

ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE
HISTORIC LOS ANGELES
CITY/COUNTY
CEMETERY

Cogstone Resource Management Inc.



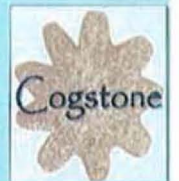
Chronology of Archaeological Work

- June 22
 - Grading began at 8 am
 - Bone was found at 10 am about 3 feet deep
 - Grading was slowed and all soil checked for bone
 - Grading was halted by the Cogstone monitor at 1:30 pm because burials were encountered



Chronology of Archaeological Work

- June 23
 - Shallow grading was attempted in an adjacent area but bone was encountered in the first few minutes and grading was shut down
 - Grass removal was conducted and revealed a few cement plugs which are used as row markers
 - All work was halted



Chronology of Archaeological Work

- No construction work was permitted while an archaeological treatment plan was developed and the Review Advisory Committee consulted (from June 24 to August 29)
- The first step was to have archaeologists review all of the soil excavated on June 22 & 23 for bone. This was done by hand.



Excavated soils hand sorted by archaeologists July 11 to August 5



Chronology of Archaeological Work

- The results of bone recovery for the stockpiled soil was reported to the RAC last August
- Those recoveries were mostly medical waste from the County Hospital consisting of amputated limbs



Chronology of Archaeological Work

- Ground penetrating radar and high resolution metal detection were performed to assist with locating potential graves on August 22 – 25
- Archaeological excavations of burials began August 30 and ended November 6.



Archaeologists use machinery to locate burials





Some recoveries consisted of remnant burials from decades old disturbance.

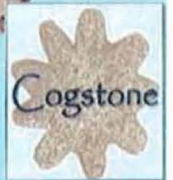




Typical recovery showing only the lower body preserved along with fragments of coffin wood



Burial with skull preserved but little coffin wood

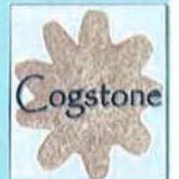




Example of an almost complete skeleton, again with fragments of coffin wood

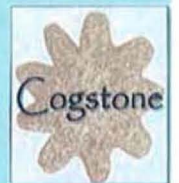
Chronology of Archaeological Work

- November 7-March 16 archaeological preparation, cataloging, and identification was performed on the recovered bones and artifacts
- March 23 (tonight) is the presentation of our preliminary results



Chronology of Archaeological Work

- We are now performing analysis and writing our report
- April 27 we will present our documentary research to this committee
- May 15 is the tentative date the final report will be available



The Los Angeles City/County Cemetery

“Evergreen Cemetery duly opened and is still active. The adjoining potter’s field was operated by the city from 1877 to 1917, when it was sold to the county; part of it is still in operation as the Los Angeles County Cemetery. The city allowed the Chinese community to set up an altar and inter its dead at one end of the public area, thus creating a separate Chinese cemetery as an alternative to the city cemetery or Calvary.”

E. H Carpenter, *Early Cemeteries of Los Angeles*, 1973



The Los Angeles City/County Cemetery

The City of Los Angeles accepted 5 acres along Lorena St. from E. 1st Street to Brooklyn Ave. [now Cesar Chavez] as a City Cemetery to be used for the sole purpose of burying bodies at public expense.

Ordinances and Resolutions of the City of Los Angeles, Vol. 1:468-9



The Los Angeles City/County Cemetery

- The cemetery operated from 1879 to 1922.
- Subsequently, only cremations were performed.
- Medical waste is still buried at the crematory

