chinese community have attempted to make meaningful their lives and deaths in the American heartland. This essay focuses on two sets of data: first is the arrangement and style of gravemarkers, and second is the inscriptions in Chinese and Roman systems of writing.

**Historical Arrangement of Gravestones**

Chinese burials in St. Louis began with the eastward migration of Chinese laborers after 1869.\(^\text{3}\) With the exception of Ching Foo, whose remains were embalmed and shipped home in 1873, others who lacked sufficient funds were buried without ceremony in unmarked graves. The first recorded ceremony was a Christian service conducted for Wong You, who died in his Pine Street laundry in the autumn of 1879. His remains were interred in a section of the Wesleyan Cemetery located on Olive Street Road, six kilometers west of the city limits.\(^\text{4}\) This and two adjacent sections became the site for all subsequent Chinese burials until the cemetery was closed in 1924.\(^\text{5}\) During these fifty years the Chinese community asserted increasing autonomy over the disposition of its deceased members, first with the help of St. John’s M.E. Church, then the
“Chouteau Avenue Church for Chinamen,” and finally, around the turn of the century, the On Leong Tong. In 1927, the Wesleyan Cemetery was razed in the course of changing land use, and the remains of a hundred Chinese were removed for shipment back to native villages in China. I have found no indication that the Chinese graves in the Wesleyan Cemetery were marked. 

In 1924, the On Leong Tong purchased a section in Valhalla, a large non-sectarian cemetery of lightly wooded hills located in the same vicinity as the Wesleyan Cemetery. This section is located on a hilltop at the northeastern corner of Valhalla. Today it contains thirty-seven square and rectangular gravestones laid flat in the earth and sandwiched between a host of mostly upright stones of European-Americans. Figure 1 illustrates the older style of gravestone in this section, whose dates range from 1924 to 1954. A second section was later opened for Chinese burials in a lower field between the perimeter road and a creek which meanders along the southern edge of the cemetery. Unlike the burial plots in the first section, those in the lower field were purchased piecemeal on the basis of periodic need. The lower field contains 143 flat rectangular stones laid in twelve rows. They date from 1930 to the present. Figure 2 illustrates one of these stones, which are all rectangular in shape.

Along both sides of the lower road there are thirteen upright gravestones with Chinese inscriptions dating from the 1960s. Typical of these is the Jue family gravestone depicted in Figure 3. These stones mark the beginning of a new phase in the mortuary practices of the Chinese community. The upright stones are stylistically heterogeneous and they are individually situated in ways that blur the spatial boundaries between Chinese graves and those of their European-American neighbors. Above the perimeter road in three other sections of the cemetery there are forty-six Chinese gravemarkers which date from 1970. All but two of these are standing upright, including two rather elaborate catafalques. These

Fig. 2 Chyuun-Sauh Leuhng gung mouh (Modified Format). Typical of flat stones in lower field section.

Fig. 3 Jue Family gravestone. Typical of newer, upright stones in various sections.
graves are situated on increasingly higher ground and in clusters that join members of the original Szeyap community from south China with the newer immigrants from other parts of central and eastern China.

The record of Chinese gravemarkers over the past seventy years thus reflects a structural shift in the Chinese community. The initial act of marking graves with stones or other impervious materials and inscribing them in Chinese characters and Roman letters is a de facto claim on permanent residence. The rows of uniform flat stones, which are especially dramatic in the oldest section, where they cut a narrow swath through a sea of upright markers and monuments belonging to European-Americans, mark the graves of individuals who became all but invisible in response to attempts to exclude them from American society. The arrangement of these stones reflects only the simple succession of individual deaths and the undifferentiated corporate unity of the On Leong Tong. Although this phase has lasted down to the present day, it has been truncated by a second phase which continues to gain momentum.

The second phase, which begins with the upright gravestones of the 1960s, reflects a new mode of participation in American society. The upright stones tend to accommodate the contiguous burial of spouses and sometimes their unmarried siblings and children. This reflects the widely reported shift from a "bachelor society" to a "family oriented society." The upright stones break the previous pattern of uniformity by exhibiting a variety of styles, sizes, shapes, materials and decor. These differences express an increasing sense of social differentiation and rising claims on social status within the Chinese community. But they also communicate claims on social status beyond the Chinese community, which is evident in the way that the modest increase in stylistic variation occurs with the dispersal of gravestones into other parts of the cemetery. This dispersal begins in earnest after 1970 and reflects the residential dispersal of members of the living community from the city to the suburbs in that decade. The dispersal of gravestones occurs in small clusters of friends and in-laws that have formed in reference to being "Chinese" in metropolitan St. Louis rather than in reference to being "Chinese" in the Old World.

Fragments of Chinese Literacy

The only feature that distinguishes the Chinese gravemarkers from those of the surrounding European-Americans is the set of inscriptions that employ Chinese writing. The Chinese tradition of literacy is the basis upon which people from China stake their claim to four thousand years of continuous cultural history. This tradition was sustained, but only tenuously and with great effort, in the rural villages from which most of the Valhalla Chinese came. Not all of the earlier immigrants were literate by Chinese standards. Most could read and write their native script, but with varying degrees of difficulty. For those who settled in the American heartland, the simple facts of demography prevented the concentration and reproduction of Chinese literary skills. Moreover, these literary skills, which constituted the core of identity and success in China, were worth almost nothing in the United States. Thus, the advent of an American-born-and-educated generation made the effort to sustain the fragments of this literary tradition all but impossible.

On the other hand, the continuous loss of Chinese literary skills among descendants of the older immigrants has been augmented by a continuous infusion of literary skills into the community by newer immigrants. Thus, the literary skill invested in the Chinese gravestone inscriptions in Valhalla has remained relatively high. In fact, closer scrutiny might show that the literary quality of the Chinese inscriptions, when measured against traditional standards, has actually improved with the passage of time. This is due to the increased educational and economic levels of many newer Chinese immigrants.

The inscriptions in Chinese are ordinarily written by a close friend, an in-law, a member of the immediate family, such as a son or grandson, or even the deceased himself. The inscription on the large upright gravestone of Yee Wing Kee, according to an appendant phrase, is "written by the person in the grave." Self-inscription becomes necessary for those who take pride in the tradition of Chinese literacy but who do not depend on their American-educated children to provide. Other signatures, of which there are only a few, claim the credit for "erecting" the gravestone, and not necessarily for the elegance of the inscription. These bear the signature of a son or "first son," but one is signed, "devoted friend," and followed by the name of an African-American woman. The inscriptions thus display a range of literary talents within the Chinese community.

