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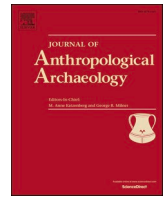
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Diaspora on the block: Neighborhood archaeology as theory and method

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ABSTRACT

The archaeology of diaspora has grown in many directions during the first two decades of the 21st century. It has become a key way of understanding the short-term and long-term connections between people and communities defined by movement and migration. However, archaeologists of diaspora still at times struggle with old models of interpretation which seek out ethnic markers in material culture or signs of acculturation. How then do we move past these paradigmatic pitfalls? In this article we look to the concept of the neighborhood as a potential avenue away from a cul-de-sac of theoretical stagnation. Neighborhoods, spatially proximal areas in towns and cities, often comprise multiple diasporic communities in close contact. Ethnic and racial lines are not necessarily neatly maintained, challenging fixity or fluidity binaries when approaching diasporic communities. Thinking of the neighborhood as interpretive model in itself challenges us to think past siloed communities and look to the distinct ways in which social identities and networks are dynamically shaped by living space in urban contexts. Utilizing material from Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi, we attempt to think through material culture through the lens of the neighborhood, appreciating the blurred lines across the multiple communities living on the block.

1. Introduction

It has often been the case in North American historical archaeology that the identification of ethnic affiliation of artifact deposits is considered an essential part of the interpretive process. This is particularly true of contexts associated with residential and domestic sites, and especially those that could potentially relate to single households. Determining whether trash-pits are related to Native American, European American, African American, Asian American, or Latinx American populations frequently precedes other aspects of interpretation such as class, gender, politics, etc. (Nassaney 1994; Lightfoot 1995; Franklin and Fesler 1999; Jones 1999; Orser 2007; Weik 2014). This is not without good cause, as the experiences of most communities in North America have been influenced by the politics of race and ethnicity. Consequently, when attempting to understand and contextualize archaeological deposits, it is helpful to determine such ethnic affiliations that may provide further insight into the practices of the people “behind the pots,” so to speak.

However, such heavy focus on assigning ethnic affiliation to archaeological sites and their associated artifact assemblages, at times, narrows the complexity of understandings or lends credence to problematic paradigms and frameworks. In the context of Asian American

and Asian Canadian archaeology, sites associated with Chinese Diasporic and Japanese Diasporic communities have a long history of ethnic identification, at times leading to reductive interpretive conclusions. Finding certain types of ceramics manufactured in China led to sites being classed as Chinese sites, with the same being true for Japanese ones. Proportions of different types of material culture suggested different modes of acculturation, assimilation, or a resistance to such forces. Thankfully, such premises are decreasing in their relevance to archaeological interpretation, as a range of scholars work to untangle the complexity of sites connected to diaspora, pursuing anti-racist archaeologies, tracing transnational networks, tracking residue analysis, and utilizing material culture as an avenue into the complexity of diasporic communities (Voss and Allen 2008; Ross 2013; Rose and Kennedy 2020; Fong 2020; Lau-Ozawa and Ross 2021; Fong et al. 2022; Wang, Ng, and Serrao-Leiva 2023).

The subfield of Japanese diaspora archaeology is smaller than that of Chinese diaspora archaeology, but it has in recent years similarly followed course in seeking to understand all the various social relations and connections of Japanese Diasporic communities. Japanese American incarceration camps are a key area in which much of this work focuses, followed by sites related to later 19th century and early 20th century labor settlements (Ross 2021). Less explored are the urban

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centers of Japanese Diasporic communities, commonly referred to Japantowns, a term we will return to later in this article. In California, there were an estimated 43 historic Japantowns, of which four are officially recognized today as Japantowns. Portland had two Japantowns, one in the Old Town-Chinatown area and one in Southwest Portland, and other cities in the Pacific Northwest like Seattle, Steveston, and Vancouver all also had Japantown communities. Many of the

historic Japantown communities in North America, especially in the west coast areas of British Columbia, Oregon, Washington, and California, were decimated by the forced removal and imprisonment by the United States government of all people of Japanese ancestry living in these areas during WWII. Recent work on the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans has sought to utilize social network analysis to understand community formation and maintenance in the context of

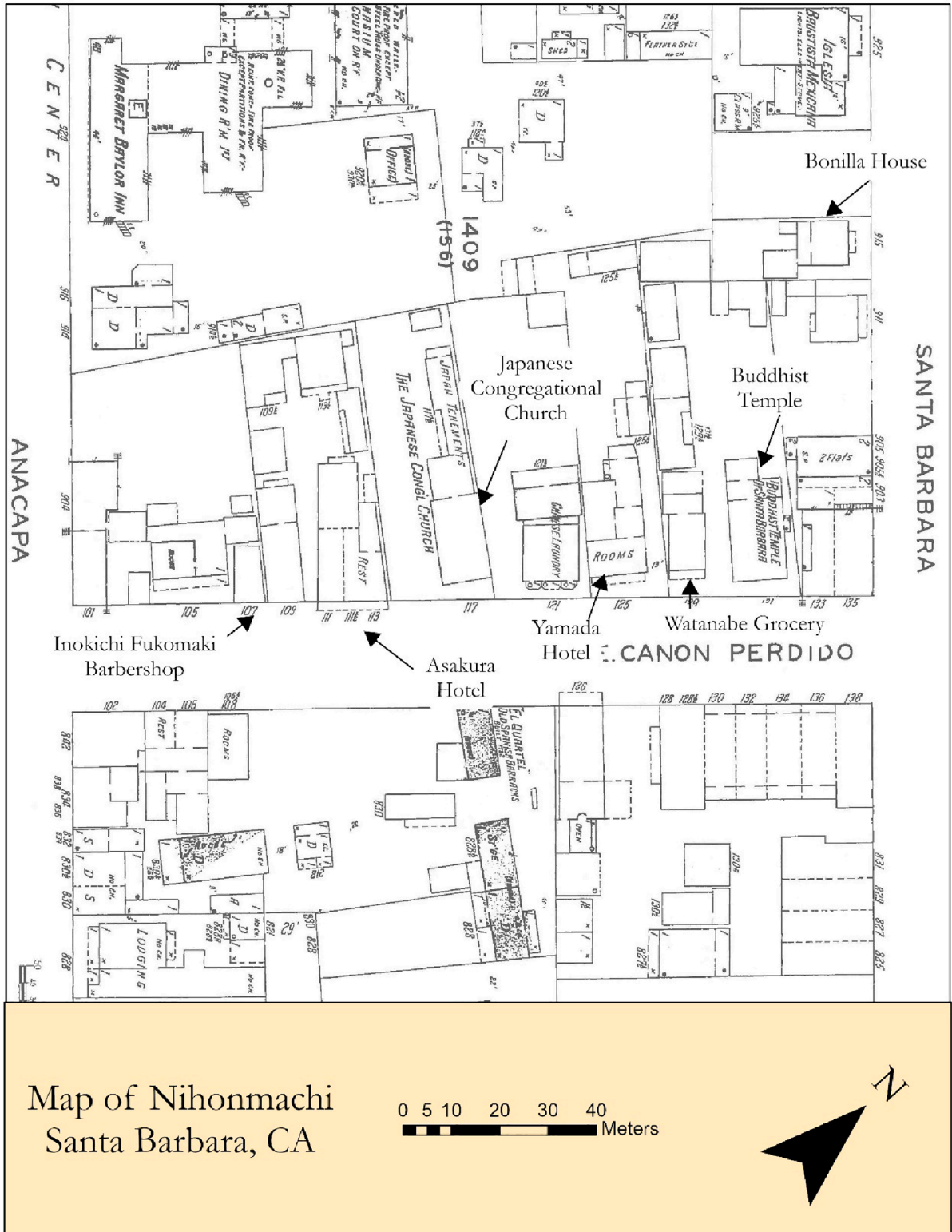


Fig. 1. Map of study area showing structures in Nihonmachi (cartography by Lau-Ozawa).

forced removal (Kamp-Whittaker and Clark 2019; Kamp-Whittaker 2021, 2023; Kekki 2022).