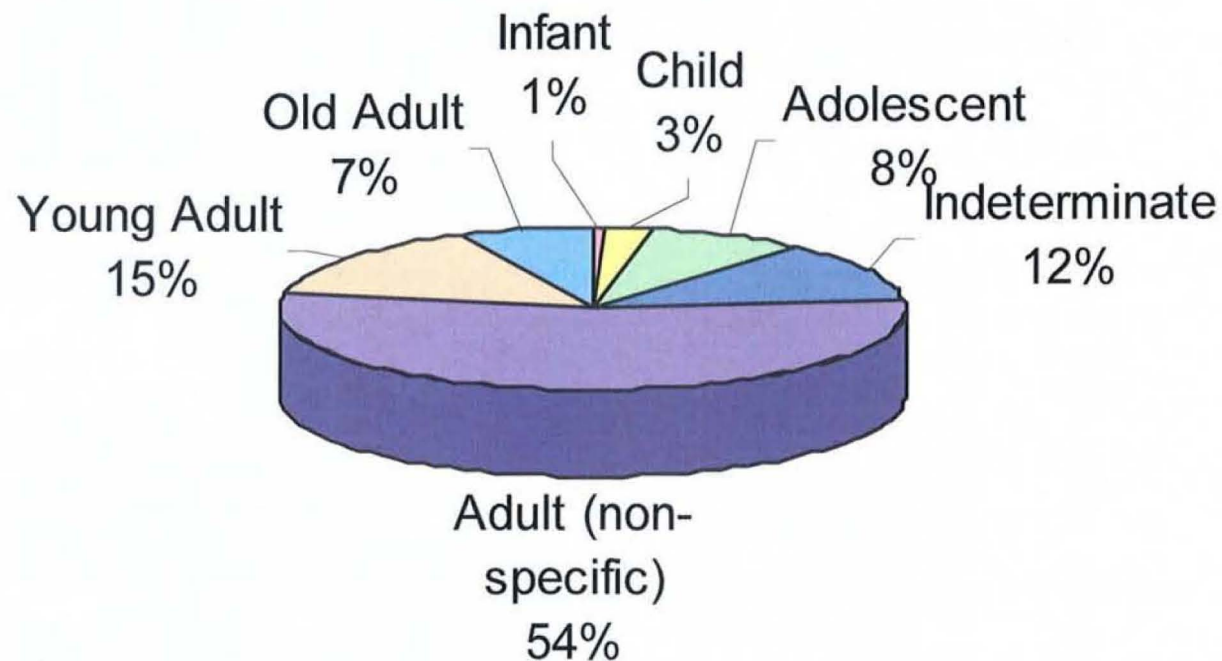


Identification of Bones

- All bones recovered were brushed clean rather than washed because they were fragile
- Each bone was identified and recorded
- The identification included age, sex, pathology and nationality if the necessary features on the bones were preserved
- Each burial was laid out and photographed to provide a permanent scientific record



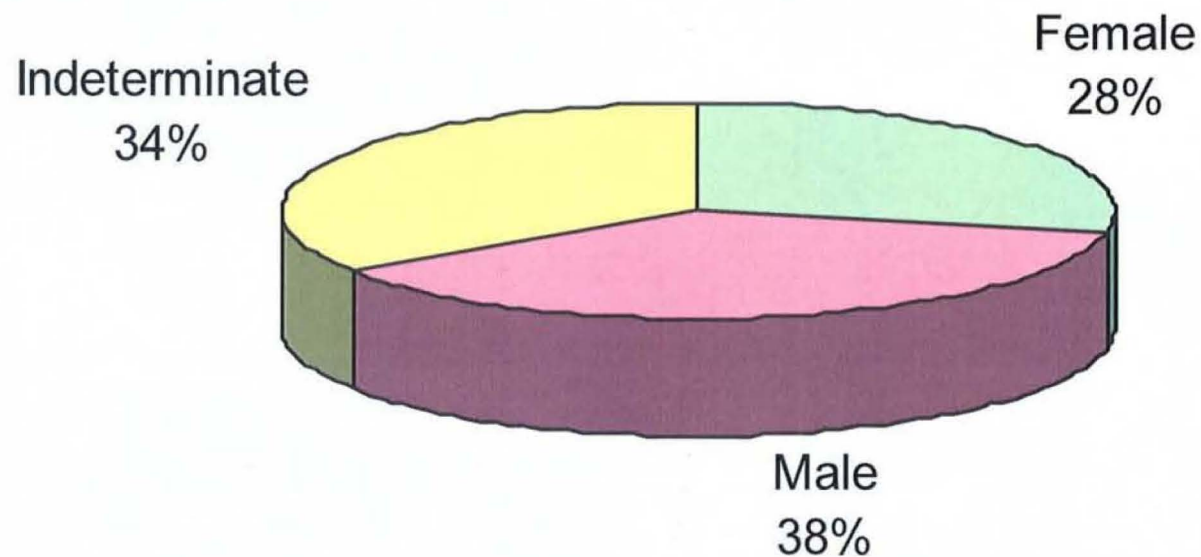
Age Distribution of Skeletal Remains



age is determined by looking at eruption of teeth and fusion of growth plates on bones



Sex Distribution of Skeletal Remains



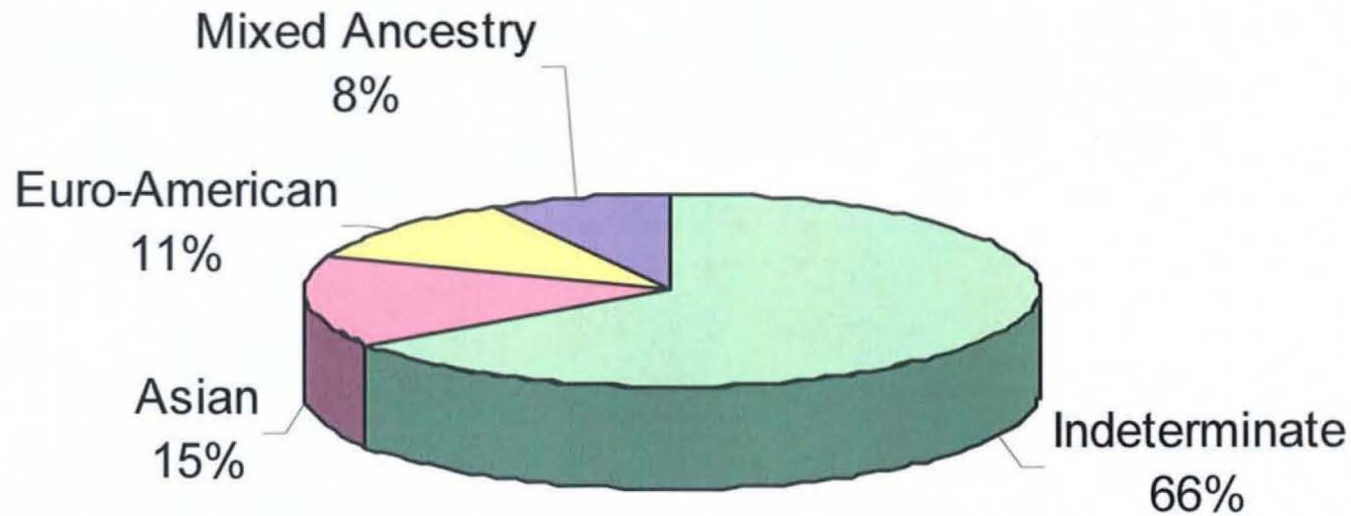
Sex can be determined if certain features of bones are preserved