The characters inscribed on the gravestones can be divided between those that achieve some degree of balance and proportion, which is the hallmark of Chinese calligraphy, and those that convey their own sense
of vitality in more unconventional modes of the written word. The first group can be further divided into the traditional types and styles of calligraphy. For instance, in the first group we find an archaic "seal type" inscription on an upright slab of polished black granite. This stylized form of print, which developed from the earliest forms of Chinese writing, marks the grave of Ting Cheuk Lam. Another example from this group is "Lishu," a square plain form of print first developed by clerks of the Han dynasty. Elements of "Lishu" are found on a catafalque belonging to the Chen family. A "Lishu" style is also in evidence on the humble gravestone of Yee Ming, especially where the side strokes in each character are elongated ("baifen style") to increase the sense of "balance." But the vast majority of the Chinese inscriptions in this first group employ "kaishu," the "regular" block print form that allows increased latitude for self-expression. Compare, for instance, the supple characters that form Leuhng Yik-Laahn's name in Figure 4 with the turgid, almost earthy characters in Cheuhng-Kwing Leih's name in Figure 5 and the deliberate and measured characters in Jiuh Fun-Jeuk's name in Figure 11.

Several inscriptions, for example Eng Hong's inscription in Figure 6, employ some of the formulaic elements of "songti" [Song dynasty typeface] to create an increased sense of precision and personal detachment. Others move in the opposite direction by quickening the motion of the brush into a single continuous flow interrupted only by the succession of characters. At this point the style shifts into a more spontaneous "running hand," or "xingshu." The gravestone inscriptions exhibit only a few halting attempts at "xingshu" style. One of these can be seen in Figure 7, where the characters that inscribe Pang Lew's name alternate between a kind of "walking" "kaishu" and "running" "xingshu." The second group of Chinese inscriptions includes characters that are easy to read but do not adhere to traditional standards of calligraphic
writing. Insofar as these characters are cut into stone and mark the graves of the next of kin, we must assume that they are invested with a high degree of sincerity. This being the case, these inscriptions make the fundamental point that "our Chineseness is disclosed in our language — no matter how it may be written." There is less concern here with appearances ("face-saving") and more concern with the substance of the expression. An especially poignant example of this proposition is the inscription on the marker for Seng Chiu seen in Figure 8. Here the significance of the script is in the content of the phrase, king-ngoi dik fu-chan [Respected and Loved Father] rather than in the rough and ready hand that produced it. This is not only a traditional literary expression, embedded in a modern format (to be discussed later), but it is one of the rare expressions of affection on the Chinese gravestones in Valhalla.

Another example is the inscription of Chinese characters found on the stone marking the grave of an American woman of African descent named Juanita Chin (see Fig. 17). The Chinese inscription transcribes her given name, Wahn-ne-douh, and implies with the word niuh-si that she was not married to the man whose Romanized surname her gravestone bears (to be discussed later). Here again, the significance of the inscription is not in the elegance of the hand that wrote it, but rather in the insistence that this American woman of African descent have her name not just inscribed on a stone, but inscribed in Chinese, and that she thus be included in the memory bank of the old community.

A residual category of literacy might include mistakes in writing the character or cutting it into the stone. Common mistakes can be found in several characters missing simple strokes. The more glaring mistakes are due to misunderstandings between the (European-American) stonecut-
ter and his (Chinese-American) customer. Lacking knowledge of Chinese, the stonecutter depends on his customer to supply a pattern scaled to the exact size and shape of the figures to be cut. With pattern in hand, the stonecutter exhibits a keen technical ability to cut the minutiae of each character, especially when he cuts the Chinese name inscription sideways on Yee Ming's gravestone, or upside down and backwards on Jim Leong's gravestone (Fig. 9).

This residual category might also include characters that appear to be mistakes but may in fact be intentional manipulations of the iconic and literary conventions. For example, a given name on Huie Wing's gravestone adds the "heart" radical to the character for "laughing." The character is written with the same clarity and self-confidence as is evident in the rest of the inscription, but it can not be found in a dictionary. This suggests that Huie Wing's given name belongs entirely to the spoken vernacular. In order to inscribe it, therefore, a special graph has been fashioned out of the phonetic and semantic resources of the literary language. Another apparent mistake, when seen in the overall text of the stone, turns out to be an intentional act of ritual prophylaxis - or "superstition." In instances where one spouse precedes the other to their common resting place, the gravestone is frequently inscribed with both their names. This creates a potentially dangerous paradox in which the surviving spouse is written down as already dead. One set of inscriptions on a married couple's gravestone protects the surviving husband by manipulating the representational function of the icon. The "grass" radical that caps the character for "grave" in the husband's name inscription is simply deleted. The incomplete icon - the "sun" radical perched above the "earth" radical but minus the "grass" radical - is not a mistake, but rather a graphic expression that "the grass under your feet does not grow on my grave!"

Taken in its entirety, the corpus of Chinese inscriptions expresses a four thousand years old tradition of literacy that has been transported from towns and villages in China and individually reproduced in Missouri lime and sandstone, granite, marble and bronze. This work exhibits a remarkable variety of conventional types and individual styles, and it is the work of ordinary persons - of laundymen, cooks, and clerks, and of engineers, architects, and businessmen, each with a different and sometimes shifting cultural experience, orientation, commitment, and skill, and each with a sense of pride and efficacy in his work.

Chinese Inscriptions

There are three basic categories of information encoded on most of the gravestones: A name for the deceased, the name of a native place in China, and a death date. Most of the names and dates in Chinese script are placed in conventional phrases that indicate that this is the grave of so 'n' so, that he or she was a native of such 'n' such a place, and that he or she passed away on the date indicated. This has the effect of structuring the string of words and increasing the control over the direction for reading them. This effect is most apparent in the names that are inscribed on a horizontal plane. In the absence of a phrase, a name like Chyunh Sauh Leuhng in Figure 2 may be read from the right side or from the left side and it may be read with the given name first, as indicated above or with the surname first as Leuhng Sauh Chyunh. By placing the name in an objective phrase, Chyunh Sauh Leuhng gung mouh [the grave (mouh) of the honorable (gung) Chyunh Sauh Leuhng], the name is read in its intended direction and syntax.

The names thus inscribed exhibit four distinct variations based on the different permutations of horizontal direction and syntax. These four ways of inscribing names may be interpreted as common sense strategies for mediating the hermeneutical problems that arise when writing Chinese in a Western cultural context. These strategies are defined in the two-dimensional matrix of Table 1. The "traditional" strategy begins with the surname on the right side of the stone as shown in Figures 6 and 7. A clear majority of names inscribed on the horizontal plane employs this strategy. This percentage is much higher on stones dating from the first two decades of the Chinese in Valhalla.

The second strategy "modifies" the tradition by placing the given name on the right side, as in Figure 2. This has the effect of placing the surname, somewhat unexpectedly, in the middle of the script. It combines the traditional direction of reading Chinese scripts with the Western preference for placing the given name in front of the surname. The modified script thus fuses a sense of direction which is Chinese with a sense of individual preeminence which may be attributed to its American context. Twenty-eight percent of the names inscribed horizontally are modified in this way. The first appearance of a modified name is on a stone dating from 1929, and by the 1950s it is almost as popular as the traditional inscription.