Archaeologically, sites associated with Japanese Diasporic communities, and especially Japantown communities, remain underexplored. There are only a few projects related to historical Japantowns recorded, and much of this work has been done under the rubric of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) archaeology. Although this work is critical in bearing witness to the lives of people in these communities, which often have few traces above the surface in the present day, there are acute and difficult issues that the nature of urban archaeological sites from the 20th century, in particular, bring to fully interpreting sites of ethnic communities. The borders of communities, relationships between households, and even depositional practices at such sites are much more interconnected than would map neatly onto lines of ethnic interpretation. So then, how do we approach interpretation of sites which hold complex, multi-ethnic communities while simultaneously appreciating their multi-dimensionality? In the following sections we discuss some of these issues and how they are impacting our approach to considering materials from the areas known as Nihonmachi in Santa Barbara. Specifically, we consider the concept of the neighborhood and how this might help to tackle the archaeological interpretation of diasporic and migrant communities.

2. Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi

Nihonmachi, as it is known today, sat near the heart of Santa Barbara's downtown, centered on the 100 block of E Canon Perdido between Anacapa and Santa Barbara St, and where today the historic El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park is situated (Fig. 1). The area was once the site of the El Presidio de Santa Barbara, built at the end of the 18th century and one of four presidios from the Spanish Colonial period in California. Present-day Canon Perdido extends over the northern wall of where the Presidio and its Chapel stood. During the Mexican period (1822–1848) retired soldiers and ranchers built adobe residences around the walls of the presidio quadrangle with the original structure slowly disintegrating. By the American period, starting in 1848, most of the original presidio structure was destroyed and the area was primarily settled with Chumash, Mexican, and Spanish descended residences. Chinese and Japanese began moving into the area in the first decade of the 20th century (Harris et al. 1993).

While the city of Santa Barbara's Japanese population wasn't as large or as concentrated as those in the nearby towns of Santa Maria or Guadalupe, its heart was undeniably in Nihonmachi, which served as a residential and commercial center. According to *History of Japanese in America* (Zaibei Nihonjinkai 2020), a text which outlined the history of various Japanese diasporic communities in North America compiled by the Japanese Association of America in 1940, the first Japanese migrants to settle in Santa Barbara did so in 1901. However, it wasn't until 1907 that handfuls of families began moving into the coastal town. The first Japanese residents set up small shops and restaurants, and then hotels to house itinerant workers and laborers, common professions for Japanese issei, or first-generation migrants (Ichioka 1988). These families were followed by gardeners, which constituted the bulk of professional occupations for Japanese households in town of Santa Barbara followed by small business owners (Zaibei Nihonjinkai 2020, 641). The composition of the town was not unusual for the time, with gardening a dominant profession for urban dwelling Japanese communities in the first half of the 20th century (Tsuchida 1984; Hirahara 2000; Tsukashima 2000).

The Japanese neighborhood stood across the street from the city's main Chinese enclave, which was pushed to the 100 block of E Canon Perdido with redevelopments following a 1925 earthquake. Not only did many of the city's Japanese residents live and work around Nihonmachi, but members of the surrounding farming community would travel there to attend service at one of the neighborhood's two religious centers, the Japanese Congregational Church and the Buddhist Temple. According to the *History of Japanese in America*, the Buddhist Temple was first a

satellite of a larger congregation from the nearby town of Guadalupe. However, a separate temple was established and a two-story building constructed in 1922, with a full-time minister assigned to it. The Temple also shared its address with a Japanese School, the Buddhist Fujinkai (a religious organization), the Young Men's and Women's Buddhist Association (YMWBA), and the Kumamoto Kai-Gai (Kumamoto prefecture overseas association) (Rafu Shinpōsha 1940; Shinbunsha 1940; Zaibei Nihonjinkai 2020, 302). The Congregational Church was said to have its roots in a Sunday school established in a Chinese church in Santa Barbara in 1903. By 1907, the Japanese congregation had broken away as a separate group, with a full-fledged church building dedicated in 1916 (Zaibei Nihonjinkai 2020, 267).

According to one record there were 630 people of Japanese ancestry living in Santa Barbara and its surrounding areas in 1940, with multiple cultural associations and businesses. Of these, about half were issei with the other half being nisei (second generation Japanese Americans). In addition to the religious organizations, the neighborhood boasted multiple boarding houses, grocery stores, regional associations, employment offices, and a barbershop. The neighborhood also possessed prefectural associations, known as kenjinkai, for Kummamoto and Fukuoka Prefectures and a Hiroshima Savings Association, which all helped community members maintain transnational connections. Though the block was small it was densely packed with people, and organizations often shared the same buildings as their homes. For instance, the 1940 directories in the Japanese newspapers *Rafu Shimpō* and *Kashu Mainichi* list the Asakura Hotel as the residence of at least 19 individuals in addition to the Japanese American Citizens League, a Chop Suey restaurant, and an attached grocery store. In those same directories, at least 51 individuals are listed as living on the 100 block of Canon Perdido (Shinbunsha 1940; Rafu Shinpōsha 1940; Seifert 1993; Haldan 2000; Zaibei Nihonjinkai 2020, 642).

In addition to the Japanese Diasporic community, as noted above, Santa Barbara's Chinatown stood across the street on the south side of E Canon Perdido St. Other than residences, there were multiple Chinese groceries, benevolent associations, trading companies, bars, and restaurants on the southside of the street. Residents of Chinatown remembered the row of two-storied buildings on the street with businesses on the ground floor and residences on the top, as well as a number of Filipino customers who would frequent the businesses (Piedmonte 1993). Hideko Nishihara Malis, who grew up on the Nihonmachi side of the street in the 1930s, remembered an Italian bakery on the block and waking up to the scent of fresh baked breads. Interspersed on the block were remnants of the previously Mexican neighborhood, including the Cañedo Adobe which stood in the middle of the 100 block of E Canon Perdido and the Bonilla house which was located on Santa Barbara Ave (Malis 2019). The Bonilla house was constructed in 1887 by Florentino Bonilla, a stagecoach driver and orchestra musician. The Bonilla Family occupied the house until the early 1920s, after which, according to some accounts, other Mexican American families lived there through the 1930s and 1940s (Hellrigel 1993; Schultz 1993).

