

**ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF THE
1990 DECENNIAL CENSUS REPORT SERIES**

REPORT #6

**BEHAVIORAL CAUSES OF CENSUS UNDERCOUNT
NEW YORK CITY'S CHINATOWN**

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Alternative Enumeration Report

CHINATOWN, NEW YORK CITY, 1990

Betty Lee Sung

REASONS FOR SELECTION OF SITE

The basic purpose of the alternative enumeration studies was to ascertain the causes of undercount in hard-to-enumerate populations. Chinese Americans fall within this category especially when they reside in a predominantly ethnic enclave like New York's Chinatown. In a neighborhood like this, the people are insulated and isolated from the mainstream, and most residents do not speak English. The Census Bureau surmised correctly that a sample Chinese American community should be targeted for an undercount study.

Site A16 was chosen because it is overwhelmingly Chinese. Only eight persons in the site out of 276 were white. There were no blacks or Hispanics. Yet this site is not even within the core of Chinatown. It is in the path of the explosive expansion of the Chinese community, so there are old-timers and newcomers. It is a residential street although the ground floor is generally devoted to commercial enterprises. The buildings are old five-to-six story tenement apartment houses built around the turn of the century. Although the buildings are old and dank and sometimes in disrepair, the neighborhood is upbeat and alive. There is plenty of activity going on, and it is fairly safe.

Most of the residents spoke Chinese, mainly the Cantonese and Toishanese dialects, although other dialects like Mandarin, Fukienese, Hakka and Ming-nan (a Taiwan dialect) are heard as well. By and large, the residents were immigrants.

To sum up, the area is an ethnic minority community. The residents are primarily foreign-born immigrants. Most do not speak or read or write English. The buildings are old and run-down. The site is a hard-to-census area because it is difficult to get into the buildings. All of these factors made for selection of A16 an ideal one to test for census undercount.

FIELD METHODS

As a long-time observer of the Chinatown scene, having written extensively about the community, and being a local resident of the neighborhood, I felt especially qualified to undertake the study on the census undercount. Nevertheless, I anticipated a great deal of difficulty trying to overcome the suspicions of the new immigrants and to gain access to the housing units.

The community leadership was 100 percent behind the Census. I attended census awareness meetings way back in the winter of 1989. Chinatown had already organized a Census Advisory Committee, and I attended some of those sessions. (See list of organizations comprising the Census Advisory Committee) Census decals and posters were pasted in the hallways and above all the mail boxes in all the buildings I canvassed. Census awareness was obviously high. It is my firm belief that without this publicity, the undercount would have been much higher. In preparation for the alternative enumeration, I laid the foundation for my study:

1. I obtained from the N.Y. Telephone Co. a reverse listing of telephone numbers by address. My initial approach was to send each housing unit a letter in Chinese and English explaining the purpose of my inquiry and then follow up with a telephone call. However, the number of housing units far exceeded the telephones listed. In other words, many units did not have telephones. In many cases, the names listed for the telephones did not match the real residents of the apartments.

2. I went to the City Hall Taxation Bureau and copied down the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all the landlords of the buildings. I intended to call the landlords as a last resort.

3. I went to the schools serving the area to check the enrollment roster for students living at the addresses under study. These were an elementary school only a half block away from our study site, a junior high school and two high schools. I checked the student rosters, but found a much better source when one principal suggested that I look at the school lunch applications. These forms contained data on all members of the student's family, their ages, sex, a telephone number and income. Information from these applications was matched against direct observation and enumeration.

4. I hit pay dirt when I went to the post office to interview the mail carrier for our census site. I was referred to

Mr. Soon Vincent Leung, one-time resident of that very same street and a person well known to almost all the residents. Mr. Leung agreed to work with me, and I contracted with him to do the alternative enumeration. As their local mailman, residents would open their doors to Mr. Leung because they recognized him, whereas they would not to me because my face is not familiar to them. Mr. Leung could gain entrance through the front door (it was always locked) because he had keys. He could knock directly on apartment doors when he had to deliver registered mail or packages requiring a signature.

Even then, Mr. Leung had difficulty. Some residents were annoyed and told him he was the third person to try to census them. With one family, Mr. Leung went back 7 times, before 7:30 in the morning and after 10 at night. These people worked long hours at their jobs. It seems that many residents only came home late at night to sleep. They emptied their mail boxes each day, but neighbors rarely saw them.

Mr. Leung was a persistent and conscientious worker as well as a highly observant one. He was a former resident of the same street. He knew most of the residents by name having delivered mail to this street for the past 20 years. When I accompanied Mr. Leung one day, the people waved and greeted him as we went by. He knew the names of the occupants of each housing unit from the mail addressed to them. Nevertheless, there were a few people whom he had never seen, who never answered the door, or who refused to respond to Mr. Leung's questions. Can you imagine the results if an unfamiliar enumerator tried to obtain information?!

Mr. Leung surmised that he only delivered census forms back in March to about 45 percent of the residents. Since he personally delivers these forms, he is aware of this fact. He said he had given the post office a detailed list of apartments on his route. In one building further down the street a little beyond our census site, a Jewish synagogue had been converted to condominium with 44 apartments. Mr. Leung gave the post office a detailed list, but not one of those apartments was mailed a census form. As for our census site, these buildings are very old and are on a bustling city street, so no address should have been overlooked, yet census forms were not distributed to all.

THE COMMUNITY OF CHINATOWN

Chinatown New York is literally a bit of Cathay transplanted in the United States. In the heart of the community -- an area of about 15 city blocks, the inhabitants are almost totally Chinese. Since the late 1960s, Chinatown's boundaries have been expanding and its population exploding, so that Chinatown boundaries have been pushed northward to Delancey Street eastward to the East River, and southward toward the Brooklyn Bridge. These adjacent areas are heavily dotted with Chinese residents.

