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**MTA TRANSFERS OLD CHINATOWN ARTIFACTS
TO CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The past, present and future came together today in Chinatown.

The MTA presented title to thousands of artifacts recovered from the site of the old Chinatown during the excavation of the subway stations at the present day Union Station to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.

The artifacts were unearthed at 59 different digs during construction of the Metro Red Line Station at Union Station from 1989 to 1991. The items include cooking and serving utensils, Chinese medicinal vials, hundreds of Asian coins, stoneware shipping jars, gaming devices and toothbrushes.

"We're happy to transfer this cross-section of immigrant life in early Los Angeles to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Franklin White. "This view into the past is a by-product of our Metro Rail construction, which will serve Los Angeles well into the future."

The area had been home to the Los Angeles Chinese community from the 1870s to 1934, when the land was condemned to make way for Union Station. The population, which peaked at nearly 3,000, was relocated. The area, 12 city blocks of houses, workshops, stores, warehouses, and a mission, was leveled. The site was covered with 14 feet of fill to form the trackbed for several rail lines.

Union Station opened to rail passengers in 1939.

The area lay undisturbed for the next 50 years, until construction began on the Metro Red Line.

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The existence of Old Chinatown was well documented in maps and census records, and the MTA hired an archaeological consultant, Greenwood and Associates, to ensure that historic items were properly removed, documented, preserved and catalogued.

Project archaeologists found intact brick foundations and thousands of items that provide a greater understanding of the early Chinese community.

"We know that cultural interaction was very limited in Old Chinatown," said Roberta Greenwood, supervising archaeologist. "Our recoveries help paint a picture of how life was back in the 1800s and how they established their homes, shops and small businesses in their community."

The MTA and the Catellus Corporation, owner of the property where the artifacts were recovered, are transferring title to the artifacts to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. The MTA is also providing \$4,000 to fund preservation and display of the items.

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, founded in 1975, will make the artifacts available to scholars and will display selected items at local businesses and financial institutions.

The Society plans to build a Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center at the site of two 110-year-old Victorian bungalows, which will be restored to their original appearance.

The MTA, which played a role in uncovering Chinatown's past, also will be a presence in Chinatown's future. One of the 13 Pasadena Blue Line stations will be in Chinatown. The Pasadena Blue Line is scheduled to open in 2002.

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