- Osteologists use the term ancestry to indicate a person's genetic heritage
- 3 main classifications at LACC
 - Euro-American: which include Europeans and Americans
 - Asian
 - Mixed: A combination of Euro-American and Asian traits



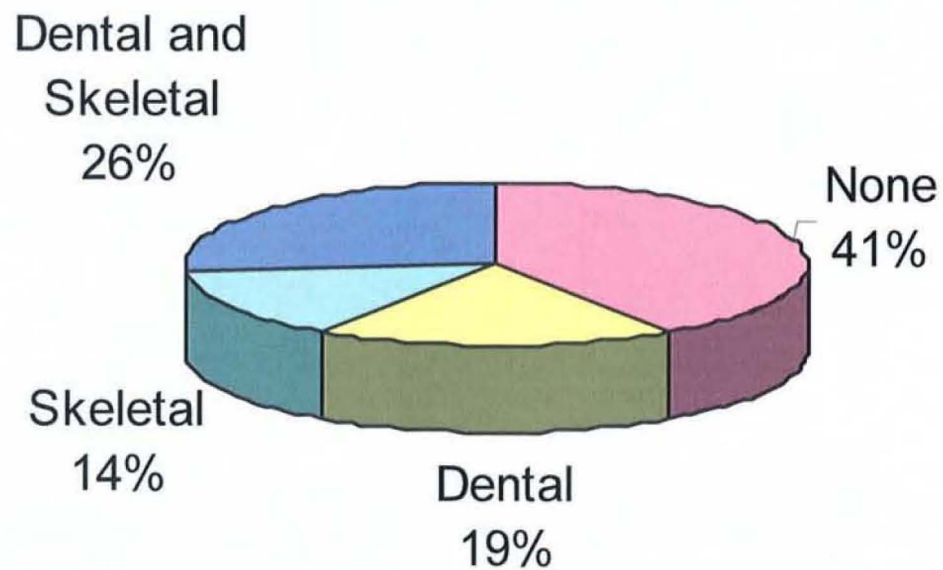
Ancestry Distribution of Skeletal Remains



Features of the skull including the nose area, cheekbones and teeth are used to subjectively assign possible ancestry



Distribution of Pathological Conditions



Pathologies include cavities in teeth and many kinds of bone conditions including arthritis

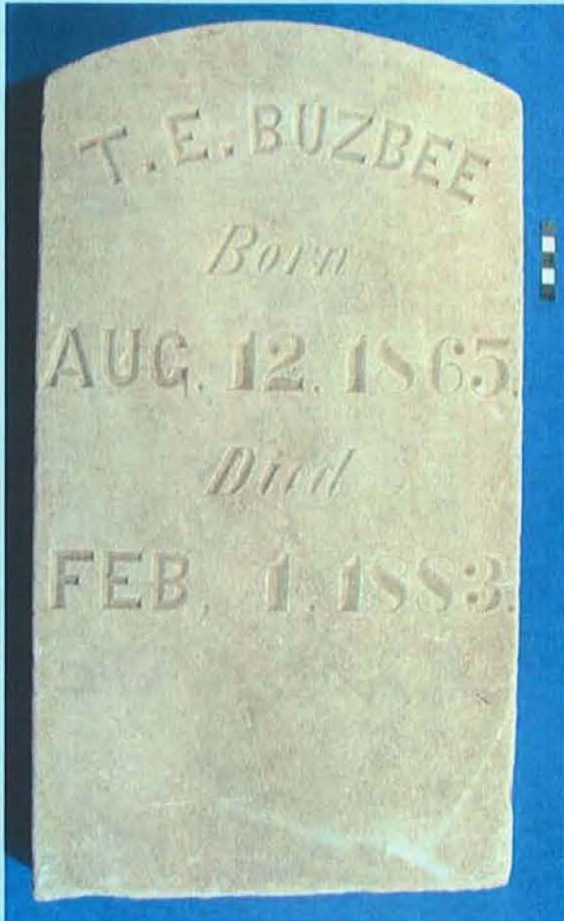


Burials (both complete and partial) recovered at LACC

Asian skeleton	19
Mixed ancestry skeleton	11
Euroamerican skeleton	15
Indeterminate ancestry skeleton	83
	128