The newcomers to Chinatown tend to be immigrants, not only from the Canton region as before, but also from other parts of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Each year about 55,000 to 60,000 enter this country from these three places and their favorite destination is New York City. Ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, the Caribbean and other parts of the world tend to attach themselves to Chinatown. Then, too, non-immigrants such as students, businessmen, and visitors are drawn to Chinatown for its food and services.

Chinatown is located in the lower tip of Manhattan, north of City Hall and the Financial District. Once wedged alongside Little Italy and the Jewish community in the Lower East Side, Chinatown has spread into these two ethnic communities. Chinatown is a long established ethnic neighborhood dating back to the 1870s, but the Chinese Exclusion Act passed shortly thereafter, prevented the Chinese from entering the country and the community from growing. It was not until 1965 when the immigration laws were changed and the revolutionary situation in China came about that the community was revitalized. Today, the Chinatown telephone directory in an 8 1/2 x 11 inch format is almost 1 1/2 inches thick. Population density is the highest in the City.

Because of its huge increase in population, Chinatown is in the throes of rapid change:

1. Its inhabitants are no longer a homogenous population from the southern region of China. The dialects of Chinese such as Fukienese, Shanghainese, Mandarin are increasingly heard in the shops. The diverse backgrounds of these newcomers create an amalgam Chinese culture transplanted.

2. The interests of old timer and newcomer, foreign-born and native born may conflict. Many newcomers from Hong Kong and Taiwan bring capital. They want to squeeze into Chinatown, therefore bidding up rents and property values. Chinatown property value by square foot exceeds even that of Times Square.

This has caused hardship for the oldtimers who used to enjoy low rents. (See article attached: "Mining Chinatown's Mountain of Gold", New York Times, June 1, 1986; and "Chinatown Boom Fueled by Hong Kong Capital Flight," Downtown Express June 11, 1990.)

3. Much of the housing stock in Chinatown was built prior to 1935. Most residential units are six-story tenements of railroad flats. Rents are controlled, so that monthly payments are low, but there is a practice of "key money", meaning a large sum is paid up front to get the key to the apartment or to sublet from a former tenant unbeknownst to the landlord. Therefore, the apartment may be rented in the name of a person who is not the real occupant. Because of the high demand for housing in Chinatown, vacancies are low or almost non-existent. Gentrification is occurring, but the new buildings going up are high-price condos or offices. Space is scarce, so old tenements have to be demolished, thus reducing the stock of low-cost housing.

4. Chinatown has had to literally create jobs for the huge influx of immigrants, and it has accomplished this with the food industry, the garment industry, the tourist trade, and the retail trade. There are about 500 Chinese restaurants in the area and about as many garment "factories". A major portion of garments sewn in New York, the garment capital of the country, is by Chinese seamstresses. Chinatown is a major tourist attraction, and tourist dollars are a big economic mainstay. Another major industry springing up is the service industry. Accountants, lawyers, doctors, dentists, beauticians, etc. all cater to a Chinese clientele who may come from the tri-state surrounding areas. These industries have created a strong economic base for Chinatown, but as more immigrants stream into the area, competition becomes keener and wages and prices are kept low. To survive, businesses and labor compensate by putting in longer hours, so the workday is very long. For example, my beauty shop opens seven days a week from 8 A.M. to 7 P.M. My hairdresser works an eleven-hour day with one day off a week. The charge for a shampoo and set is \$7, recently raised from \$6. Most stores open until 9 P.M. That is why it is difficult for enumerators to find people at home. (See attached article: "Immigrants Strain Chinatown Resources", New York Times May 30, 1990.)

5. Crime and Physical Safety. Chinatown was once the safest area in New York City. Infractions of the law usually revolved around immigration violations and gambling. These were victim-less crimes, and the police closed one eye to the situation. Today, Chinatown is plagued with youth gangs who extort merchants, so that it has become almost an accepted part of

doing business to pay them off. Gang wars are the most dreaded because these teenagers shoot at each other randomly, sometimes hitting passerbys or anyone in the line of fire. Some streets are controlled by gangs, but our census site, is not a commercial one and not profitable for gang fights over turf. The gang problem is an extremely serious one in Chinatown. (See article attached: "Chinatown Gangs Face Off", Downtown News February 19, 1990) Organized crime is also entering the Chinatown garment industry. (See article attached: "Police Say Their Chinatown Sting Ties Mob to the Garment Industry", New York Times March 20, 1990) But in this instance, the garment factories are victims of the mob. Wholesale importation of heroin and cocaine is also taking place in Chinatown, but the use of drugs is not widespread in the community. Purse snatching and burglaries are increasing.

6. Environment. In a recent report issued by the Mayor's office, Chinatown is one of the dirtiest sections of town, and sanitation services are the least. The filth is created by the high population density, the tourist traffic, and the restaurants. On any street in Chinatown, garbage bags are piled up, almost impeding pedestrian traffic. Restaurants have to hire private garbage collectors, which are controlled by organized crime. Yet the entire community is a bustling, vital, active one. In spite of its old housing, its dirty streets, and its struggling inhabitants, the community is not a depressed one. Its tempo is upbeat and strong.

NEIGHBORHOOD

1. Characteristics of Addresses. The census site, A16, chosen for this study is one end of a street ending at an empty lot. There are a few less than 100 housing units in these six tenement buildings constructed around the turn of the century. These are six story walk-ups with about four railroad apartments on each floor.