The Nihonmachi and Chinatown neighborhoods had a plethora of grocery stores for residents to shop in. Table 1 shows known grocery stores in the area based on local directories from 1917 to 1941. Additionally, the *Rafu Nenkan*, a directory for the Japanese American newspaper *Rafu Shimpō*, lists in its Santa Barbara entry for 1941 the Asahiya Grocery Store in Nihonmachi and nearby the American Grocery Store, Hoover Market, and Suzuki Fish Company (Rafu Shinpōsha 1940). Other grocery stores also operated nearby, such as the Jordano Brother's Grocery Store which first opened a few blocks to the southwest of Nihonmachi at 706 State Street in 1915, expanded to a second location 1029 State St, and eventually opened a store three blocks away from Nihonmachi at the corner of Canon Perdido and Chapala Streets (*Santa Barbara Daily News* 1915; *Morning Press* 1924). The range of grocery stores both inside of the Nihonmachi and Chinatown areas, as well as outside of the area but listed in Japanese American newspaper directories, suggests a large marketplace through which residents of the

Table 1
Grocery stores in the Nihonmachi and Chinatown area from 1917 to 1941.

Store	Address	Known Years Active
Fukushima Grocery	111 E Canon Perdido	1917–1923
Kakimoto Grocery	838 Anacapa and 101/105 E Canon Perdido	1917–1930
Orella A J Grocery	136 E Canon Perdido	1921
Pippin EJ Grocery	136 E Canon Perdido	1922–1923
Rodriguez Grocery	135 E Canon Perdido	1923
Hung Fung Hai Grocery Company	133 E Canon Perdido	1928–1933
Azar Brothers Grocery	138 E Canon Perdido and 135 E Canon Perdido	1928–1934
Imai Kinujiro Grocery	111 E Canon Perdido	1928–1941
Kakimoto Produce	906 Anacapa	1932
Sam Min Company Grocery	135 E Canon Perdido	1932
Watanabe Grocery	129 E Canon Perdido	1932–1941
Hing Yuen Co Grocery	138 E Canon Perdido	1934–1938
Quong Hop Chung Company Grocery	107 E Canon Perdido	1934–1941
Nicola N M Jr. Grocery	135 E Canon Perdido	1936
Chung Yee Kee Grocery	138 E Canon Perdido	1938–1941
Lee Kay Grocery	135 E Canon Perdido	1941

neighborhood could shop. Thus, Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi and Chinatown, like most Japantowns and Chinatowns in the United States and Canada, were actually multi-ethnic communities. While the histories of these two neighborhoods were indeed dominated by Japanese and Chinese diasporic communities, they were not sealed off from the rest of Santa Barbara's population. Rather, European, Mexican, and Filipino communities converged in different ways across the same neighborhood spaces, with lines of convergence spanning, at minimum, residency, labor, and consumerism.

3. Japanese diaspora archaeology

The archaeology of the Japanese diaspora has been a growing sub-field within historical archaeology, as well as within the archaeology of Asian American communities more specifically. Much of the work done in this context has been led by CRM-driven excavations and graduate student theses and dissertations, with much fewer studies published within peer-reviewed monographs or academic journals. Consequently, it is only since the late 2010s and early 2020s that there were efforts to more comprehensively synthesize work in the field (Ross 2017; 2021; Campbell 2017; Lau-Ozawa and Ross 2021). Much of this work is situated in the wake of larger movements within historical archaeology focused on past Asian American experiences, and, in particular, by work which has proliferated on the Chinese diaspora, itself an established and expanding sub-discipline of historical archaeology (Voss and Allen 2008; Voss 2015; Chang et al. 2019; Rose and Kennedy 2020; Fong et al. 2022). Consequently, as part of the development of Japanese diaspora archaeology, there are concerted efforts to situate diasporic communities within larger transnational contexts, synthesize previous work, and draw interdisciplinary connections to research in fields such as history, ethnic studies, material culture studies, and art history.

The use of "diaspora" as a marker for Japanese diaspora archaeology arises out of an intentional effort to recognize the complex interplays of transnational exchange and movement by Japanese migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries. This follows suit from a range of other archaeologies of diaspora which have recognized the limits of containing interpretation to nation state models when considering historical interpretation (see for instance Orser 1998; Weik 2004; Lilley 2006; Brighton 2009; 2011; González-Tennant 2011; Voss et al. 2018; Ross 2013; 2020; Fennell 2008; 2012). Diaspora in and itself has been an important marker for considering both the diachronic and synchronic relationships of migratory populations, acknowledging both historic movements and contemporary connections across multiple spatial and transnational

contexts (Clifford 1994; Tölölyan 1996; Cohen 2008; Butler 2001). Within the context of Japanese migration history, the concept of diaspora has been debated, questioning whether it is a useful analytic to accurately describe the relationships that Japanese migrants, or descendants of Japanese migrants, have with other such communities or Japan itself. Proponents of diaspora argue that it is better suited than other terms such as "migration" or "immigration" to describe the complex, transnational movements of Japanese migrants and the networks of personal, state, and commercial relationships which were maintained. Critics however worry that the term either can flatten out the experiences of Japanese migrants, essentializing them into one model, or misrepresent Japanese migration through comparisons of forced diasporas such as the Jewish and Black diasporas which are more commonly known (Hirabayashi et al. 2002; White 2003; Adachi 2006; Tsuda 2012b; 2012a; Azuma 2005). With these debates in mind, scholars of Japanese diaspora archaeology have proceeded with the term to acknowledge the ways in which communities of Japanese migrants and their descendants, particularly in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, maintain commercial, social, and familial ties with communities which crosscut multiple national boundaries, colonial territories, and Japan itself (Lau-Ozawa and Ross 2021).

An ongoing and key challenge of Japanese diaspora archaeology is the synthesis of previous work conducted on the subject. This challenge derives, in part, from the predominance of CRM archaeology in the field which has produced a plethora of grey literature scattered throughout regional repositories and using site- and firm-specific standards of cataloging and analysis. Indeed, a primary critique of archaeological practice in both Japanese diaspora archaeology, as well as other sub-fields of archaeology, is the need for standardization in methods and categorical schemes (Rouse 1960; South 1978; 2002; Little and Shackel 1989; Camp 2016; Voss and Allen 2010; Campbell 2017; Bates et al. 2020). As such there have been numerous attempts to work towards standard nomenclatures of ceramics, Japanese design motifs, and vessel counting methodologies (Campbell 2018; Camp 2021). Such methods can be especially challenging in urban, early 20th-century contexts, where rapid shipping technologies supported the relatively inexpensive importation of material goods from across much of the world.

As noted previously, a large portion of research on the archaeology of the Japanese diaspora has centered on the experiences of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII, mirroring a similar phenomenon within writings on Japanese American history (Burton et al. 1999; Azuma 2016; Camp 2016; 2021; Clark 2020). Outside of the WWII experience, the archaeology of Japanese Americans has often examined rural contexts and work camps (Carlson 2017; 2021; Muckle 2017; 2022; Campbell 2021), or on sites in larger urban areas such as Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area (Walker et al. 2012; Nicolay 2017). Notable but rare exceptions to these foci include CRM excavations which have looked at materials from a Japanese American family in the California coastal town of San Luis Obispo (Allen et al. 2018; Baxter 2021), and a Japanese American and Chinese American community in Walnut Grove, a small town in the Sacramento Delta area of California (Costello and Maniery 1988). In recent years, many of these works have looked to cross disciplinary boundaries through engagement with contemporary community activism (Lau-Ozawa 2023), critical race theory (Carlson 2017; 2021), lifecycle history (Hartse and Hannah 2021), and Asian American Studies (Iijima et al. 2021). In all of these studies, it is also of note that archaeological work has centered almost entirely on ceramic and glass analysis, with little attention paid to other material types such as faunal materials, a subject we will return to below.