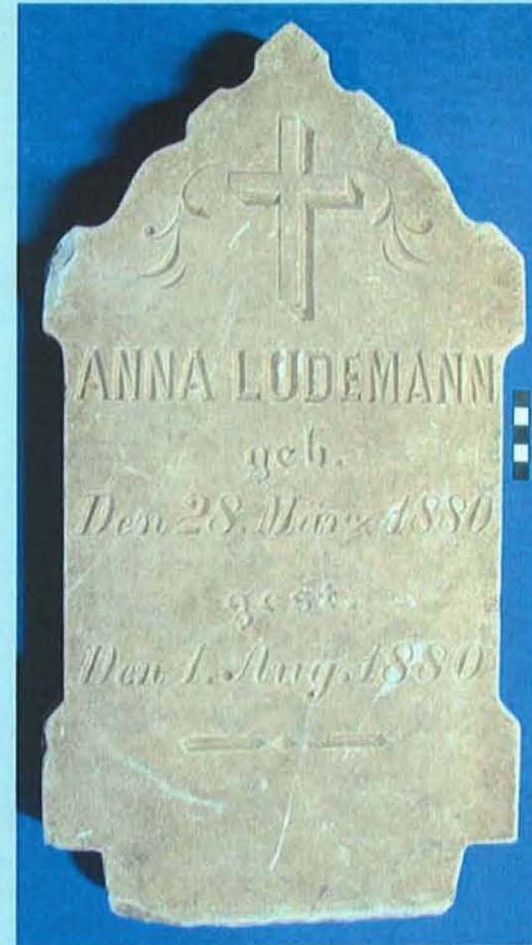
Grave Markers



There were very few markers in this cemetery.

This is the headstone for T.E. Buzbee. His grave is listed as Block 1, Row 1, Grave 1. His headstone was one of three found for a Euroamerican.

Grave Markers



The other Euro-American headstones belonged to children.



Grave Markers



This marble headstone represents one of several with Chinese characters carved into the surface. The name of the deceased is Kwan Sum.

Grave Markers



Wong Choi Kei



Chew Kei Uet

Chinese burial bricks were used so that the individual could be easily identified when disinterred and returned to China

The person's name and village are typically written



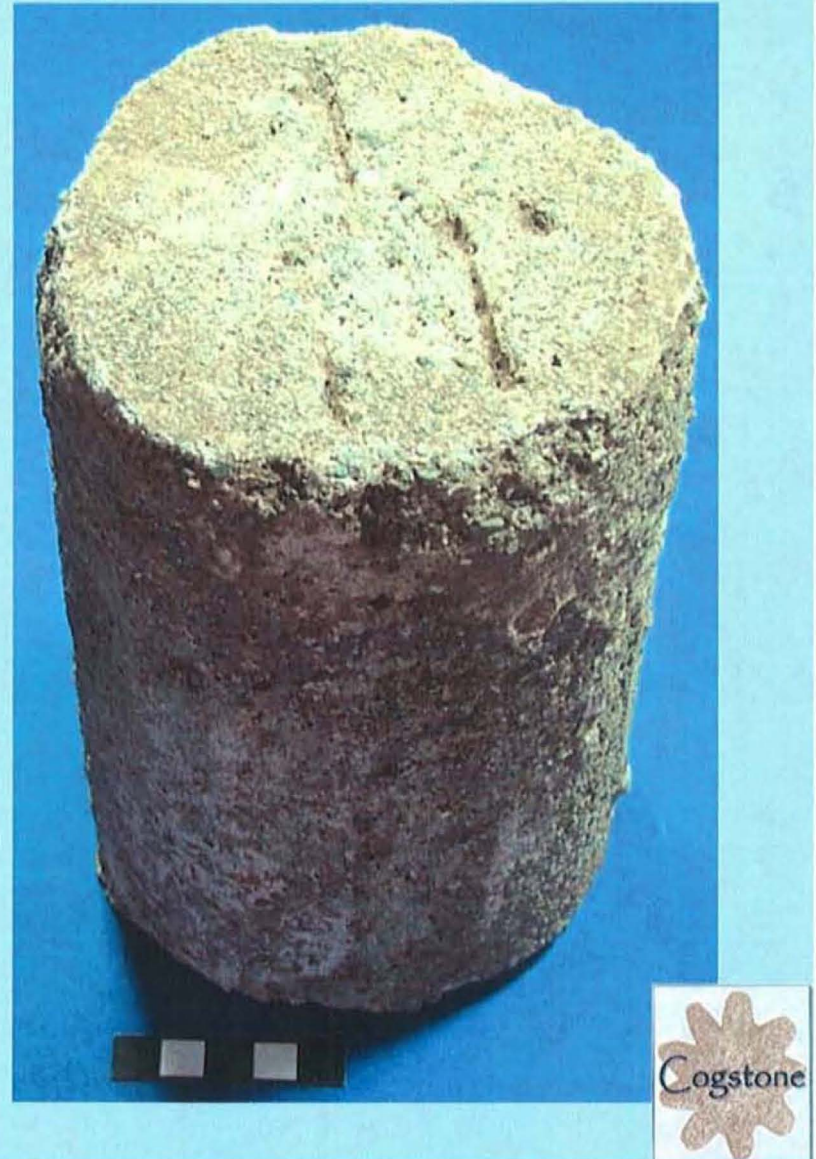
Markers Recovered

- 3 Euroamerican headstones were recovered
- 8 Chinese headstones were recovered
 - 2 were associated with disinterred graves
- 14 Chinese burial bricks were recovered
 - 7 were associated with disinterred graves



Grave Markers

- Simple concrete plugs were used by the cemetery as location markers
- Some have two numbers but many have only one, making them difficult to interpret



Coffin Hardware

- This style of coffin handle is called a swing bail handle. It made up the majority of handles at the cemetery.