The exteriors of the buildings look sturdy, but being so old, the maintenance costs of the buildings are high. Most of the apartments are rent controlled. In these cases where the original tenants have occupied the apartments for forty or fifty years, the rents are about \$225 per month. In decontrolled apartments, the rent runs as high as \$800 plus key money. In other words, tenants must pay a huge sum up front to obtain the privilege of moving in. In a partitioned basement, the area is divided into three units each barely big enough for a bed space. Yet each unit has its separate door. The middle unit is vacant because it was condemned as unfit for occupancy.

The street level or basement of all these buildings is invariably used for some commercial enterprise like a flower shop, a boutique, a real estate office or coffee shop. The upper floors are apartments.

As mentioned in the section under "Community", this street is primarily a residential one and it is undergoing gentrification. A number of the old tenements on the street have already been razed, and high rise condominiums would have gone up except that the developers met community resistance to the demolition of low cost housing units to build high price condos. There are now a number of empty parcels on this block. One project managed to be built. Just this past year at the end of the block, a huge high rise was completed. (See attached article: "Chinatown Boom Fueled by Hong Kong Capital Flight", Downtown Express, June 11, 1990) These units sell for \$250,000 for a studio to \$440,000 for a two bedroom. Buyers of these units will be well-to-do Chinese from Hong Kong, so this street will be upgraded when this condo is fully occupied and when construction of the buildings in the middle of the block are completed. I believe that at the time of the next census, our census site will have been transformed into an upper middle class neighborhood instead of the lower class neighborhood that it now is.

At one time, Site A16 was on the periphery of the Chinatown core. Mr. Leung remembers when he moved there in 1950, the buildings were populated primarily by whites. One Italian man, still living there, tried to prevent the Chinese from coming in. He literally came at Mr. Leung's family with a baseball bat. Today, this street is considered in the heart of the community itself, and more than 97 percent of the residents are Chinese.

2. Mail. As mentioned previously, all of the buildings have mail boxes and mail delivery is dependable. Besides, the first floor is invariably a business enterprise where mail could be received for the apartment tenants.

3. Multiunit Situations. Because of the high demand for housing in Chinatown, some units are partitioned and rented separately, or families squeeze in with relatives temporarily.

4. Subsidies. Most of the apartments in the census site are under rent control. Actual rent may be low, but "key money" may have been substantial. Considering the dilapidated apartments in these buildings, the value may be low for the monies paid. Full-grown adults do not spend much time in their homes. They spend about 10 to 12 hours in their working place and take their meals there. They only go home to sleep. Some of the older folks brought up their families here. The children are grown and have moved to the suburbs, but the old folks feel more comfortable in the environs of Chinatown, so their rent is subsidized by the offspring. Many of the residents are elderly and live on pensions and small social security payments.

5. Most of the residents in this site were here on Census Day.

Quite a number are long-time residents. These are the old folks mentioned above.

6. Short term movers. The turn over rate of occupants is low. The movers would be newly arrived immigrants who lived temporarily with relatives until they could find their own place. Records from the public schools frequently showed students living in our census site, and these were included in the alternative enumeration, but they are identified as movers.

7. International immigrants. Almost all of the residents on this block are immigrants, but some have been long-time residents. Once the residents were almost all from China or Hong Kong. Now they are a mix. Some are Malaysian Chinese. Others are Vietnamese Chinese and Fukienese. The latter speak a dialect totally incomprehensible to the Cantonese. These recent immigrants are more mobile. They tend to be single males who rent the room or bed space when they first arrive paying very high rent. They move out as soon as they find cheaper quarters.

8. Tenure. By and large, the occupants of these apartments are renters. The owners can afford to live in better quarters elsewhere.

9. Household composition. The commercial units on the first floors of these buildings were not included in this survey. There were no group quarters or special places within this site. Household composition took various forms: the nuclear family, parent/offspring setup, the three generational family, widowed elderly living alone, and housemates

10A. Kinship. In general, terms of kinship conform to the American English language usage. No fictive kin nor honorary kin relationships were noted. In other words, people were related by blood or marriage. Household size for the families in this site was fairly small, except for some ambiguous situations where the arrangements might have been temporary, such as newly arrived immigrants. The small size household is also due to the prevalence of widowed elderly whose children are grown and live elsewhere.

10B. Generations Present. Most families were of the nuclear type -- parents and children. A few had grandparents living with them.

11. Language. The most common tongue was Chinese, usually Cantonese. As noted previously, Mandarin, Fukienese, Hakka and even Ming-nan dialects are heard. Young children could speak English, but they used Chinese in speaking to their parents.

12. Literacy. The residents are generally literate in their own language. According to Mr. Leung, even the 94 year old little lady could read her letters -- a most unusual phenomenon because women of her age were usually not literate at all. Another old lady, 86 years old went out every day for her daily walk and came home with a newspaper tucked under her arms. Mr. Leung said the older residents generally had a grade school education, but the more recent immigrants had a high school education or better. It is important to note that standards for grade school and high school are much higher in China than in the U.S. Mr. Leung noted that there were many reading materials in the homes. Newspapers were in English and Chinese, but books were primarily in Chinese. The people were well-informed about the census through the media.

13. Income source. Most of the residents have lived on this street for decades. They are elderly and live on pensions, social security, or subsidies from their children. The more recent tenants are from Fukien Province, from other Mainland provinces and single males from Malaysia. The men work in restaurants or stores; the women in garment factories. Mr. Leung estimates their average weekly wage to be in the vicinity of \$225 to \$250.

OBSERVATION OF DWELLING UNITS

The main entrances to the apartment houses are locked and there are no buzzers or bells or intercoms. These apartments were built around the turn of the century, and they have no elevators. If someone on the 6th floor expects a visitor, that person would have to come down and open the door and climb back upstairs again. This does not encourage unexpected visitors, nor a census enumerator.