The least popular strategy is to "modernize" the inscription by writ-
ing the surname on the left side of the stone, as depicted in Figure 4. This strategy reverses the direction of the script while giving priority to the Chinese surname. That is to say, it preserves the Chinese syntax but changes the direction in which it is read. Reversing the direction of the script while keeping the syntax Chinese became popular in China as the “modern” way to write after 1950. This was a conscious strategy by which the Communist Party put into daily praxis its project to save China by changing its direction with respect to the Western world. Thus, the various configurations of direction and syntax signify not only cultural orientations but also political and ideological commitments.

The fourth strategy is to “Westernize” the name by inscribing the given name on the left. If this is a logical alternative, it seems to be unacceptable in view of the fact that we find no examples on the Chinese gravestones in Valhalla. The rule is sufficiently ingrained that even names inscribed without the benefit of a phrase, such as Jiuh Fun-Jeuk in Figure 11, would not be read as “Jeuk-Fun Jiuh.” The Chinese inscriptions may be “modified” or “modernized,” but they may not be “Westernized.” In other words, if preeminence is given to the individual name then it must take the form of modifying the Chinese syntax while resisting the directional bias of Western culture; or if the direction is reversed, then the syntax must be preserved. These relationships are of consider-

Table 1: Strategies for Inscribing Chinese Scripts on American Gravemarkers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RIGHT SIDE</th>
<th>LEFT SIDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SURNAME</td>
<td>Traditional 62%</td>
<td>Modern 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVEN NAME</td>
<td>Modified 28%</td>
<td>Western 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

able importance to persons who seek to retain a coherent identity while endeavoring to restructure and adapt their traditions.

Up until now I have referred to inscriptions of personal names written on a horizontal plane. However, many inscriptions are written vertically. This includes most of the personal names inscribed on upright stones and virtually all the place names and death dates inscribed on both upright and flat stones. The inscriptions that are placed on the vertical plane accommodate only the traditional and the modified forms for the simple reason that there is no convention in either culture for reading a script from the bottom to the top. However, among the hundreds of vertical inscriptions on the Chinese gravemarkers in Valhalla, only two modify the traditional syntax by placing the exclusive given name above the inclusive surname (see Fig. 16).

Native place names and death dates are as a rule written vertically on the right and left edges respectively of both flat and upright markers. Each begins with the larger inclusive unit, the name of the native province or the year of death, and each ends with the smaller exclusive unit, the name of the natal village or the hour of death. The text of the stone thus moves from right to left, from birth to death, and from beginning to end, with the name in between. The sense of the text as a whole is traditional, but a tradition that is not without profound disruptions. This process of mediating disturbances in the tradition intensifies as we move from the Chinese to the Roman system of writing.

Roman and Arabic Transcriptions

Although most of the information in the basic categories is written in Chinese characters, many names and dates for the deceased are also inscribed in ordinary Roman letters and Arabic numbers. The use of two culturally distinct writing systems in the same text creates additional disturbances. Of these there are two: one is the occasional inconsistency between death dates written in Chinese and dates written in Roman-Arabic scripts. These usually indicate differences between the lunar and the Gregorian calendars. The other disruptions include the pervasive differences between personal names. The principal means of mediating these differences is transcription, which involves writing Chinese names in Roman script. The first task is to mediate the syntax of names, and, again, we find that there are four common sense strategies which can be defined in the two-dimensional matrix of Table 2.
The most popular strategy is to "sinicize" the syntax of the Romanized name by writing the surname in front of the given name in conformity with the syntax of the Chinese script below (see Fig. 6). The accommodation of "American culture" in the form of a Roman script is thus accomplished in keeping with Chinese rules. However, as we shall see, when a name in Chinese like Ngh Bak-Hahng is rendered into a parallel Roman script as "Eng Hong," the given name, "Hong," often becomes the American surname.

Next in popularity is to "segregate" the rules that generate the two scripts each according to its own cultural convention and sensibility. The Chinese name in Figure 10 is written according to Chinese syntax, while the name in Roman letters, which in this case happens to be a highly modified transcription of the Chinese name, is written according to Western syntax.

A third strategy is to "integrate" the rules of syntax. The Western rule is used to write the name in Chinese script and the Chinese rule is used to write the same name in Roman script. In Figure 5, Lee Chong Quin's gravestone inscription in Roman letters conforms to the Chinese rule of placing the surname, "Lee," before the given name, "Chong Quin," while the same name in Chinese script, Cheuhng-Kwing Leih is written in a modified format with the given name, Cheuhng-Kwing before the surname, Leih. This strategy uses the literary resources of the two cultures to create a cultural synthesis and thus a sense of congruence.

Table 2 Strategies for Inscribing Name Phrases in Chinese and Roman Scripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHINESE SYNTAX</th>
<th>WESTERN SYNTAX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinicization</td>
<td>Segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Westernization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last and least utilized strategy is to write the Chinese name in both scripts according to the convention of Western usage, for example "Wee Wo Lee" (where "Lee" is the surname), and the name in Chinese script is written in a modified form, for example Waih-Woh Leih (where Leih is the surname). This strategy, along with the segregated scripts (e.g. in Fig. 10), is strongly associated with the tendency to inscribe American (given) names above the inscriptions of Chinese names. The next logical step is to dispense with the Chinese inscription altogether, and this we find on twenty gravestones marked only with Romanized names, for example, "George Sunn," "Gim Y. Chiu," and "Jack G. Jue" (see Fig. 13).

Another point of mediation between the two systems of writing surrounds the inscription of different names on the same stone. Many men possess more than one set of Chinese names. These may include a boyhood name, a school name, a nickname, a married name, a business name, and a paper name.26 As several of the figures illustrate, the gravestones frequently inscribe one set of names in Chinese characters and another set or combination thereof in Roman letters. However, the given name in Roman script is more often an ordinary American name. For instance, Figure 10 shows a stone inscribed with the American name "Jim But." Below this in parentheses is another name which combines an
The conversion of Chinese names from the Chinese script into American paper names in Roman script, of Jiuh Baht into Jim But, for example, had certain practical advantages. It created a coherent set of personal identities in a life world that was torn by cultural differences and racial hostility.

On the other hand, these same conditions, which resulted in sixty years of official exclusion from 1882 to 1943, constrained others to change their names entirely. Many would-be immigrants with no legal means for entering the United States purchased their paper names from families who enjoyed legal residence. This “slot racket,” as it was sometimes called, consisted of a man with legal residence selling a place in his family genealogy to a neighboring villager. The bearers of these illegal papers were known as “paper sons;” and as illegal residents of the United States they were denied any opportunity to acknowledge their true paternity for fear of discovery and deportation. Some gravestones in Valhalla bear the evidence from this difficult chapter in Chinese-American history. These stones have two Chinese surnames. One is the paper surname in Roman letters and the other is the ancestral surname in Chinese characters. The gravestone thus makes it possible for a person to finally acknowledge his true ancestry but in so doing also to reveal to the world what was once the most closely guarded secret of the Chinese community. The Chinese gravestone inscriptions are significant precisely because they preserve, as in no other public record, the complex structure of personal identities by which means members of the old-time community mediated the sociocultural boundaries and legal restrictions that they encountered in their daily struggle to make ends meet.