Within this context, the site of Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi is situated in a unique position of Japanese diaspora archaeology. Materials from Nihonmachi are some of the first excavated artifacts from a site related to Japanese migrants, and they were cited in the first published monograph on the archaeology of Asian American communities, *Rice Bowls in the Delta* by Costello and Maniery (1988). Although *Rice Bowls in*

the Delta focused on sites in the Sacramento Delta area, located over 300 miles north of Santa Barbara, the detailed report references materials previously excavated from contexts in Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi. Outside of grey literature, this was the only reference to excavated materials related to Nihonmachi published for decades.

4. Nihonmachi archaeology

After the forced removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans from the west coast during WWII, only small numbers returned in the later 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s, the last families left, and the 100 block of Canon Perdido was bought by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation. All buildings associated with the Nihonmachi period were demolished, and the reconstruction of a section of the Spanish Colonial Area Presidio buildings began. In order to accomplish the reconstruction, extensive archaeological work took place. Between 1961 and 1965 James Deetz and Lewis Binford conducted preliminary work to identify some of the boundaries of the original presidio structure. Larger excavations took place between 1966 and 1977, which were led variously by Timothy Hillebrand, Richard Humphrey, Lynne Spear, George Decker Jr. Mike Glassow, John Walker, Michael Hardwick, Brian Fagan and Julia Costello. Virginia Scott, a teacher at Santa Barbara High School, also led excavations by her students of a plot of land behind the Bonilla property which was acquired by the Trust in 1972. Though these excavations were largely centered on the Spanish Colonial era presidio, they also uncovered multiple refuse deposits dating from the early to mid-20th century, the height of the Nihonmachi period (Hillebrand 1967a; 1967b; Decker et al. 1968; Glassow 1970; Costello 1976; Fagan 1976; Bente, Tordoff, and Hilderman-Smith 1982).

Somewhat surprisingly for the times, the relatively modern materials recovered from 20th-century deposits were kept, including numerous ceramics, marking the earliest excavations of a Japanese diasporic community in the United States. Following excavation, the 20th century material was only roughly cataloged and curated with little analysis conducted over the next 40 years. The only clues to the existence of these assemblages were scattered references to the materials, made largely in CRM reports and Costello and Manieri's 1988 *Rice Bowls in the Delta*. Renewed interest in the site began in 2018, when Stacey Camp of Michigan State University contacted Santa Barbara Trust archaeologist Mike Imwalle and visited the collection. Camp invited Lau-Ozawa to look at the material, and in 2019, with support from the Society for California Archaeology, Lau-Ozawa began documenting and analyzing materials related to both these early collections as well as recent excavations led by the Santa Barbara Trust in 2009 (Hoover and Imwalle 2009).

In particular, Lau-Ozawa's analysis focuses on materials recovered from two trash pits, one located in an area near where a row of Japanese tenement houses stood, and one on the back lot of the Bonilla House property. The two trash deposits were relatively small pits, likely related to individual households. Early analysis of material culture in these contexts revealed a continuation of Japanese medicinal practices as well as the use of imported ceramics from Japan, China, and Europe alongside American manufactured earthenwares. These studies indicate changes between material practices in Nihonmachi and subsequent practices in WWII Japanese American incarceration camps (Lau-Ozawa 2021; 2025). Of particular relevance here, a medicine bottle found in one assemblage was embossed with the "Red Cross Pharmacy" which operated two blocks away from Nihonmachi on State Street. The presence of the bottle alongside imported Japanese medicine bottles suggests that residents of the Nihonmachi area used both ethnically relevant medicines and commercial importers as well as non-Japanese diasporic medicine stores like the Red Cross Pharmacy. These purchasing decisions can suggest a commercial consumption network which surpassed the boundaries of an ethnically based supply chain.

For the remainder of this paper, we will refer to the trash pit uncovered in front of the tenement houses as the "tenement house

assemblage" and the trash pit found near the Bonilla House as the "Bonilla House assemblage." We have opted for these designations to focus on the residential structures most closely related to either deposit rather than utilize a nomenclature which might emphasize ethnic affiliation, such as the "Nihonmachi assemblage." We would like to also reiterate that the Bonilla House is named for the person who built it, Florentino Bonilla, and that several other families lived in the house after the Bonillas, including during the depositional period of the trash pit near the house. Thus, in using the term "Bonilla House assemblage" we are *not* suggesting that the materials are necessarily related to the Bonilla family. Artifacts in both deposits date from the 1910s to the mid-1930s and include a range of materials which show connections to both local and transnational business networks. For instance, Japanese and European manufactured porcelains were documented in both deposits, as well as glass bottles and bottle caps related to local pharmacies, soda water makers, and dairies. The proverbial and literal pots do not equal people. As is typical of many urban archaeological deposits, a fair amount of faunal materials were also documented in each provenance; these assemblages form the basis for our discussion of neighborhood archaeology presented below.

5. Materials and methods

In total, 412 faunal remains were recovered from the tenement house deposit, and 1,388 faunal remains were recovered from the Bonilla House deposit. All faunal remains from both assemblages were analyzed by Kennedy in the University of New Orleans Archaeology Laboratory following standard zooarchaeological methods (e.g., Reitz and Wing 2008). Each specimen was assigned to the most specific taxonomic classification possible (e.g., species, family, class), and identifications were kept conservative to account for osteological similarities that exist between some taxa, such as sheep/goats and certain fish taxa (e.g., Gobalet 2001). Note that we have left all mollusk remains identified at the phylum level (Mollusca) due a lack of access to appropriate comparative materials for this group of animals; however, given the clear importance of these animals to Nihonmachi food practices a more detailed analysis of molluscan remains could be worthwhile. For each specimen, skeletal element, butchery marks present, indications of taphonomic processes such as burning and rodent/carnivore gnawing, and weight in grams were recorded. All specimens or groups of identical specimens (e.g., complete right humeri) were assigned a unique specimen number to allow for replicability of results.

The data collected from both assemblages are discussed below largely in terms of the taxa identified, number of identified specimens (NISP) and weight in grams. NISP is a count of the total bones identified for a given taxon. NISP and weight each have different strengths and weaknesses, and when taken together provide a more holistic view of the importance of individual animal taxa in the past (Reitz and Wing 2008:202-213).