The halls and steps are rickety and dark. The low rentals are no incentive for the landlords to upgrade their property. Mr. Leung has sketched some of the layouts of the apartments. The front door opens to a kitchen and the bathtub is next to the stove. Undoubtedly this goes back to the days when hot water had to be heated for the Saturday night bath, and this was the most convenient place for the tub. Actually the kitchen and living room adjoin. The master bedrooms are about 8x10 feet and the other bedroom is about 5x7. The tiny toilet is tucked into one of the bedrooms. This is the usual layout of the apartments. The frontage of these apartment houses are about 20 to 24 feet. If space is taken up by the hallway in the middle and alleys on both sides of the building, most rooms are no wider than 8 feet.

OBSERVATION ON SELECTED INDIVIDUALS

The most notable aspect of the residents in this census site is their age. This is an old population with one widowed lady age 94. Yet every day, she climbs down from her fifth floor apartment and goes to the senior citizen's center a few blocks away. There, she socializes with other old folk like herself, eats a hot lunch for 50 cents, goes home at 3 P.M. and does not come out again. Obviously this old lady is not going to open the front door or her apartment door to any unfamiliar face. Mr. Leung says she can read the letters sent her from Hong Kong, but I doubt if she can fill out a census form or would admit anyone to her apartment to do it for her. However, she may have taken the form to the senior citizens center and had someone help her fill it out.

There are very few children in these apartments, except for the few names taken from the school rosters. "A" for administrative source is noted for these names. These students may attend the Chinatown schools, but do not live at the addresses given. In immigrant communities, the children tend to learn English faster and assimilate quicker than the parents, who lean on their children to interpret and translate for them. Without this resource, the likelihood is a greater census undercount.

In HUs 007-009, Malaysian Chinese tend to congregate. These tend to be unattached males in their 40s. They go out in the morning and only come home to sleep late at night. These men are likely candidates to be missed by the census.

In another building there are a number of Fukienese who are more recent comers to the area. These people speak a dialect totally different from and incomprehensible to the Cantonese. They are also immigrants, so a Chinese enumerator may still not be able to communicate with them. Besides they also come home late at night. Neighbors say they work at a take-out place which does not close until 11 P.M. That is why Mr. Leung has had great difficulty making contact with them. He also does not speak Fukienese.

Eight whites in this area are in their late 60s or 70s. They are long-time residents, and even they may not read or write English well.

Getting a place to live in Chinatown is a prize, so people are not moving out. To move in requires a large sum in key money, so there is very little moving activity, except for the roomers in HUs 007-009. Except for these roomers, mobility is not much of an undercount factor. Although it is a low income neighborhood, it is not a depressed area. The people are hard-working, perhaps overworked so it is difficult to find them.

In the main, the bulk of the residents on our census site are family-oriented living with kin or alone if widowed. Only a few are unattached males. Most are in their 40s or above, working at low level jobs or are retired. Particularly interesting is the number of never-married males living with their parents. By and large, the neighborhood residents lead uneventful lives, with little to make them stand out. I expected the population density to be much higher, but since there are so many old folk who are widowed or whose children are grown up and have left home, there were many apartments with only one occupant. Over-crowding in a few of these apartments is due to newly arrived immigrants.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Housing units

In a preliminary look at the raw data from Alternative Enumeration's A list of Site A16 and the census enumeration's B list, I reviewed links made between housing units on the match report prepared by the Census Bureau. This match report linked 82 housing units of the 98 listed on A and the 88 on B. The A list contained entries for 16 housing units which were not linked to any on B. Of the additional 10 housing units listed on A, 9 were overlooked by the census. Housing units were missed by B where there were partitions that were not obvious. One unit listed on A and not on B was a separate apartment (marked "2B" on its door): the address was taken from school records. An elementary school student was found housed in this small apartment, next door to his elderly grandparents. The B list had 6 housing units unlinked to any on A. Of these 6, however, 1 was a duplicate, 1 was marked field delete and 1 was a misplacement because there is no "apartment 4" in that building. The remaining three B housing units could be paired with A housing units. The original match report did not link them apparently because there were apartment numbers in the address on the B records but none on the A records.

Mail returns

This enumerator was surprised that 51 housing units were censused by mail return. This is 52% of all the housing units in the site and 57% of the housing units found by the census there. This rate is in my opinion quite good when compared to the reported national rate of 69% for mail returns. Undoubtedly, this is due to the extensive publicity given to the census. Of these 51 mail returns, 36 were perfectly matched (71 per cent). In other words, A's enumeration and the mail returns were the same. Of the remainder, in 9 instances, A counted extra people within the households. In 7 instances, B had extra people not included on the A list. In only one instance was there no match at all. This is explained by the high turnover of residents within this rooming house. Mail returns are the best and most efficient method of censusing and getting a good count, but even with mail returns, some persons were missed. Nevertheless, I gave priority to the information on mail returns over returns filed by enumerators because I assumed that information solicited in this manner was more accurate.

In 48 of the 82 housing units linked on the match report, A's count of the people matched B's exactly. Two were vacant units and 46 were entire households. These units were not recounted. In those units where the Alternative Enumeration A list did not match the census B list, a recount was conducted targeted only at the discrepancies. Matched persons were not challenged.

The census enumeration began in April and ended in August while the Alternative Enumeration took place in June, July and August 1990. The recount was done in January and February of the following year. The extent of the undercount must await verification from the census resolution and determination of whether certain persons are to be included in the counts.