The process of Romanizing names to conform to sounds that are familiar to American ears, of converting Ngh Hahng into Eng Hong, for example, entails other considerations which are clearly expressed on the gravestones. For example, the Romanized name tends to avoid configuring letters in a way that suggests an identity in American culture that is provocative or otherwise unwarranted. In Valhalla, the surname Jiuh is Romanized nine different ways. These include one surname written with the letters “J-e-w” on the flat gravestone in Figure 11. The same
The Chinese of Valhalla

grave is marked by an upright stone of later vintage which fuses the surname with the given name "I-k," thus creating an entirely different American surname, "Jewik," for the deceased and his posterity, as depicted in Figure 12.

However, I would hasten to add that this attempt to avoid unwarranted associations does not cover warranted associations such as engravings of the Mosaic Tablets, the Mogen David, the Torah and the menorah (candelabrum). These Judaic symbols are found on two upright stones marking the graves of Dang Sei-Chih, an immigrant from Guangdong, and Dr. Jack G. Jue, a native-born St. Louisan. The configuration of symbols on Dr. Jue’s gravestone in Figure 13 is one of the most elegant religious motifs in the Chinese sections of Valhalla.

These are some of the ways that disruptions in personal identities are mediated between the two cultures. One principle of mediation that is common to all the inscriptions, however, is the use of Roman letters to transcribe, but not to translate, Chinese names.

The Index of Women’s Names and the Changing Constructs of Female Identity

Chinese women do not possess the multiplicity of given names that men traditionally possess. Instead, they possess a multiplicity of surnames. In the Old World village tradition a married woman is known by the surnames of her father and her husband. This tradition is expressed on many of the gravestones in Chinese Valhalla. The oldest gravestone for a woman, dated 1928, is shown in Figure 1. The inscription reads jiuh mahn jung si [a jung married to a jiuh]. Her inscription gives no clue to who she was as an individual person. Jiuh and Jung are surnames; mahn [doorway] and si [nativity] are signifiers for the married and maiden names respectively. The maiden name together with its signifier, jung-si, takes the place of her given name. When these names are Romanized and converted into paper names they follow the spoken version, which deletes the signifier for the married name. The Romanized name often follows the Western syntax, as in Figure 4: the maiden name “Chan,” plus its signifier “See,” comes before the married name “Leong.” The same stone records a Chinese given name, Yihk-Laahn [abundant orchids]. However, this name is inscribed on the husband’s gravestone in another section of the cemetery, and thus refers to him. What is more, the native place name boldly inscribed across the top of the woman’s stone typically refers to her husband’s village. It is interesting that the content of this woman’s identity is constructed entirely according to Old World village traditions, but it is inscribed in a Western and modern format.

Although most inscriptions identify a woman by the link between her maiden and married names, there is, in fact, an emerging tradition of genuine given names. The earliest inscription of a given name is on a 1942 gravestone belonging to a young married woman named “L. Mary” (see Fig. 14). However, the given name is an American name and it is placed, according to Chinese syntax, after the initial “L,” which stands for her married and maiden names. These are inscribed below as Lahm mahn Leuhng si [a Leuhng married to a Lahm].

Most of the earliest inscriptions of given names are found on the gravestones belonging to young or unmarried women, and even to
female infants. However, marking the graves of unmarried females entailed a radical break from the mortuary practice of the Old World village. The grave of little Wohng Guk-Ying / Charlotte Wong, who was less than a year old when she passed away in 1945, is the most poignant example. She is buried not only in a marked grave, but a grave marked with a stone that bears her given names in Chinese and American and, even more telling, a grave that has continued to receive the devotion of visitors bearing springtime bouquets and white floral crosses for almost half a century (the white floral cross can be seen standing in the field of flat gravestones to the right and rear of the Jue family gravemarker illustrated in Figure 3.)

Marking the graves of unmarried females required an additional accommodation, that of using a given name in the absence of a married name. Marking her grave with her given name suggests that the unmarried female is recognized as an individual person in the public domain of gravestone inscriptions. These fundamental shifts in traditional mortuary practice created a precedent that has been extended to include the gravestone inscriptions of married women.

The first appearance of a married woman's Chinese name is on a Leong family gravestone that dates from 1968 (see Fig. 15). The name, "Lee Chung," is written in Roman letters. This is followed by another stone dated three years later that gives the woman's name in Chinese characters. The inscription begins with her married and maiden names, Yuh Chahn, then her given name, Meih-Wahn, followed by the term for wife, fuh-yahn. In the past two decades the use of Chinese characters to inscribe woman's given names has become increasingly popular.

The most recent precedent in this evolving microcosm of name inscriptions is found on two gravestones dating from 1986. The name inscriptions, which follow a modified vertical format, include only the woman's given and maiden names. For example, the gravestone inscription in Figure 16 shows the woman's title Tsou-bi [ancestral deceased mother] followed by her given name, Tsui-sieng, and then her maiden name, Bung. Significantly, no married name is included in her inscription. Her marital status can be inferred from her title Tsou-bi [ancestral mother] and from the inscription of her surviving husband's surname, Lee, in bold Roman letters at the bottom of the stone.
The changing tradition of inscribing the names of women is still encumbered with certain practical problems, however. Survivors of deceased women, especially members of a lower generation, may not know the given name of their mother or grandmother and others may have forgotten the name.35 Recently, a woman of very respectable age passed away. Her surviving relatives including her son could not recall her given name. Her gravestone is marked only with surnames, but in this case with three different surnames, not the usual two. These include her maiden and married names in Chinese script and a paper surname in Roman letters.

The gravestones in Valhalla thus reflect changes in the way women's personal identities are publicly constructed. One aspect of this tradition that remains invariant is the attachment of relationship terms to the woman's name. Whether the name is a coupled surname or includes her given name, a relationship term is always part of the married woman's name phrase. The two most frequent relationship terms are moh [mother] and fuh-yahn [married woman or Mrs.]. Two others include a modern term, ngoi-jai [beloved wife], and a classical literary term, on-yahn [wife of imperial rank]. Several names are followed by the term niuh-si ['"mistr-
between male descent groups, the maiden name may increasingly signify a woman's ownership of her own being.

The Index of men's Names and the Reconstruction of the Old Community

The casual visitor to the Chinese graves perceives only the rows of gravestones laid in order of death dates and the recent extensions of the more heterogeneous upright stones into other parts of the cemetery. However, most markers inscribe a set of names that have structural significance and that are available in no other public domain. The gravestone inscriptions are crucial in our attempt to study the history of the old Chinese community. When the names of persons and places are systematically collected and sorted, they generate a structure of references to the historical community. These hypothetical structures can be tested, modified, and augmented by the results of other research procedures. I will limit my remarks to the data from the gravestones that represent the older Szeyap community.