6. Towards a neighborhood archaeology

Before discussing the zooarchaeological data in more depth, we want to first turn to some of the challenges and ambiguities related to interpreting these (and other related) data in the context of a multi-ethnic urban neighborhood in the early to mid-20th century. As discussed earlier, while known as Nihonmachi, or Japantown, the composition of the neighborhood is more mixed than exclusively Japanese diasporic communities are often assumed to be. While the tenement house deposit we examined is well within the boundaries of Nihonmachi, and more than likely related to a Japanese household, the deposit on the Bonilla property is more ambiguous, and it remains unclear if it is related to residents of the Bonilla House or, possibly, Nihonmachi residents who dumped materials across property lines. Further, other unanalyzed deposits from the El Presidio de Santa Barbara grounds uncovered in more recent excavations between 2017–2020 show a mass trash deposit much

larger than a single household and with a range of materials from Spanish era majolica to stoneware sake bottles and European manufactured porcelains. This deposit highlights a longstanding practice of mixed trash disposal within this dense, urban neighborhood, a not uncommon practice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Voss (2008) has contended that the depositional processes related to Chinatowns call for a rethinking of the household as the primary unit of analysis in examining refuse deposits. Rather, Voss emphasizes the often-communal nature of trash deposits in urban Chinatowns and urges archaeologists to more carefully consider the intersection of archaeological (features, deposits) and social (community, neighborhood, household, etc.) scales of analysis in designing their research questions. Lightfoot (2015) in describing the archaeology of pluralism in multi-ethnic societies, notes that even in ethnically segregated communities there were often heterogeneous communities, connections to broader landscapes, and rapidly changing practices. Lightfoot's insights focused on the contribution of colonial, Mission, and plantation archaeological research could speak to ancient urbanism, but these points are just as relevant in looking towards more contemporary urbanism. Indeed, Praetzelis and Praetzelis (2011) in a quantitative approach to late 19th and early 20th century urban deposits in Oakland and San Francisco saw consumption patterns which at times crosscut class and ethnic boundaries and reflected instead spatial distributions in particular neighborhoods. These correlations suggest that the close proximity of neighborhoods, though less rigid than colonial forts, Missions, or plantations, were important to the practices of their residents. Praetzelis and Praetzelis's work stands as an important indication of the potential for neighborhood identity in the archaeological record, though their research benefited from large-scale quantitative analysis possible with dozens of household samples.

When looking at the materials recovered from Santa Barbara's Nihonmachi, we have sought to extend this line of thought to consider deposits within the context of the "neighborhood" rather than simply a single community or ethnic identity. As Stone (2019) points out, defining what a neighborhood is essential to its application as a unit of analysis. The concept of a neighborhood, which we define as a spatially proximal area in towns and cities often comprising multiple diasporic communities in close contact, considers the messiness and complexity of urban life. In our use of the term, neighborhoods are not only spatially delimited areas within urban contexts, but thought of as places, existing as social facts, even if they change over time. Nihonmachi existed in as much as it was thought to exist by its residents.

Supply chains, community stores, grocers, butcher shops, and other resources and businesses are typically not only connected to individual households, but instead to neighborhoods which transcend neat ethnic lines and divisions and which can also be intimately linked to multiple broader communities and networks, as people moved between areas and often lived and worked in separate locations. We do not mean to suggest that ethnicity and race should be ignored. Indeed, the experiences, opportunities, and access to particular goods and spaces was of course highly shaped by racial and ethnic lines throughout the 20th century. However, we would like to consider how the spatial proximity of the neighborhood, with all of its idiosyncrasies and particularities and informed by both local and transnational connections, can create distinct patterns of consumption that simultaneously permeate and extend beyond lines of ethnicity and race. The phenomenon of the neighborhood emerges from the multiple constitutive communities which make it up (Smith and Novic 2012; Pacifico and Truex 2019). Consequently, it is essential to examine the practices which occur within the space of the neighborhood across multiple households. It is in this context that we now turn to a discussion of zooarchaeological data from the tenement house and Bonilla House assemblages.

The tenement house faunal assemblage.

The tenement house assemblage includes 412 faunal remains, and all but 35 of the vertebrate specimens were identifiable to a level of at least class (Table 2; Fig. 2). Mammals dominate in terms of both NISP (58.5

Table 2

Faunal data collected from the tenement house faunal assemblage.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	NISP	NISP %	Wt(g)	Wt (g)%
<i>Bos taurus</i>	Cattle	8	1.94	93.04	13.48
cf. <i>Bos taurus</i>	cf. Cattle	1	0.24	4.98	0.72
Caprinae	Sheep/goat	9	2.18	67.60	9.79
cf. Caprinae	cf. Sheep/goat	1	0.24	1.54	0.22
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Pig	1	0.24	2.87	0.42
Leporidae	Rabbit or jackrabbit	3	0.73	0.57	0.08
Small mammal	Small mammal	1	0.24	0.08	0.01
Medium mammal	Medium mammal	28	6.80	38.04	5.51
Large mammal	Large mammal	37	8.98	161.03	23.32
Medium/Large mammal	Medium/Large mammal	26	6.31	29.84	4.32
Unspecified mammal	Mammal	126	30.58	98.45	14.26
Anatidae (small)	Duck	1	0.24	1.21	0.18
cf. Anatidae	cf. Duck	1	0.24	0.14	0.02
<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Chicken	18	4.37	23.99	3.47
cf. <i>Gallus gallus</i>	cf. Chicken	3	0.73	1.44	0.21
<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	Turkey	1	0.24	1.66	0.24
cf. <i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	cf. Turkey	2	0.49	3.51	0.51
Galliformes	Chicken order	2	0.49	0.26	0.04
Aves (large)	Large bird	1	0.24	1.77	0.26
Aves (medium)	Medium bird	44	10.68	9.36	1.36
Clupeidae	Herring family	2	0.49	0.03	0.00
<i>Paralichthys californicus</i>	California Halibut	6	1.46	7.10	1.03
<i>Sphyrna</i> sp.	Barracuda	2	0.49	1.34	0.19
Actinopterygii	Ray-finned fish	8	1.94	2.88	0.42
Mollusca	Mollusk	45	10.92	135.19	19.58
Vertebrate	Vertebrate	35	8.50	2.51	0.36
Total		412	100	690.43	100

NISP = number of identified specimens; Wt(g) = weight in grams.

cf. indicates specimens that compare favorably to the taxon.

sp. indicates specimens that can be identified to the genus but not species level.



Fig. 2. Rabbit bones from the tenement house assemblage.

%) and weight (72.13 %), and they were supplemented with birds (NISP = 17.7 %; weight = 6.28 %), fish (NISP = 4.37 %; weight = 1.64 %), and mollusks (NISP = 10.92 %; weight = 19.58 %). The assemblage contains a mix of both domesticated and wild animals, and, as we discuss below, some of the identified taxa are of ambiguous origins due to a lack of resolution in some zooarchaeological identifications (e.g., rabbits [Leporidae]) (Fig. 3).

Overall, data from the tenement house assemblage suggests a focus on cattle (*Bos taurus*) and sheep/goat (Caprinae), and these taxa account for the bulk of identified domesticated mammals in the assemblage. Despite the small sample size, there are a wide variety of skeletal elements present for cattle and especially sheep/goat, including a roughly even mix of long bones, ribs, and vertebrae that were sawn into steaks or

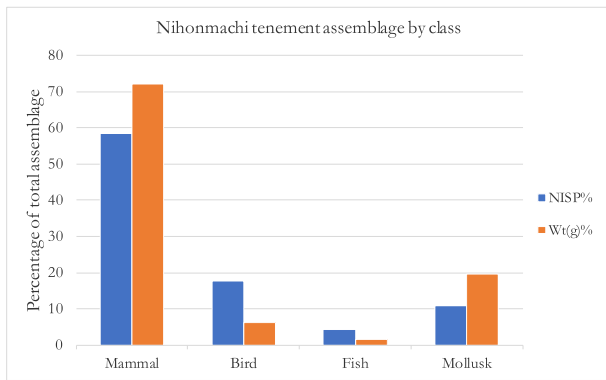


Fig. 3. Relative importance of animal classes in the tenement house assemblage.

other smaller cuts. Although a wide range of skeletal elements can be indicative of on-site animal husbandry and (snout-to-tail) butchery, the fact that 40 % of these specimens showed evidence of butchery with industrial bandsaws indicates that much, if not all, of this meat was acquired through butcher shops and other markets that were tied into larger meat distribution networks (Sunseri 2015). This pattern contrasts with a near-complete lack of butchery marks on the identified remains of rabbits, birds, and fish, all of which were likely sold whole and/or raised or harvested at a household level. In contrast to the relative prominence of cattle and sheep/goat remains, the tenement house assemblage yielded only a single identified pig remain, indicating that pork played a secondary role compared to beef and sheep/goat meat. The tenement house assemblage also contains a fair number of mammals that could only be size graded (e.g., medium mammal), and it is reasonable to assume that these likely belong to the most common taxa at the site, in this case sheep/goat (medium) and cattle (large) rather than pigs.