There were several different categories of discrepancies between the two counts of the same population:

- o duplicates, same as person already listed within the file
 - o at same address
 - o at different address
- o housing units and individual records shown as unmatched on the report could be matched
 - o at same address
 - o at different address
- o listed only on A or B but not present during recount, presence Census Day could not be confirmed
- o entirely different people from A or B at apartment address during recount
- o listed only on A or B, Census Day presence confirmed in recount
- o adult children who live elsewhere, but who maintain ties with parents
- o children listed in school records whose address or residence could not be confirmed
- o names taken from telephone directories not corresponding to residents
- o no such apartment (1 on A, 5 on B)

Some records were identified as duplicates or as mismatched on the original match report. Corrections of this type included 12 on the A list and 9 on the B or census list. B also listed 5 people in an apartment that does not exist in this area.

In the recount, 13 unmatched persons counted originally only on A and 15 people counted only on B could not be relocated to ask about their Census Day situation. Keep in mind that a time

lapse of six months had taken place. In two housing units run as boarding houses, the turnover rate was so high that no person counted by A or B was present during the recount: a total of 9 records of people enumerated by A and 10 by B. The Alternative Enumeration had included 4 names taken from a telephone directory as living at addresses within the site, but their presence could not be ascertained in the recount and these were coded as errors.

Persons missed by A but counted by B who were verified during the recount number 28. A therefore missed 28 people. However, B missed 77 people counted by A and verified during the recount. These 77 people should have been censused in the sample area. One additional person who had been living in the site on Census Day but who was not on the A or the B list was found in the recount in January 1991.

Some people left off the census live in the 9 apartments the census did not list on this street, but most of these were small apartments occupied by a single individual. Most of the people missed by the census live within households. That census omissions came primarily from persons not enumerated within households lends strong weight to the concealment hypothesis.

The census counted 238 people, but 57 of these records were errors, including 8 records which were duplicates or not at addresses in the sample area as well as those whose Census Day residence was not confirmed. The census missed 78 people living at the site Census Day entirely. This number could be increased if the people with multiple residences listed on A could be counted.

Multiple residences

A very difficult decision was whether to include adult children who maintained separate homes of their own, but who had close ties to parental homes where they often stayed while they worked in Chinatown. Census takers included 4 such adult children and 4 others were included on mail returns. The Alternative Enumeration also included several people in this living situation. After discussions with staff at the Center for Survey Methods Research, the decision was made to code all these records (A or B) as erroneous enumerations because the people had multiple residences and their "usual home" could not be considered at their parents'. Four families and a total of eight persons were affected by this ruling.

The figures indicate an undercount on the census in the range of 14% to 18%. The rough count on A is 276 but only 238 on B, a raw 14% undercount. If we deduct from the A and B lists people who moved in after Census Day or who had multiple residences or did not really live in the area (also duplicates and other listing errors among the census B records), then the corrected count of people living in the site on Census Day is 256 according to A but only 210 according to B: an 18% undercount.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In my proposal "Behavioral Causes of Census Undercount in New York's Chinatown," I advanced eight factors: (1) New immigrants (2) Language barrier (3) Fear (4) Distrust (5) Concealment and (6) Illegal partition of dwelling (7) Irregular Housing Arrangement and (8) Complicated Census Forms.

After weeks of intensive survey and immersion of self in the community, I can re-order these factors and incorporate them into broader headings. In addition, I will list others. The causes for undercount will be presented in descending order (in my opinion) of severity of the problem or contribution to an undercount.

1. Inaccessibility This cause may be subdivided into physical inaccessibility and time inaccessibility. As mentioned in the community and neighborhood profiles, there is fear of crime, so that front doors are triple locked. Our census site consists of old, run-down tenements, which do not look inviting. Censusing in housing units like these is not like walking down a tree-lined street with one-family detached houses, where one can walk up to the front door and knock. The front doors are heavily locked and there are no intercoms. The tenements are six-story walk-ups; climbing the stairs is discouraging in itself. An enumerator or researcher simply cannot get up to the door of an apartment easily. The physical barriers are formidable for anyone who does not have access to the buildings. We surmounted that barrier because the mailman has keys to the building. An ordinary enumerator would find it almost impossible to gain entry.

Time inaccessibility is a tremendous barrier. Hard-working residents like these go out early in the morning and come home after 11 P.M. Enumerators are not likely to go knocking on doors after 11 P.M. They would be intruding on people's rest. No one would open the door, and only foolhardy enumerators would venture into these tenements at such late hours.

2. Resistance This heading actually takes in three reasons contributing to an undercount: fear, distrust, and concealment.

a. Fear. Most of the residents in my census site are immigrants from both Mainland China and Taiwan and Malaysia. They have lived under repressive governments, where it is not wise nor safe to reveal too much personal information. They fear the government, they fear authority, and they fear crime. They simply will not open doors to a stranger. An increasing number of Chinatown residents are undocumented aliens. Obviously they fear being reported to the immigration authorities.

b. Distrust. From the Chinese immigrants' experience with their homeland governments, whose policies change from day to day, the U.S. government's assurances of confidentiality are not taken at face value. Many of the residents in our census site are old-timers who remember the discriminatory laws against them, and they do not believe or trust a governmental agency.

c. Concealment. Three areas of concealment lead to the possibility of an undercount. Many Chinese entered the U.S. under illegal or extralegal circumstances when Exclusion Acts forbade the Chinese from migrating. Although these laws have been repealed, old time residents may still remember and seek to hide from any governmental snooping. Concealment of income either for income tax purposes or for protection against robbery or burglary is a primary reason for evading or resisting census enumeration. Residents think the Immigration Bureau or the IRS will find out where they live and come after them. The third concealment is to hoodwink the landlord. Landlords would not be happy if they found out eight people instead of four were living in an apartment, or that the former tenant had moved out and a new one in place, so the apartment would be decontrolled or destabilized.