We have already noted how the simple arrangement of the gravestones reflects the overall structure of relationships under the On Leong Tong. Within this corporate structure there are three other general points of identity that oriented social relationships of the men in the old community. These are surname, first given name, and native place. There are twenty-two surnames listed on the gravemarkers of the original community. However, three of these surnames, Leung, Leih, and Jiuh represent forty-five percent of the post-mortem population; and from other data we know that they provided the demographic basis for organizing influence in the old community.

The names of native places inscribed on the gravemarkers refer to fifty-four villages situated in each of four neighboring counties that form the western edge of the Canton Delta. The four counties are Hoi-pihng, Toi-saan, Hok-saan, and San-wui. Among these the largest number of references are to fourteen villages surrounding the market town of Gu-jeng, in the center of San-wui county.

The index of place names correlates closely with the index of surnames. Thus, two of the principal surnames belong to two different villages around Gu-jeng, while the large Leih [Lee] group belongs to a rural district in Toi-saan. The largest surname group in the cemetery, Leung [Leong], is almost evenly divided between villages in San-wui county and the neighboring county of Hok-saan. In fact, the San-wui and Hok-saan county Leongs constituted the two branches of the now defunct Jung-haau-lohng, i.e. the Leong Surname Association of St. Louis. Thus, the Leong men of Gu-jeng were strategically situated in the St. Louis Chinese community. Within the St. Louis community they could draw on two networks of social support and political influence, one from alliances with other surname groups in their own marketing and marriage network, the other from an alliance based on a surname shared with men from a neighboring county.

When we sort the index of surnames and native places by first given names, which we have compiled from the gravestones, we get a more focused view of actual descent groups. This is based on the cultural assumption that the shared first name from the same descent group (which is indicated by a surname linked to a particular native place) represents the married individual's affiliation with a particular generation of collateral kinsmen. In our corpus of first names we find eighteen possible cohorts, two of which form significant clusters. The two significant clusters are associated with the two branches of the Leong surname group in St. Louis. The first cluster includes the Leongs from San-wui county. The second cluster includes the Leongs from Hok-saan county.

We may verify the corporate status of these clusters and place each individual in his respective generation by sorting the names according to a "poem" which the descent groups possess as a means to name the married men in each generation. Each word in the poem provides the married men in each generation with a common first name. That is to say, when a male member of the descent group is married he takes as his first given name a word that is dictated by the sequence of words in a poem composed by his ancestors. I was fortunate to elicit several of these poems from elders of the community who were still able to recite them. However, when I compared the two clusters of "generational names" that I compiled from Leong gravestones with the two poems that I elicited from elders of the two former branches of the Leong Association, I found an anomaly. "Generational names" compiled from the Hoh-chyun market gravestones follow the poem of the Leongs from the neighboring county of Hok-saan and not the Leongs from their own county of San-wui. When I re-sorted the corpus of Leong gravestone names on the basis of the different poems, I resolved the anomaly in my research procedure, but I then encountered two additional anomalies located in the historical social structure itself!
While the San-wui cluster includes the men of the eleventh, or jeuhng generation of Gu-jeng market, the Hok-saan cluster includes men with married names from five generations of a network extending from Hoh-chyun market in San-wui across the county line to Haahp-tuhng market in Hok-saan. The first anomaly is not uncommon: the men whose married names linked them to five consecutive generations in the same descent group lived and worked together in St. Louis. In fact, we can see from the dates inscribed on the gravestones that some members of the older generations were actually younger in chronological age than some members of the more recent generations! This anomaly can be explained on the basis of differential rates of reproduction in a large and, in this case, dispersed descent group.

The second anomaly entails a unique contradiction between the de facto and the de jure native place identity of the Hoh-chyun sub-segment of the Leong Surname Association (see Table 3). The Hoh-chyun segment resides in San-wui county, but is the senior segment of the more populous Hok-saan county descent group. In other words, the identity of the Hok-saan Leongs is divided; and it is the Hoh-chyun people who confound the distinction between the two descent groups that made up the two legs of the Association. In the historical community, this “confusion” was dealt with on at least two levels of highly reflexive social action. The first was in the origin stories of the Hok-saan Leongs that explained how they became known as the “Double Leongs.” The second was in the way that persons from Hoh-chyun were singled out in the old community as objects of local humor. In fact, this sense of humor (which was expressed in the form of “moron jokes”) is evident on the gravestone depicted in Figure 9, where the characters are turned upside down and backwards. This at least enables the deceased to read his own name, it could be reasoned, which then challenges our common sense that gravestone inscriptions are for the living, not the dead! Of course, it may only be mere coincidence that the native place inscribed along the edge of this gravestone is Bak-miu, a village in Hoh-chyun.

Although we have begun to move our attention from the material culture of gravestones to the reflexive folklore of origin myths and local humor, it was questions that I posed in the original analysis of the gravestone inscriptions that led to the present insights. The gravestones in Valhalla thus provide an important key in our endeavor to reconstruct the old Chinese community of St. Louis.
memories. But when we assemble and sort this index we grasp the features of structure and scale in their objective form. As we “flesh out” these objective features of structure and scale we encounter anomalies that provoke additional questions, probe ever deeper and recall with increased cognitive acuity the shadowy remains of a deceased community. In this way, we continue the task of appropriating the past to serve the historical needs of the present.

NOTES

* All photographs are by the author.

1. See, for example, “Among the Dead, Bellefontaine Cemetery as It is Seen on Sunday: The Beauties and Attractions of the Silent City,” St. Louis Post Dispatch (July 8, 1878).


3. Although there were individual Chinese living in St. Louis before the Civil War, the Chinese did not become a recognizable aggregate or community until the decade of the 1870s. See Lucy M. Cohen, Chinese in the Post-Civil War South: A People without a History (Baton Rouge and London, 1984); C. Fred Blake, “The Life and Times of Alla Lee: The First Chinese Citizen of St. Louis, Missouri 1857-1880” (unpublished manuscript, Department of Anthropology, University of Hawaii).


5. “The Wesleyan Cemetery Association Journal” (handwritten manuscript in the archives of the Centenary Episcopal Church, St. Louis, Missouri).

6. The On Leong Tong was the corporate expression of the St. Louis Chinese community from around the turn of the century until the 1960s. The English-speaking community often referred to it as “the Chinese Merchants Association” or “the Chinese Masons.” The St. Louis On Leong Tong was one branch of the national organization headquartered in New York City. The national On Leong Tong was, in turn, part of a loose confederation of about thirty competing lodges across North America known as the Chee Kung Tong (Zhigongtang), which supported radical political reform in China before 1911. Unlike the larger Chinese communities, the St. Louis community appears not to have had a United Chinese Benevolent Association of various huiguan (“official association”) based on native places. The St. Louis On Leong Tong undertook many of the tasks that huiguan performed in the larger communities, such as dealing with the City Hall and providing for burials and the repatriation of remains of deceased members to their native places in China. Beneath the St. Louis On Leong Tong were several surname associations which provided business credit to their members. At the lowest tier of the old St. Louis community were a number of corporate descent groups which owned and operated a variety of import and wholesale businesses.