Coffin Hardware



- This tiny swing bail handle was attached to an infant's coffin.

Coffin Hardware

- These pieces of coffin hardware served purely decorative purposes. The piece on the left represents an upside-down lotus blossom and is found only on Chinese coffins. The piece on the right represents a hand clasping a rose.



Coffin Hardware – Why So Ornate?



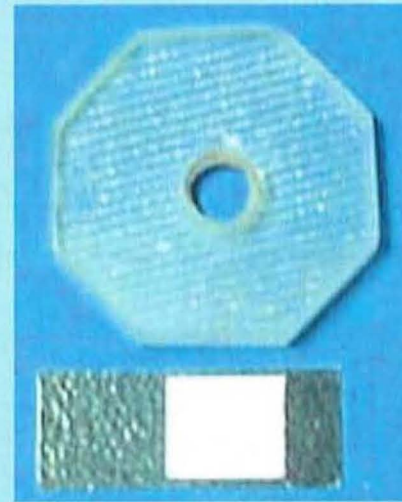
- Mass marketing, improvements in transportation and cheap metal alloys all mean that wealthy-looking styles were inexpensive and easily available.



Chinese Grave Goods



opium pipe bowl



oil reservoir cover for
an opium lamp

Chinese Grave Goods

The charm on the metal bracelet has Chinese characters that read “Precious” and “Long Life”



Jade bangles



Chinese Grave Goods

- Hollow, metal buttons with loop shanks, shown on the left, were used in conjunction with braided toggles, shown on the right, to fasten Chinese garments.



Chinese Grave Goods



- only Double Happiness pattern recovered at the cemetery
- pattern is rarely seen after the 1860s
- May have been someone's favorite.

Chinese Grave Goods



This one-of-a-kind teapot appears to represent stylized horses

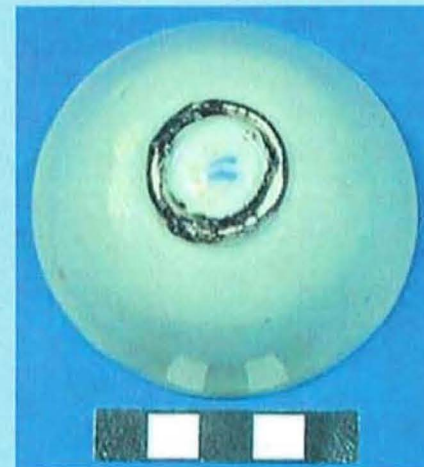
Chinese Grave Goods



Bamboo pattern rice bowl



Four Seasons pattern spoon



celadon wine bowl



Chinese Grave Goods



Chinese medicine vials. The top vial still has a cork in place and is full of tiny, red pills.