By refusing to divulge any information, by tearing up the census forms, by avoiding the enumerator, Chinese people show their fear and distrust of the government or anyone they do not know well. Resistance against answering the census in Chinatown is very high. To scale this resistance, the census taker must be a familiar face, someone who understands their reasons for not disclosing information, and someone who will not divulge it to the IRS, the immigration authorities, or the landlord. Even then, Chinatown residents do not want to answer personal questions.

3. Language Barrier Most of the residents in Chinatown speak very little English and read and write less. They can spend their entire lives within Chinatown without learning English. Census forms are not printed in Chinese, so residents may not even know what the forms are for. During census week, I saw many census forms strewn all about in hallways. People may have thrown them out or thought they were catalog items or mail order ads. In our census site, the large proportion of old folks pushes the possibility of a greater undercount. Old people, especially old ladies, are more apt to be illiterate. The small number of school-age youngsters also contribute to a higher undercount. In most immigrant families, when the parents do not speak English, they lean on their children to translate for them. When there are no children, the adults are deprived of their translators.

Mentioned earlier was the fact that Chinese is not one tongue but many. There are hundreds of dialects, although a few are more common. For example, Mr. Leung speaks two dialects, but he cannot speak Fukienese, so even he had trouble tracking these people down. I speak three dialects, but I don't know Fukienese either.

My hairdresser speaks this dialect, but I cannot make out a word that she says when she speaks Fukienese to her sister. The Chinese written word is uniform, so a census form in Chinese would overcome some of the language barrier problem. Mr. Leung says literacy is not an issue -- English literacy is.

4. Wrong Enumerators The appropriate type of enumerator for an ethnic community like Chinatown is essential to a good census count. That person must be known so that people will recognize and trust him/her. That person must be familiar with the background and customs of the Chinese people as pointed out under cultural characteristics below. It is best to utilize the services of a Chinese person, but that person must be able to speak at least one of the Chinese dialects. The attached article "I Was a Census Enumerator, and I Thought It Was a Farce", Asian Week July 20, 1990 by Suzanne Lee told about her experience in San Francisco's Chinatown. To send someone into an ethnic community without being able to speak the language is a waste of time. Yet, Suzanne Lee said the census enumerators sent in to replace her were a black couple.

The enumerators sent in to our census site, were a white at first and later a Chinese. I was unable to find out the background of these enumerators.

Again, I make these recommendations to the Census Bureau. Print the census form in Chinese because the people are literate. This will reduce the need for enumerators. I was told the residents were aware of the census. There was a great deal of publicity, for which the Bureau should get credit. But publicity does not reduce their fear, distrust and inaccessibility. Utilize the mailmen who are intimately acquainted with their area of mail delivery. They have access where totally strange enumerators do not.

5. Cultural Differences Even when answers are elicited, there are cultural differences that might affect the accuracy of the census.

a. Calculation of Age. If year of birth is given according to the Western calendar, then actual years of age can be calculated. However, if the enumerator asks, "How old are you?" he or she must be aware of the system of calculation. Chinese custom dates age from the moment of conception and each new year marks an additional year of age. For example, if a baby is born the last day of the year, he is considered one year old. The next day marks a new year and he becomes two years old when in fact he is only two days old.

b. Cultural Characteristics about Names.

1. Order of Names. According to Chinese custom, the surname comes first. Untold confusion has result from this situation, and records are all fouled up for many Chinese because of it. For example, my father's name was Lee Sing, so from the moment of my birth, the doctor assumed that our family name was Sing because it came last. For example, Chen Xiu Hua could be mistakenly named Mr. Hua.

2. Common Surnames. There are only 400 surnames in China for more than one billion people. Consequently there are millions of Lees, Wongs, Chens, Yees, etc. For an outsider, the same-ness of surnames can be utterly confusing.

3. Common Middle Name for Siblings. A prevalent Chinese custom is to give a common middle name for children within the family. For example:

Wong Wen Ting

Wong Wen Tien

Wong Wen Tung

Wong is the surname. Wen Ting is the given name, but an enumerator may surmise that Wen T Wong is one and the same person where in fact there are three. (See example 002-04)

3. Wife Keeps Maiden Name. In China, the wife retains her maiden name, so her name may be different from her husband's. The relationship may not be apparent or be confusing to someone not familiar with this cultural custom. To conform to American usage, the wife may use her husband's name. At other times, she may use her own.

4. Romanization of Names. Converting a hieroglyphic language into an alphabetical one results in different spellings. Chang may be spelled Zhang or Cheung. Huang may be spelled Wong or Wang. Liu may be spelled Lew. Eng may be spelled Ng or even Wu. In some cases, families that immigrated earlier may spell their names according to the Wade-Gillis system, while family members who immigrated more recently may spell according to the Pin-Yin system. So the father, Chang, may have children with the surname Zhang. The various dialects pronounce their names differently, so that creates more romanization varieties.

5. American Names. Sometime Chinese take an American name but also retain their Chinese names, so "Richard Chin" could be "Chen Xiu Hua," for example.

c. **Cultural Characteristics about Relationships.** Although I did not come across fictive kinship in any of the families at my site, this could be a factor in mislabeling relationship to head of household. There are many terms for aunt and uncle in the Chinese language, each connoting an exact relationship. Aunt and uncle can also be honorific terms given to close friends of the family. So aunt and uncle may be family friends rather than relatives. This comment is included for general information only.