7. The exhumation was undertaken by the leaders of the On Leong Tong. They removed the remains, washed, dried and packed the bones in metal boxes, and shipped them to San Francisco, where similar shipments were received from all over the United States. From San Francisco the containers of bones were shipped to Hong Kong, where they were sent to their respective villages in the rural districts southwest of Guangzhou for re-burial: see “Bones of Chinese to be Sent Home,” St. Louis Post Dispatch (Nov. 17, 1928).

8. The manner of marking Chinese graves should indicate the temporal nature of the Chinese community. Marking a grave with an inscribed stone presumably signifies some level of permanence. This must certainly be the inference in face of all the factors that can be adduced to account for graves intended as temporary resting places and thus unmarked or marked with less durable materials. These factors would include 1) the Federal laws that excluded Chinese from citizenship in the United States, 2) the stated intentions and customary practice of the Chinese community to deposit the bones of its members in the hills surrounding their native villages, 3) the general poverty of the community and need to expend its meager resources on the shipment of bones back to China rather than on marking its graves with permanent fixtures, and 4) the customary idea held by people from south China that exhuming the remains from temporary graves and cleaning the bones for re-deposition in burial urns in accord with principles of Chinese geomancy is an important act of filial piety, not to mention interlineage rivalry and village politics. See Maurice Freedman, Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung (London, 1966), 118-154, and Rubie S. Watson, “Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in Southeastern China,” in Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. (Berkeley, 1988), 203-227.

9. When the plots in one lot were filled, each member of the On Leong Tong was asked to contribute a sum of money for the purchase of the next lot. In this way burial was under the control of the Tong and every member was guaranteed a place in the cemetery on the occasion of his or her death.

10. The decade of the 1920s, when Chinese burials became continuous and permanent in St. Louis, was the pivotal decade for Chinese in the United States. This was the period when the weight of forty years of Federal and State legislation to exclude Chinese from American society achieved its greatest result in reducing and isolating the Chinese population. The virtual elimination of the Chinese as a viable population, on the other hand, ironically reduced the pressures against them. Many of the men of this period had lived and worked in the United States for the better parts of their lives. Although many expressed a desire to return to their native villages, they were also completely inured to their ways of making ends meet, and could not return to an Old World rural economy. The outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 and the succession of the Communist Party in 1949 ended, for many, even the desire to return. The series of Congressional acts and Executive orders which began in 1943 to unravel the official discrimination against Chinese in the United States provided additional incentives for
members of the Chinese community to make their graves in Valhalla their permanent resting places.

11. Some members of the Chinese community have voiced the idea that the flat grave-stones of previous decades were the result of racial discrimination against the Chinese. These voices seem to echo Susan E. Wallace’s eloquent description of a Jewish cemetery at Constantinople, where “the stones lie flat, as though pressing down the restless feet of the scattered, wandering, and persecuted race that is even in the sepulchre denied the right of an upright memorial” (“Turkish Cemeteries,” St. Louis Post Dispatch, April 1, 1888). However, in the absence of explicitly stated rules prescribing how Chinese should mark their graves in Valhalla, this interpretation is difficult to validate, especially in view of the many flat grave-stones also marking the graves of European-Americans. The interpretation does have merit, on the other hand, if understood in a very broad context that includes 1) the economic priorities of a community that is transient and, out of necessity, parsimonious; 2) the egalitarian corporate practices of the On Leong Tong; 3) Cantonese cultural preferences (see note 8); and 4) subtle and not-so-subtle interethnic expectations and mutual understandings in an atmosphere of racial hostility. Indeed, the whole cultural complex of Chinese mortuary customs and stated intentions to be repatriated to China, alive or dead, must be seen in some immeasurable sense as a response to the racist system that excluded Chinese from participation in American society. In this sense, the practice of marking Chinese graves with flat stones prior to 1960 may also be seen as yet one more expression of a survival strategy geared to retaining a “low profile” in a hostile environment. The strategy of keeping a low profile was manifest in many aspects of ordinary daily life, not the least of which included the means of livelihood. Most of the Chinese buried in the older sections of Valhalla worked hand laundries or “chopsuey joints,” which were among the humblest of all trades. They lived and worked among the immigrant and transient neighborhoods within the city limits, where they tended to blend with the other “unmeltable ethnics.” Their low profile lifestyles are described by Paul C. P. Siu, The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation, ed. Kuo Wei Tchen (New York and London, 1987).


13. In St. Louis, as in many other American cities, the several hundred members of the original Chinese community joined the migration to the suburbs in the late 1960s. This move was coupled with the urban renewal in which St. Louis’ Chinatown” on South Eighth Street was demolished in order to build the parking structure for the Bush Memorial Stadium. Of course, the demolition of “Chinatown” was not the cause as much as a symbol of this move to the suburbs, since many Chinese had always lived in other parts of the city and not in “Chinatown.” The 1960s also witnessed the end of the Chinese hand laundries in St. Louis and the move of the second generation into professional occupations. These moves were important parts of a changing kaleidoscope of living standards, styles, and material artifacts. In the suburbs they were joined by new waves of Chinese from various parts of East Asia to form part of the working middle class of metropolitan St. Louis.

14. Except for the inscriptions of Chinese characters, the Chinese gravemarkers are indistinguishable from the others in Valhalla. With very few exceptions, there is no trace of a Chinese cultural influence on the form, shape or substance of the gravemarkers. The minor exceptions include a recess in the lower corner of the Chung family gravestone marking the residence of the Chung family guardian earth deity. Also, there is a vague-ly expressed regard for Chinese geomancy (fengshui) evidenced by the way some of the more recent graves are nestled in the side of the hill and by what an employee of the cemetery refers to as “the Chinese preference for plots on higher ground.”


16. I asked two of my friends in St. Louis with very different backgrounds and a different set of literary standards to comment on the stylistic aspects of the several thousand characters in these inscriptions. One friend is trained in Chinese art history and calligraphy and is an immigrant from Beijing. My other friend was born and reared in St. Louis and is the author of several of the Chinese gravestone inscriptions. The comments of these two friends helped me to draw some general inferences about the quality of the writing.

17. Songti and its modern “imitation,” fangsongti, is from a typeface carved on square blocks in the Song dynasty. It is not a type of calligraphy and it may be copied with any type of writing utensil. See Yu Gingnan, Meishuzi (Beijing, 1980), 12-13.

18. The fifth type of calligraphy is caoshu, or “grass style.” It is a kind of shorthand that lends itself to such artistic self-expressions that ordinary people sometimes find it difficult to decipher. This type of calligraphy is appropriate on certain types of public monuments, for example on monuments to the dead heroes of the revolution in Beijing. But I have not seen credible examples of caoshu on ordinary Chinese-American gravemarkers.

19. The spoken vernaculars of Chinese, which are regionally based, include numerous words that are not represented by a particular graph or set thereof in the written language.