Chinese Grave Goods



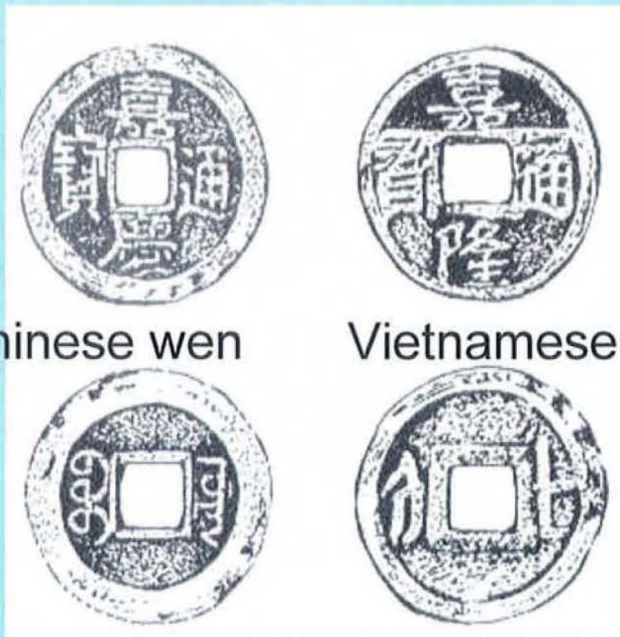
Chinese padlock



Glass gaming pieces

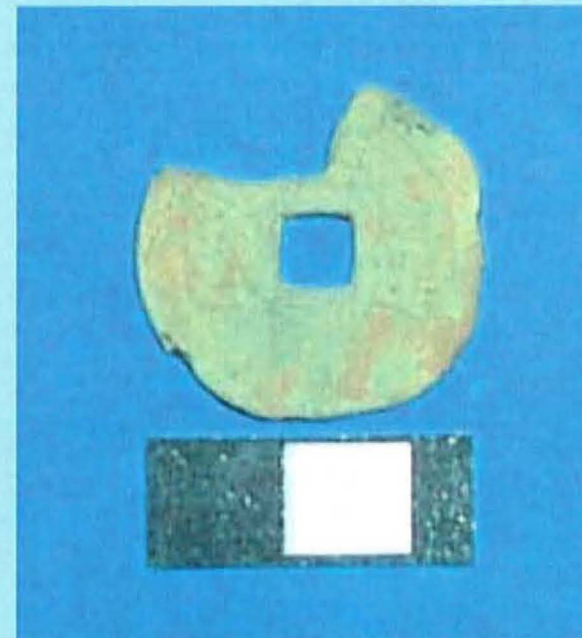
Chinese Grave Goods

- Over seventy Asian coins were recovered, mostly dong rather than wen



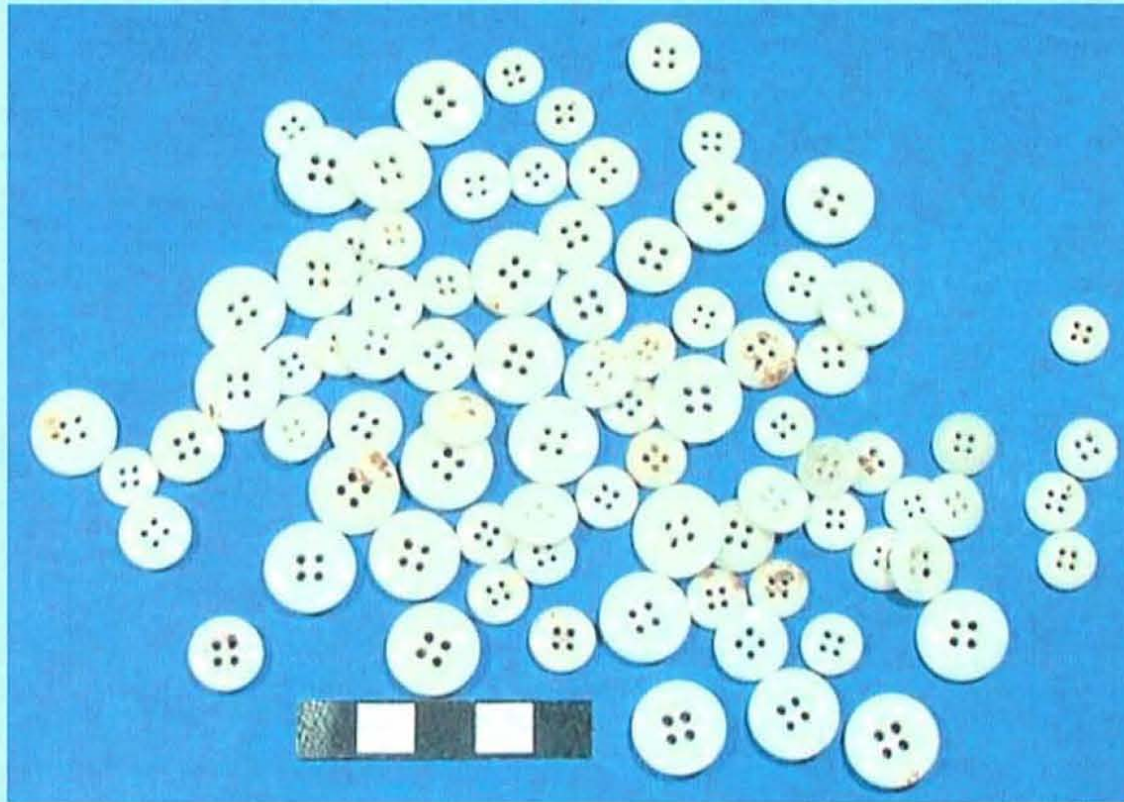
Chinese wen

Vietnamese dong



Condition of coins

Other Grave Goods



Buttons were the most common artifacts after coffin hardware. These buttons are all ceramic and represent the style and sizes most often encountered.