6. **New Immigrants** Although I listed this factor as an important one in my proposal, I found that whether old immigrants or new, all of the preceding reasons for an undercount applied. More than 85 percent of the residents in our census site were immigrants. It happened that not many were recent arrivals, but for the rest of Chinatown, this does not hold true. In the expanding peripheral boundaries, most are new immigrants with all the implications of language barrier, inaccessibility due to long working hours, fear, mistrust, cultural differences, etc.

7. **Irregularities** Under this heading, I will include my original hypotheses of illegal subdivision of dwelling units and irregular housing arrangement. In only a few instances did we see partitioning of housing units. I believe that the rooms in most of the apartment houses were already too small to partition. In instances where there were partitions, errors by the census resulted. For example, A16, 002 and 003 were partitioned into Apt 1 and 1A. Census listed only one housing unit.

As for irregular housing arrangement, this may cause some problems under the following situations:

a. Parents may utilize an address of a friend or relative in Chinatown so that their children can attend a Chinatown public school. This was reflected in school children reporting a census site address, but they did not actually live there. However, names obtained from school records were presumed to live at the address because they came from official records, and in many cases, they were found living there.

b. Unattached males work and live at their place of employment during the week, but maintain their personal living quarters in Chinatown. The boarders in the rooming houses were of this type. Mobility is high with this group.

c. Adult offspring who have established their own homes but maintain close ties to their elderly parents spending time with them and perhaps sleeping in their old beds from time to time. This was a difficult problem to resolve. Six adult children came under this category. Two indicated their residence in Chinatown, on their mail return, although Mr. Leung established that they had a house elsewhere. In consultation with Census, it was decided to subtract them from the B count. The AE did not include them in

the first place. (See B16, 747-03,04; B16, 299-03,04; B16, 994-02,03)

8. Complicated Census Forms Since we did not deal with filling out census forms, I had no way of ascertaining this factor as a cause of undercount. However, I still maintain that the long form is extremely difficult to fill out and discourages a population who are primarily immigrants to do so.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the enormous difficulties in getting a complete count in an ethnic community like New York's Chinatown with its insularity, its resistance, its language and cultural barriers, a better count can be accomplished if some of the recommendations from this study can be implemented.

In fact, due to a conscientious and capable census director in the southern Manhattan region, the undercount has been considerably reduced for the Chinese community, otherwise the undercount would have been much greater. In conversation with him, I learned that the actual census counting period was extended for this region to July 15th, an additional three and a half months dating from April 1st. Astutely, he realized that the three conventional methods of getting census forms back were not netting the results he expected. The three were mail-back forms, sending out enumerators, and community assistance centers. As mentioned previously, many residents did not get forms and if they did, they did not fill them out and mail them back. Enumerators met with the inaccessibility factor that I described. The community assistance centers did not draw the people expected due to the resistance factors. So the director devised his own strategies.

He went to the busy street corners of Chinatown and manned them with Chinese-speaking staff members. With loud bull horns, they accosted pedestrians and asked them if they had been counted. If not, they were brought to a table and assisted in filling out a census form. If these pedestrians did not live in the region, the forms were sent on to their census district. The director was aware that the greatest number of undercounted Chinese came from Brooklyn rather than from his own region, but that did not deter him.

In addition, the director knew that there are about 600 garment factories in the Chinatown vicinity and about 500 restaurants. He sent enumerators to all of these places catching them in their place of work rather than in their residence. Both these tactics overcame the inaccessibility factor. He found the garment workers, mainly females, less resistant than the male restaurant workers. Over three thousand census returns were obtained this way. The director felt that if he had more time, he could have improved upon this number.

If the director was conscientious and innovative, he was also observant. He noted that if one or two workers in a garment factory came forward, more would follow suit. This follow-the-leader tactic reduced resistance to being counted.

By using Chinese-speaking personnel, he overcame the language and cultural barriers. With my use of Mr. Leung, the local mailman, I was able to utilize his 20 years of service in the community. Again, I reiterate this recommendation. The postal service is a nation-wide network. These people know their routes and their mail recipients. They would not have to penetrate barriers like a strange-face enumerator would have to do. They also know the names and faces of the residents. It is small wonder that the Census Bureau has not tapped this resource before. I think the mailmen would do the job more efficiently at lower cost.

I believe I was able to obtain as complete a count as possible as Mr. Leung not only observed most of the people at this site, but he supplemented his information from the landlords and from neighbors. Also by consulting the school rosters, I was able to verify and compare the residents through administrative records.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In ethnic communities, enumerators must speak the language or dialect of the people they count.
2. Make use of the local mail personnel to conduct the enumerations. They already know the addresses and names of people on their mail routes. They can gain access to buildings in urban areas, and they can overcome some of the fear of strange people asking personal questions.
3. Print census forms in Chinese. Mail returns are more efficient than enumerators and more accurate. The cost of printing forms, I believe, is cheaper than hiring enumerators.
4. Be aware of cultural factors in the spelling and order of names. See "Cultural Characteristics about Names" in this report.
5. Be aware of cultural factors such as calculation of age or family relationships.
6. In a community like Chinatown with its high percentage of hard-working new immigrants, enumeration at the place where they sleep is less productive than catching them at their place of work. This reduces the accessibility barrier.
7. Resistance can only be overcome gradually by publicity

and endorsement by Chinese leaders. Make the pitch by stressing benefits to those who are counted. Attached is a speech I made for the Census encouraging people to be counted.

8. Give enumerators a profile of the community and some its culture and customs in the training session before they go in to start censusing.

9. Adopt strategies like placing enumerators at shopping malls or train stations to help people fill out census forms wherever they may live. To many people, filling out a census form is extremely difficult, especially the long form.

10. The U.S. population is too diverse and the universe is too large to count each and every person separately in the censuses. Serious consideration should be given to sampling and use of statistical procedures to enumerate the population. If so, a census should be conducted every five years, because changes are occurring so fast that decennial censuses do not accurately reflect the true demographic picture in this country.