20. I have rendered into italicized Roman letters all the names on the gravestones inscribed in Chinese characters. Most of these names belong to speakers of a Yue dialect. These are hyphenated and transcribed according to the pronunciation of the Guangzhou (Canton city) dialect of the Yue vernacular as described in Zhou Wuji, Guangdonghua Biaozhunyin Zhiisi (Xianggang, 1988). Zhou uses the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is awkward for the purpose of this essay. I therefore employ the system of romanization developed by Parker Po-fei Huang in his Cantonese Dictionary (New Haven and London, 1970). In Huang’s orthography, the “b” after a vowel places the spoken word in the lower register of the Guangzhou tonal system. The reader needs to bear in mind several provisos. The first is that the Guangzhou dialect spoken in the provincial capital constitutes the dominant speech community of the Yue vernacular and therefore only roughly approximates the rural dialects of the Szeyap region from which the original Chinese community in St. Louis came. Second, exactly how to characterize the dialects of the original St. Louis community or of the American “Chinatown Chinese” is uncertain. There is a strong sense among some, including my friends in the Chinese community, that there has evolved a Chinese dialect that blends
21. Chinese tradition lends preference to writing in vertical columns moving from top to bottom and right to left. But these columns may also be written from left to right or in horizontal rows from either direction. I should point out that many forms of the popular culture employ this versatility, from *The People’s Daily* to the throng of signs that form the labyrinth of advertisements along Hong Kong’s Nathan Road. However, having pointed this out, I do not suggest that gravestones belong to the discourse of popular media. Gravemarkers and popular media, although they occasionally interact, nevertheless belong to phenomenologically different domains of the American culture.

22. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. On a few stones the position of the native place name and death date is reversed, while on others (for Fig 4) the native place is inscribed across the top of the stone. In the latter case, the characters for the native place name are sometimes inscribed with such bold strokes as to overshadow the person’s name below.

23. The Chinese death dates on the gravestones employ one or a combination of the three conventional styles of enumeration (including the very informal *mazi* or “business style” numbers on the gravestone in Fig. 17) and one or a combination of several systems for reckoning time (Gregorian system variously modified, the lunar system, and the sixty-year cosmic cycle). Although most dates in Chinese agree with the dates in the conventional styles of enumeration (including the very informal *mazi* or “business style” numbers on the gravestone in Fig. 17) and one or a combination of several systems for reckoning time (Gregorian system variously modified, the lunar system, and the sixty-year cosmic cycle). Although most dates in Chinese agree with the dates in the Pinyin system of Romanization.

24. The percentages in each cell pertain only to the frequencies of gravestones on which the name is the same in both Chinese and Roman scripts. These percentages would change if we included the gravestones on which the name in Roman script is different from the name in Chinese script. My analysis does not hinge, however, on these quantitative differences, but rather on the semantic structure of logical possibilities.

25. A variation on this format is Seng Chiu’s inscription (Fig. 8), in which the Roman script follows Western usage (Chi is the surname), while the Chinese script *jiuh Siuhng* follows a “modern” format, that is, it reads from the left side with the surname first.

26. The paper name is the name in Roman letters required on legal documents in the United States.

27. The nine ways of Romanizing *jiuh* on the Valhalla gravestones are “Chao,” “Chu,” “Cheu,” “Chew,” “Chiu,” “Jeu,” “Jew,” “Jue,” and “Jui.”

28. Although there is nothing on his gravestone to indicate that Dr. Jue is “Chinese,” it is appropriate, I believe, to note the fact that he is a descendant of immigrants from China and specifically of the *jiuh* family from San-wei county in Guangdong province.

29. Six percent of Chinese gravestones in Valhalla express a Christian affiliation with simple engravings of the cross. Eighteen percent of the markers are engraved with floral designs. The floral designs provide the most frequent motifs. Although there is a general absence of epitaphs, there are a few that express trite or traditional sentiments such as “Rest in Peace,” “Our Eternal Love,” and “Together Forever.” Others express the same deep feelings based on a specific relationship: “Our Dear Sister,” “Our Boy,” “Devoted Friend.” Although there are no Buddhist-inspired epitaphs or symbols, there is one from each of several other religious traditions not mentioned in the text of my essay. From the Christian tradition we find the Pond family [Resting secure in the bosom of the Lord]. The Chen family catafalque is flanked by a Taoist-inspired couplet: [May pines and cedars stay green for ten thousand years; and rivers and mountains bloom for a thousand years]. The Chung family gravestone is engraved with a Confucian-inspired couplet: [Let us find joy in the virtue of our ancestors; and let our posterity prosper in this land of good fortune].

30. Chinese derive surnames from a particular domain of their historical experience which is untranslatable except as “surname.” Given names, however, come from the words of everyday experience. They often are given in pairs, the two members of which may stand alone or form a semantic or lexical unit. However, as personal names these words are embedded in semantic networks and ontological structures that can not be translated without sounding either “exotic” or “awkward.” For example, among the names inscribed in Valhalla, “Hsiao” is translated as Xiao; “Gam-Yihn” [“a river (with) many branches”]; “Chen-Jihn” [“spring rains”]; “Sai-kahn” [“a world (of) celery”]; “Feuhng-ko” [“a likeness (of) waves”]. Other names, for example *Bat-Wuih* [“no benefit”], are difficult to interpret as names that somebody might inscribe on a gravestone, although there is a precedent in Chinese village culture for so-called “mean names” according to Russell Jones, “Chinese Names,” *Journal of the Malayman Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 52:187 (1961), 45. Some names found on the gravestones translate easily into semantic categories of English, for example, *Chun-lahm* [“spring rains”], and others form a single lexeme, for example, *Tai-sieng* [“narcissus”]. But each and every translation of names loses the thick and vital texture of its meaning in Chinese and the name in translation becomes a veneer of ethnicity. There are Chinese-Americans who have names that are translated from the Chinese. The ones I am most familiar with are names like “Narcissus,” “Jasmine,” “Lotus” and “Jade.” These names fit the Western semantic categories of feminine names for flowers and precious stones. But even these names, in translation, lose their cultural vitality and become veneers of ethnicity. In Cantonese, *Yuhs* [jade] is endowed with the mystical power of purity and virtue, and this mystical power is gender neutral. In Valhalla there are several inscriptions of men’s names which include the word *Yuhs*. The Amer-
The gravemarkers of women reflect the uneven sex ratio in the Chinese community over the past seventy years. The overall sex ratio of males per one hundred females is 600, which is the national average for Chinese in the 1920 U.S. Census. See Stanford M. Lyman, Chinese Americans (New York, 1974), 88.