In addition to larger-bodied domesticated animals, the assemblage also included three rabbit remains (Fig. 2). None of these specimens were identified past the family level due to morphological similarities across rabbit taxa and a lack of clear diagnostic landmarks, and none included clear butchery marks. These specimens could conceivably be from local species of cottontails (*Sylvilagus* spp.) and jackrabbits (*Lepus* spp.), imported/introduced European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), or even non-local cottontail and jackrabbit species imported from other areas of North America. Regardless, rabbits of various kinds were readily available in urban markets at the time, though we cannot rule out that these animals were harvested or raised directly by Nihonmachi residents.

The tenement house bird assemblage is dominated by chicken (*Gallus gallus*) remains (NISP = 4.37 %; weight = 3.47 %), and it is likely that most of the identified medium bird remains (NISP = 10.68 %; weight = 1.36 %) also derive from this species. It is clear that chicken provided the bulk of bird meat in this assemblage, but the presence of duck (Anatidae) and turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) remains reveals that these taxa were consumed at least occasionally. Similar to the identified rabbits, the identified duck could be either a domestic duck (the most common being domesticated mallards [*Anas platyrhynchos*]) or any of many wild duck species that are resident to or migrate through the Santa Barbara area. Although bird eggshell fragments were not identified, the assemblage contains two chicken bones that contain medullary bone, a calcium deposit found within the shafts of female, egg-laying birds. The presence of medullary bone raises the possibility that the people responsible for producing the tenement house assemblage were keeping chickens (and potentially other bird species) for eggs.

Finally, the tenement house fish assemblage was small, totaling just 18 bones, but it included three identified marine fish taxa, including an unspecified member of the herring family (Clupeidae), California Halibut (*Paralichthys californicus*), and an unspecified species of

barracuda (*Sphyraena* sp.). The Clupeid specimens are vertebrae which are notoriously difficult to identify to the genus or species level, and they could be from locally available taxa such as Pacific Sardine (*Clupea pallasii*) or any number of imports, like Atlantic Herring (*C. herangus*). California Halibut have a wide range along the Pacific coast, but they are not uncommon in the waters near Santa Barbara. The barracuda are likely Pacific Barracuda (*Sphyraena argentea*), common in local waters, but given the potential for other morphologically similar barracuda species we have kept this identification at the genus level. Regardless of the specific species all of these fishes would have been available in fish markets in Santa Barbara, and they would likely have been available in more general markets as preserved (salted, smoked, pickled, etc.) products as well. Although not identified to species, mollusk remains still speak to probable local connections, as mollusks would likely have been procured in relatively nearby waters and shipped directly to Santa Barbara owing to concerns of spoilage.

The Bonilla House faunal assemblage.

The Bonilla House assemblage contains 1,388 faunal remains, of which all but 2 of the vertebrate specimens were identifiable to a level of at least class (Table 3; Fig. 4). Mammals likewise dominate in terms of both NISP (54.61 %) and weight (69.38 %), and they were supplemented with small numbers of birds (NISP = 1.8 %; weight = 0.56 %) and fish (NISP = 1.95 %; weight = 0.17 %) as well as mollusks (NISP = 41.5 %; weight = 29.87 %). As with the tenement house assemblage, the Bonilla House assemblage contains a mix of both domesticated and wild animal remains.

Faunal data from the Bonilla House assemblage reveal a heavy focus on beef, which was supplemented with a moderate amount of pork and sheep/goat meat. Although a wide variety of skeletal elements are present across these three taxa, there is a clear focus on steak cuts made from cattle scapula and, to a lesser extent, long bones (Fig. 5). Many of the unspecified medium and large mammal remains are from these same cuts but lack distinct landmarks to confidently identify them to species; thus, the focus on beef, and especially scapular cuts, is almost certainly greater than is immediately apparent from the data presented in Table 3. The identified pork and sheep/goat remains derive from a much wider range of skeletal elements including vertebrae, foot elements, and long bones; although this does not indicate on-site animal husbandry, it does

Table 3

Faunal data from the Bonilla House assemblage.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	NISP	NISP %	Wt(g)	Wt (g)%
<i>Bos taurus</i>	Cattle	22	1.59	347.25	20.09
cf. <i>Bos taurus</i>	cf. Cattle	4	0.29	24.26	1.40
Caprinae	Sheep/goat	5	0.36	49.36	2.86
cf. Caprinae	cf. Sheep/goat	2	0.14	7.62	0.44
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Pig	15	1.08	37.69	2.18
Leporidae	Rabbit or jackrabbit	2	0.14	0.27	0.02
Medium mammal	Medium mammal	59	4.25	91.75	5.31
Large mammal	Large mammal	65	4.68	282.10	16.32
Medium/Large mammal	Medium/Large mammal	262	18.88	217.22	12.57
Unspecified ammal	Mammal	322	23.20	141.48	8.19
<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Chicken	8	0.58	4.23	0.24
Aves (medium)	Medium bird	11	0.79	4.04	0.23
Aves	Bird	6	0.43	1.46	0.08
Pleuronectiformes	Flatfish	19	1.37	1.91	0.11
<i>Scomber</i> cf. <i>japonicus</i>	Mackerel	1	0.07	0.31	0.02
<i>Sphyraena</i> sp.	Barracuda	2	0.14	1.70	0.10
Actinopterygii	Ray-finned fish	5	0.36	0.73	0.04
Mollusca	Mollusk	576	41.50	516.22	29.87
Vertebrate	Vertebrate	2	0.14	0.34	0.02
Total		1388	100	1729.9	100.00

NISP = number of identified specimens; Wt(g) = weight in grams.

cf. indicates specimens that compare favorably to the taxon

sp. indicates specimens that can be identified to the genus but not species level.

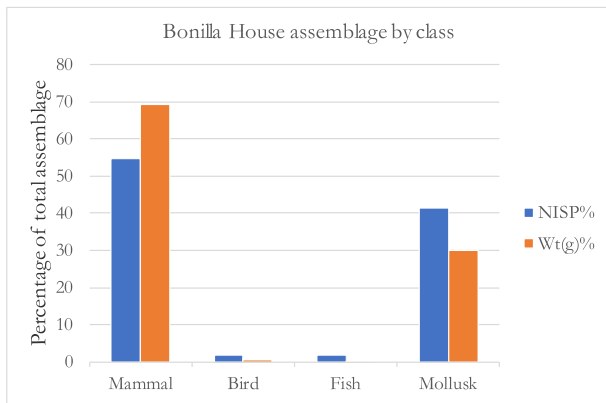


Fig. 4. Relative importance of animal classes in the Bonilla House assemblage.