Other Grave Goods



eyeglasses



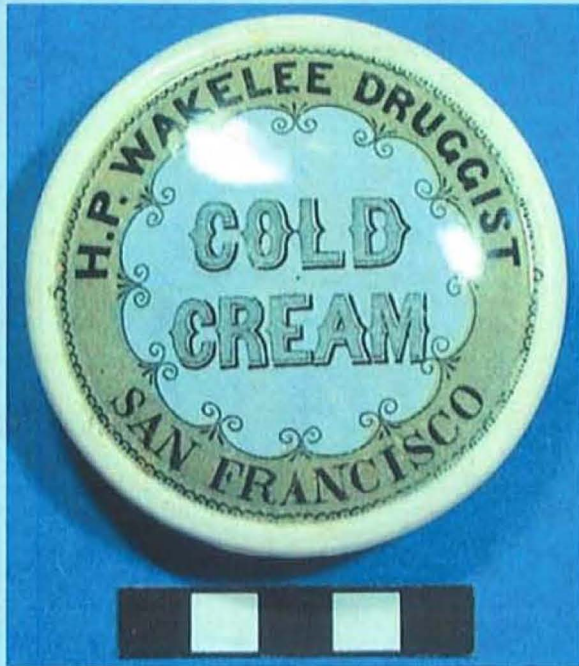
suspender clasp



pipe bit



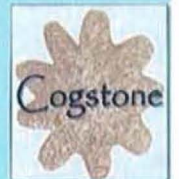
Cemetery Trash



1850s to the early
20th century



1971 and the 1990s



Chinese & Western artifacts from Chinese graves

Class	Category							Total
	Activities	Domestic	Indefinite	Mortuary	Personal	Structural	Undefined	
Accessories					24			24
Animal Husbandry	4							4
Bedding					4			4
Clothing					434			434
Commerce	70							70
Entertainment	12							12
Firearms	4							4
Food Prep/Consumption		129						129
Food/Food Storage		7						7
Footwear					34			34
Furnishings		16						16
Grooming/Health					4			4
Hardware				521		1		522
Materials				118		1		119
Misc. Beads			10					10
Misc. Closures			2					2
Misc. Containers			106					106
Misc. Metal Items			14					14
Social Drugs					67			67
Tools	6							6
Unidentified Items							73	73
Grand Total	96	152	132	639	567	2	73	1662

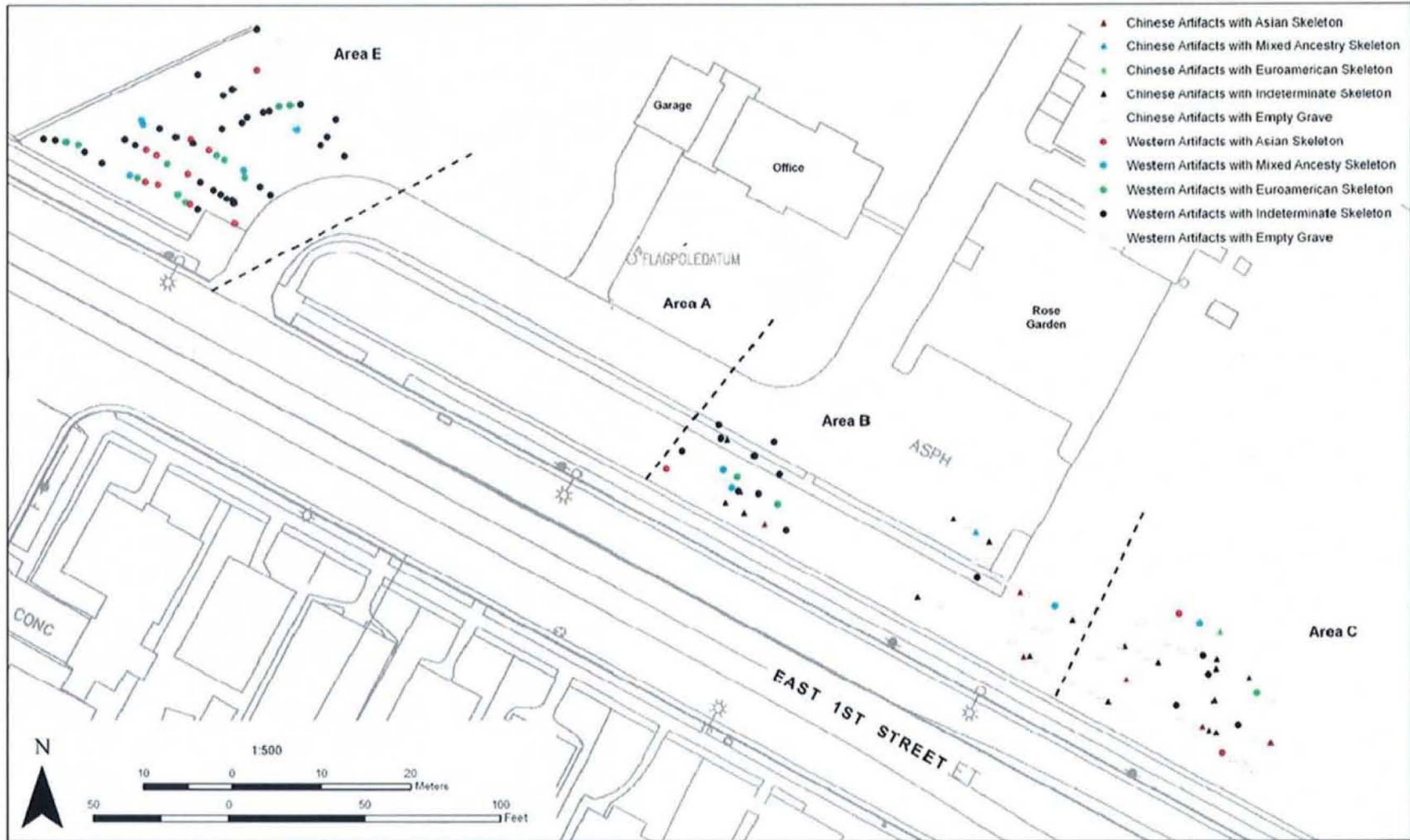
Western artifacts from Western graves

Class	Category							Total
	Activities	Domestic	Indefinite	Mortuary	Personal	Structural	Undefined	
Accessories					27			27
Activities					2			2
Bedding					2			2
Clothing					450			450
Commerce	19							19
Firearms	5							5
Food Prep/Consumption		3						3
Food/Food Storage		3						3
Footwear					11			11
Grooming/Health					25			25
Hardware				702		2		704
Materials				141				141
Misc. Containers			53					53
Misc. Metal Items			3					3
Reading	2							2
Social Drugs					37			37
Tools	1							1
Toys					2			2
Unidentified Items					2		46	48
Grand Total	27	6	56	843	558	2	46	1538