33. Chinese village culture offered few comforts in the face of death outside the elaborate rituals which expense alone dictated be held only for those who lived long enough to complete a circle of life. This attitude was garbed in the values of the folk religion and popular Confucianism which demeaned the life of any person that did not live long enough to complete the principal filial obligation of reproduction. This obligation was completely integrated in the highly structured interdependence between living and deceased members of the family. The death of an unmarried child subverted this structure of interdependence and thus provided, especially in the case of a female infant, no occasion for a public expression of grief. The corpse was disposed of, contrary to that of a married adult, in the most efficient and seemingly indifferent manner possible. See, for example, the descriptions of J.J.M. de Groot, The Religious System of China, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1897), 1387-1389, and J. Dyer Ball, Things Chinese (Shanghai, 1925), 404. The obvious attention shown to female graves, especially those of female infants, in Chinese Valhalla is probably due to a shifting mixture of values, amongst which we should count the influence of Christianity, the demographic need for women in a bachelor society, and the increasing affluence of the Chinese community.

34. However, there is another dimension to this inscription which is not related directly to the question of gender. The inscriptions which are in negative relief are painted green to signify the "grave," i.e. the immortal or transcendental aspect of being — the aspect of being that incorporates the ancestors and their descendants as members of a family. The inscription for a deceased male on a neighboring grave is painted the color red to signify the "ancestor," i.e. the mortal or finite aspect of individual being. These arrangements were sometimes complicated by men who left wives in China, where they had been married according to village custom (see Siu, 156-170). The post-1960 movement of Chinese into the white-dominated suburban classes has increased the pressure on Chinese to disassociate themselves from the Black community, a process which James Loewen has described in The Mississippi Chinese: Between White and Black (Cambridge, Mass., 1971). These pressures have been most acutely felt in "mixed" families of Chinese and African ancestry.

37. The number of villages represented on the gravestones is inexact due to the combination of three factors: 1) our own analytical definitions of “village” are ambiguous; 2) native references in the inscriptions to "xiong" (administrative village), bao (walled village), cun (natural village), and li (hamlet or neighborhood) are used interchangeably; 3) actual places which are designated with one of these native terms for “village” occupy various and shifting positions in the hierarchy of modernizing central places.

38. These four counties share common borders along the western edge of the Canton Delta. Hoi-pihng, Toi-saan and San-wui form three counties of the Szeyap (or Four Districts) region, which is based on a distinct dialect and control of the Taalim river resource base. See Kil Young Zo, “Emigrant Communities in China, Szeyap,” Asian Profile 5:4 (1977): 313-323. When Hok-saan is included on the basis of geographical proximity and cultural affinity, the region is referred to as Ngh-yap (Five Districts). However, Hok-saan is mostly hills and hollows where it backs up against Szeyap along its western and southern borders. Its small mountain streams feed the Taalim river, but well south of the county boundary. Thus Hok-saan has no direct share in the Taalim river basin, but its northeastern border is formed by the major channel of the West River where it enters the incomparably rich agricultural counties of the Canton Delta.

39. The St. Louis Leong Surname Association was affiliated with the Jung-hau-tolng (Zhongxiaotang), headquartered in San Francisco.

40. The network of Gu-jeng men in St. Louis is also reflected in the conjugal relationships that are indicated by the two surnames inscribed on the gravestones of Chinese women in Valhalla. Most of the inscriptions on the gravestones of Chinese women in Valhalla indicate they came from a village in the Gu-jeng market area and married a man from another village in the same area. This conjugal pattern distinguishes the Gu-jeng men of Valhalla from their contemporaries in the Chinese community who did not reproduce their market-based conjugal network in St. Louis.

41. By actual descent group I mean a group that records actual genealogical relationships. These are distinguished from the much more inclusive groups that recruit members simply on the basis of a shared surname.

42. According to Jones (11), the arrangement of “generational names” in the form of a
poem began in the Han dynasty as a mnemonic device. In poetic form, each line consists of five names and each stanza consists of two, four or six lines, hence ten, twenty, or thirty generations of names. The four line poem of the Leong descent group from San-wui county, Gu-jeng market is typical of the ones I elicited: Sai dak fong chyuhn sau, Douh wihng sihng sin tung, Jeuhng yihn hing yuhn cheung, Jung daaih kaai san yauh. Loosely translated: [Let our virtue be kept and protected in the four corners of the realm, Let the eternal Way govern our ancestral tradition, Let our models of virtue prosper into the distant future, And let the greatness of our ancestors begin anew.] The St. Louis descendants of this group are currently in the third line of their poem, but with the demise of the Leongs as a corporate descent group in St. Louis the poem has become increasingly irrelevant and all but forgotten.

43. These five names make up one line of the Hok-saan Leong's ancestral poem: Jou yihk sai chyuhn fong [Let the virtue of our ancestors be spread far and wide].

44. I am using market town reference points here instead of the particular villages in order to simplify the analysis. Most members of the Leuhng descent group in Hok-saan come from the villages of Chuhng-hah and Leuhng-kang, which are one and two kilometers west of Haahp-tuhng market. The Leuhng descent group from San-wui, Gu-jeng is from the village of Naahm-lohng.

45. The fact that five generations are represented contemporaneously may be accounted for by long-term differential rates of reproduction between segments of the group due to difference in command over economic resources. See Hugh D. R. Baker, Chinese Family and Kinship (New York, 1979), 56-57.

46. I have not yet been able to obtain much information on this large descent group that straddled the county line, but it would appear to be similar to the Kuan lineage of Hoi-pihng described in Yuen-fong Woon, Social Organization in South China 1911-1949: The Case of the Kuan Lineage in Kai-p'ing County, Center for Chinese Studies Monograph 48 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984).

47. The origin of the "Double Leongs" celebrates the exploits of Ngau Ying, a local culture hero whose foolishness and tricks became legendary. Early orphaned, he lives with his father's sister, who is married to the Leong family in Hok-chyun. When he is hungry, he steals the villager's potatoes; when pursued, he abandons the cremated remains of his parents in the cleft of a mountain that turns out to have excellent geomancy, the benefits of which he almost squanders through ignorance. Later he betrays his aboriginal (Miao) patrons whom he has taught the benefits of civilization and annihilates them in a great holocaust under the assumed name of Leong and in the pay of his royal overlord. Through thievery, accident, and guile, and despite serious blunders, he wins fame and fortune and in time gives up his ancestral name, Ngau, to assume the Leong surname. Ngau-Leuhng Ying thus mediates and reflects the crucial boundaries of Chinese identity, the boundaries between man and nature, the civilized and the savage, and between different patrilineal descent groups.

48. The role of the "comic fool" is often assigned to a person or group which mediates a critical social boundary. A critical social boundary is a point of interaction that is fraught with tension but also serves as the foundation of social order. The group that straddles this boundary or point of identification is often the purveyor and the butt of so-called "moron jokes" which turn the common sense on its head. In this way, the offending-and-offended group, which is one and the same, embodies, represents, and reflects the mysteries of (the) social order itself. The quality of community life depends on the "good nature" rather than the hostility of the group that offends and is offended. See C. Fred Blake, "Racial Victimage in Hawaii: The Role of the Comic in Reducing Violence," Planning the Good Life for Hawaii: Proceedings of the 1980 Humanities Conference (Honolulu: Hawaii Committee for the Humanities, 1981), 148-153.