Fig. 5. Beef bones butchered with a bandsaw from the Bonilla House assemblage.

indicate the use of much of the range of meat cuts available in contemporary urban markets. Further connecting the Bonilla House assemblage to urban markets, fully 50 % of the identified beef, pork, and sheep/goat remains were sawn with industrial bandsaws. As with the Nihonmachi assemblage, butchery marks in the Bonilla House assemblage were confined to medium and large domestic mammals, again suggesting different distribution or procurement strategies for smaller fauna. The Bonilla House assemblage also yielded two rabbit remains; identifications were kept at the family level, and they could derive from either wild or domestic animals.

The Bonilla House bird assemblage is relatively small ($N = 25$) and is dominated by chicken remains (NISP = 0.58 %; weight = 0.24 %). Additionally, the identified medium bird remains (NISP = 0.79 %; weight = 0.23 %) most likely derive from this species as well, further indicating a focus on chickens. Given the relatively small sample size, however, it is unclear whether or not other bird taxa were consumed by the people associated with this deposit. None of the chicken remains in the Bonilla House assemblage had medullary bone present, but, again, the lack of these specimens could simply be an artifact of small sample size.

Finally, the Bonilla House assemblage included 27 fish remains and, at minimum, three fish taxa. Nineteen bones were recovered from the same context and belong to a single, large, unidentified flatfish (Pleuronectiformes). Although these flatfish bones likely derive from a local species, given the availability of refrigerated shipping and the potential for preserved flatfish we cannot rule out importation of a non-local taxa. The assemblage also contained a single mackerel (*Scomber cf. japonicus*) vertebra; this specimen was a near perfect match for the locally available Pacific Mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), but without access to comparative specimens of several other *Scomber* species that could have conceivably been imported to Santa Barbara, we chose to keep this identification

slightly more conservative. As with the tenement house assemblage, the presence of mollusk remains hints at engagement with local shellfish markets.

Through a neighborhood lens.

In traditional studies, the tenement house assemblage and Bonilla House assemblage might be interpreted through lenses of ethnicity, acculturation, or any number of other theoretical approaches, especially given their location in Nihonmachi. However, we instead ask what the multiple lines of difference and similarity between these two spatially close assemblages might tell us about the nature of life, and archaeology, in what we know to have been an ethnically diverse and quite porous neighborhood.

There are clear distinctions between the tenement house and Bonilla House assemblages, in terms of both the kinds of animals eaten and their relative proportions (Tables 2, 3; Fig. 6). The people that produced the tenement house assemblage largely ate beef and mutton, which they supplemented with rabbits, a moderate amount of chicken, an occasional duck and turkey, small numbers of fishes, including halibut, herring, and barracuda, and mollusks. Conversely, the people that produced the Bonilla House assemblage largely ate beef (and especially steaks made from beef shoulder), which they supplemented with pork and sheep/goat meat, rabbits, chicken, a small number of fishes including flatfishes, mackerel, and barracuda, and mollusks. In addition to different use of large-bodied domesticated mammals (cattle, pigs, sheep/goat), zooarchaeological data suggest that the people who produced the tenement house assemblage ate relatively greater amounts of both poultry and fish. Still, by zooarchaeological standards the taxonomic lists from the tenement house assemblage and Bonilla House assemblage look similar with relatively minor differences in the frequencies of particular taxa or cuts of meat. However, while both households made use of similar animals, they may very well have prepared these meats differently, using different seasonings, cooking methods, and presentation styles, and the resulting meals may (or may not) have been eaten within entirely different social circles.

What then do these data mean, especially in the context of a diverse, early-20th-century neighborhood? First and foremost, the kinds of animals and cuts of meat present in these two assemblages were quite common fare at the time and often appear in large numbers in urban archaeological deposits dating to the late-19th and early-20th centuries, rendering much of the assemblages “ethnically ambiguous.” Similarly, both assemblages conspicuously lack the kinds of “culturally diagnostic” faunal remains that zooarchaeologists in other contexts might look for to assign ethnicity, such as the remains of imported Asian fishes and bear paw bones regularly identified at Chinese diaspora sites (Kennedy 2017; Kennedy et al. 2018; Kennedy et al. 2022). Indeed, based solely on faunal data there is little that would (or even could) link these two faunal assemblages to people of a specific ethnicity. Instead, we might fall back to the bread and butter of historical archaeology: written records relating to each of these properties, alongside detailed analysis of material culture recovered alongside the faunal assemblages we present in this article. But even still, as we discussed above in detail the historical record undeniably demonstrates that these assemblages were produced in a neighborhood that, while predominantly associated with people of Japanese descent, was home to and/or regularly visited by people from a diverse array of backgrounds. Similarly, although still undergoing analysis, the material culture from these contexts includes an array of ceramics produced in Japan, China, Europe, and the United States, and while there is certainly evidence of the continuation of some Japanese practices within the material record (e.g., medicine), the mixing of materials from so many points of manufacture again hampers efforts to assign a concrete ethnicity to the households that produced these specific assemblages (Lau-Ozawa 2021; 2025). This process is doubly challenging when one considers even more nuanced interpretations, such as households composed of people of different ethnicities or generations (e.g., issei and nisei).

So how then might we productively interpret these assemblages?

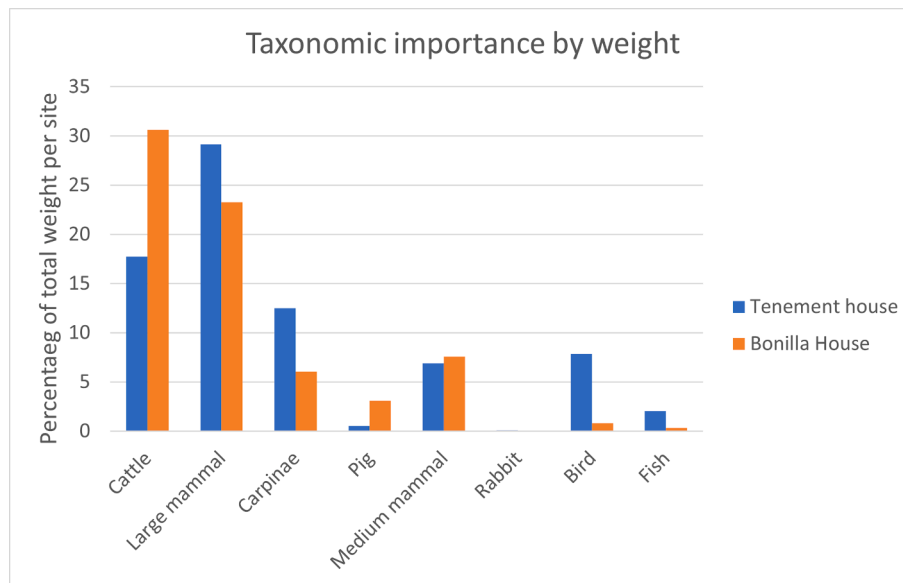


Fig. 6. Taxonomic importance of common vertebrate food animals by percentage of each assemblage's total weight. Note that molluscan and unspecified vertebrate weights were not included in these calculations in order to specifically show each percentage relative to the overall *vertebrate* assemblage.