Number of burials by skeletal ancestry and artifact type



	Asian	Mixed ancestry	Euro american	Indeterminate ancestry	Empty grave
Chinese (& Western)	6	1	1	20	28
Western	13	10	14	50	20
no artifacts				13	7

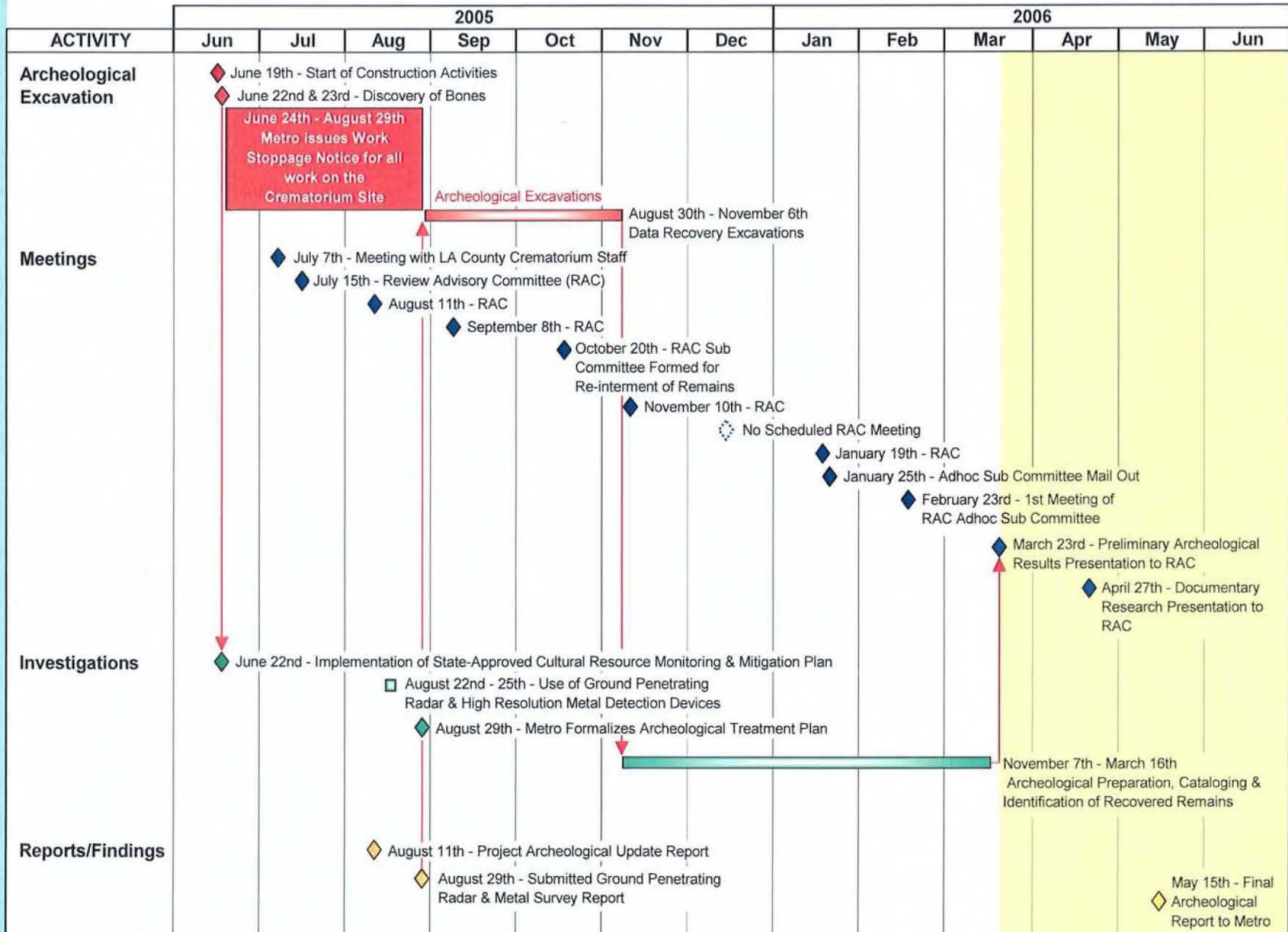




Off the Metro project site at the Crematorium are Chinese marble headstones that have been reused as a driveway border. Metro will be assisting the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California retrieve these and translate them.



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY CREMATORIUM SITE
 ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION / INVESTIGATION TIMELINE
 KEY MILESTONES ACTIVITIES**



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- previously excavated soil hand sorted for bone

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- results reported to the RAC; medical waste consisting of amputated limbs

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August 30 to November 6

- Archaeological excavations of burials was conducted

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Western artifacts only	13	10	14	50	20

no artifacts

13

7

Chinese and Western Artifacts from Chinese graves

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