One path may be by examining the commonalities across both assemblages, with an eye towards supply chains and markets that might have played key roles in supplying *neighborhoods* rather than ethnic communities. Both assemblages contain beef bones butchered with industrial bandsaws, highlighting links to large-scale beef distribution networks (Sunseri 2015). By the early 20th century, the vast majority of beef distribution was controlled by a small number of national firms such as Swift and Company (Warner 2015), and it is likely that products shipped via rail by these companies would have been available in Santa Barbara, including at some of the 16 grocery stores listed in Table 1. However, Santa Barbara also received meat, including beef and lamb, from the Gehl Packing Company, a local meat packer which sourced cattle and sheep from nearby Santa Cruz Island (Morning Press 1913, 1919a). The supply of lamb by Gehl gives additional weight to this company being the ultimate source of at least some of the faunal remains in the tenement house and Bonilla house assemblages, as sheep/goat bones from both assemblages were butchered with industrial bandsaws like those that would have been used by Gehl. Although Gehl sold meat in its own storefronts, such companies also typically sold wholesale to local grocers and butchers and it is likely that this occurred in Santa Barbara. Pork procurement is more ambiguous, but local newspaper advertisements indicate that Gehl and other local companies sold “choice pork” (Morning Press 1914). Whereas these advertisements indicate the local sourcing of certain products (“local dressed poultry” and “island mutton”) we have seen no indications of the source of pork, suggesting that this meat was shipped from further afield via rail either as live animals or finished products, both of which were commonly transported by this time (Kennedy and Guiry 2022). Regardless of whether the beef, pork, and sheep/goat bones from the assemblages derive from meat distributed by nationally or locally owned companies, they are certainly from meat that would have moved through city-wide meat distribution networks that crosscut and permeated communities and neighborhoods within Santa Barbara.

In contrast, the identified small mammal, bird, fish, and mollusk remains suggest more varied engagement with local suppliers and, potentially, household-level production. Historical newspapers mention household-scale rabbit penning (Morning Press 1922b) and formal rabbit husbandry operations in the Santa Barbara area (Morning Press 1920), while advertisements by Gehl and the California Packing Company indicate that these companies periodically sold dressed rabbits (Morning Press 1919b). The smaller scale of rabbit production and their relative

scarcity in both assemblages suggest that rabbits may have been eaten only rarely, perhaps on special occasions, and that they may have been procured from a limited number of retailers, obtained informally from people raising rabbits, or husbanded on-site. Similarly, during the period our study assemblages date to most chickens (whether used for eggs or meat) were raised in relatively small, family run operations and sold locally or produced at a household level, and historical newspapers indicate the presence of such farms and backyard operations in the Santa Barbara area (Morning Press 1920, 1922a). The identification of medullary bone in two chicken bones in the tenement house assemblage suggest that chickens were being raised within the neighborhood, but it is not clear how common this was versus buying chickens from grocers. Although purely speculation, raising chickens (and potentially rabbits) in backyard pens would have both altered the feel of life in Nihonmachi and provided opportunities to connect with neighbors engaged in similar activities. Fish and mollusks indicate different, likely specialized suppliers given the strenuous requirements for keeping fish fresh for sale. Santa Barbara was home to multiple fish markets, and historical newspapers record the sale of a wide range of fishes including barracuda, mackerel, halibut, and several other kinds of flatfishes (Morning Press 1918). It is highly likely that residents had far fewer options for places to buy fish and shellfish at compared to beef, pork, and lamb. In this context, use of a similar array of fish taxa, especially flatfishes (including halibut) and barracuda, hints at reliance on a small number of nearby stores.

In this context, the residents of both households could have bought their beef, pork, and lamb at local stores tied to city-wide distribution networks, either raised rabbits and chickens or bought them from local or specialty stores, and visited a small number of fish markets for fish and mollusks. When considering these activities on a neighborhood scale, it is not unlikely that both households could have shopped at the same stores for some or all of the animal products they bought. Further, it is not inconceivable that these neighbors could have even shared meals with each other or swapped recipes for how to prepare some of these ingredients. In an oral history, one member of the Dyo family remembers that his family migrated first from Japan to Mexico before moving to Summerland, a town near Santa Barbara. He noted that when his family was in Juarez, Mexico, his grandmother started a Mexican restaurant, and to this day his family frequently eats as much Mexican food as Japanese (Dyo 2020). Diasporas are characterized not as point-to-point immigration histories, but wider dispersals and connections

which spread transnationally (Butler 2001). Japanese diasporic communities don't only have connections between their current residences and Japan, but to the many other Japanese diasporic communities throughout the world. In neighborhoods, these complex movements and histories connect, offering the possibilities of newly forged connections which transgress ethnic boundaries.

In the context of supply chains and markets, general grocers, butchers, and specialty purveyors provide venues for connections that can cross other community boundaries. Although speculative, such scenarios are quite likely when one considers food distribution at a neighborhood scale in the early 20th century, when corner stores and neighborhood markets (rather than industrial grocery stores) played critical roles in food distribution by redistributing a wide range of products sourced from national, regional, and local producers (Jenks 2008; Mullins 2008). This is especially true in neighborhoods that were largely occupied by immigrants, and in these contexts corner stores not only provided employment opportunities for neighborhood or community residents but also became sources of both mass-produced goods and hard-to-acquire imported and/or specialty items (Pilcher 2006).

Where does such an approach leave us? At a fundamental level, examining neighborhood-scale food supply can help productively complicate archaeological interpretations of neighborhoods like Japantowns and Chinatowns, which are often cast as homogenous and insular communities with limited outside connections. Instead of highlighting lines of difference, such as the "culturally diagnostic" artifacts that archaeologists are so often drawn to (Mullins 2008), a focus on commonalities reveals possible connections that might otherwise fly under the radar. In the case of Nihonmachi, seemingly mundane practices – from raising chickens to buying fresh barracuda from a local fishmonger to purchasing mass-produced beef – provided opportunities to engage with national food distribution networks in a familiar environment, while activities like raising chickens and rabbits and buying fresh fish and specialty items potentially allowed for negotiating place and identity (Warner 2015). In this vein, while addressing specific aspects of ethnicity and race in these contexts is difficult, we wish to reiterate that we are not suggesting that they should be ignored in projects such as ours. Instead, we follow Voss (2008) in arguing that depositional and social histories are what should ultimately structure our research questions, and in the context of Nihonmachi the archaeological deposits and occupational history of the neighborhood make it clear that, at least in the case of faunal data, we are best served by considering our two study assemblages not as the results of two discrete households but instead as the products of a dense, ethnically diverse neighborhood.

7. Conclusion

As we noted at the outset of this article, the archaeology of Asian diasporic communities has often been marked by simplistic narratives drawing on models of acculturation and assimilation (Kennedy and Rose 2020). Though these trends are changing in recent years, they are at times exacerbated by the emphasis that historical archaeologists frequently place on discrete assemblages that can be assigned, be it through documentary, oral history, or material evidence, to single, known households. However, as is the case in Nihonmachi, dense, urban neighborhoods were often home to much more diverse communities than typically considered in archaeological narratives. In this context, we hope the case study we have presented here encourages more neighborhood-scale analyses that not only incorporate data from multiple households but also draw on the many under- or unstudied mixed urban deposits that, while incapable of addressing questions about single households, are ideal for considering questions about neighborhood dynamics.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Koji Lau-Ozawa: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **J. Ryan Kennedy:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization, Formal analysis.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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