LIST OF APPENDICES

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VOICES

The 1990 Census In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

By Tsiwen Law

Tsiwen M. Law is the chairman of the Mayor's Commission on Asian American Affairs, City of Philadelphia.

(The following is part of a letter by Tsiwen Law to the Honorable Thomas C. Sawyer, chairman of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Census and Population, regarding census issues of Asian American communities of Philadelphia. Law addressed the subcommittee on July 23.)

The Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Asian American Affairs was first formed in the fall of 1988 to provide improved representation and input in City policy on behalf of the Philadelphia Asian American communities. The commission is composed of representatives from 10 Asian ethnic communities and three special interest groups.

With regard to the census, the commission met with Laverne Collins, Frank Ambrose and other members of the regional census office to discuss issues of concern to the Asian American communities. Additionally, commission members have worked actively to assist the regional office in the dissemination of materials applicable to the Asian American communities of Philadelphia. We have had much contact with Tom Lycogthuan Lee and commend him for his resourcefulness and diligence in obtaining material applicable to the Asian American communities.

The issues that we have raised in the implementation of the census effort focused on April 1, 1990 are as follows:

1. The failure to encourage the applications of non-citizen Asian American enumerators. The translated employment literature specifically stated that citizenship was a requirement of employment. Because the pool of available Asian bilingual citizens was small, the recruitment efforts were significantly impeded by this requirement. The polyglot nature of the Asian American communities of Philadelphia created a severe need for Asian bilingual enumerators. To meet that need, the recruitment had to reach out to bilingual Asian permanent residents.

2. Mr. Lee was the principle coordinator for Asian American recruitment/outreach efforts. At least seven months before the census began, the Bureau of the Census was aware that it did not have an Asian American from the Philadelphia area to do the significant outreach required. The census made no effort to contact the Asian American communities about filling that position from persons locally who were familiar with the communities and familiar with the leadership and structure of the representative organizations. Some complaints did come forward that appointments that were made with members of the Asian American community were not kept. We ascribe these to the overburdening of one non-Philadelphian individual with all of the task of dealing with 10 different Asian American communities here.

3. Available translated material about confidentiality which were essential to the complete cooperation with the census were not available in all languages and in forms that could be posted in institutions.

4. Persons seeking employment with the regional offices were frustrated by the uncertainty surrounding their employment. This resulted in the loss to the census of valuable bilingual persons who can easily find alternate employment because their skills are in

such great demand. Some applicants were given extremely short notice to report to work and were expected to drop all other plans made well in advance.

5. The distribution of census forms in Philadelphia was inefficient and ineffective. In Chinatown, one recipient received all the surveys for the entire apartment house. Use of the postal service would have been more effective and more timely. Numerous inquiries came from Asians in different parts of the city claiming they had never received the questionnaire forms. Several did not even know they were supposed to ask for them.

6. The contract system with the Asian American community organizations which volunteered as assistance centers failed in part due to lack of follow-up. In fact, I was advised that Census Bureau policy was not to pursue community organizations which failed to return executed contracts so as to avoid coercion. Several organizations were unaware that the contracts were essential to training and other services by the census personnel.

The Asian American communities of Philadelphia are deeply angered by the Census Bureau's decision to count Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans as whites in the post-enumeration survey. While Asian American data will be collected, the survey results will not reflect a separate breakdown for Asian Pacific Islanders or Native Americans. Without a breakdown of the Asian Pacific Islander undercount, the Census Bureau will have only two options: 1) apply the white population undercount rate to Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans or 2) not adjust for undercount in the Asian Pacific Islander population. Neither option is acceptable to Asian Pacific Islander communities. The Census Bureau has chosen a methodology which will assure the unavailability of a statistically significant adjustment mechanism for a Native American and Asian Pacific American undercount. Once again, we find ourselves excluded from a process which will greatly affect our entitlement to federal resources for the next 10 years.

An accurate count is vital to our survival. We have been the victims of racial incidents at a rate far in excess of our proportion of the city's population. Only with accurate population denominators were we able to expose the severity of our victimization in 1988. This fact alone has permitted us to advocate for the allocation of resources for prevention. In its report on 1989 intergroup tension incidents, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations declined to apply 1980 population data on the grounds

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that it was out-of-date. Now, without a statistically valid adjustment of our undercounted 1990 population, the Human Relations Commission may argue that it has more reason not to apply Asian Pacific Islander population data to its analysis. Similarly, data collected under the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 for Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans will not be properly adjusted for population unless some undercount adjustment is made.

Even more ominous is the great likelihood that research about Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans will have to

carry a disclaimer that the research conclusions may tend to overstate true conditions, because the population data have not been adjusted for undercount. This possibility will set back research on issues facing our communities for many years. More importantly, the unreliability of the population data will undermine advocacy on behalf of Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans. The Commission on Asian American Affairs relies heavily on population data to recommend policies or policy changes to Mayor Goode and city departments. Recommendations on prevention of or early detection of lead poisoning, hepatitis B, and AIDS are all based on accurate population counts.

The Census Bureau foresaw the 1990 census undercount of Asian Pacific Islanders as early as 1986 when it conducted a post-enumeration survey in the East-Central Los Angeles area. The survey was entitled the "Test of Adjustment Related Operations." That report announced a 7 percent undercount of Asian Pacific Islanders. We would not be surprised to find a comparable, if not greater, undercount rate among Asian Pacific Islanders in Philadelphia. Philadelphia has a significant Asian Pacific population characterized by limited English proficiency and limited understanding of American government. For many, this is their first census.

We have heard promises that

the Asian Pacific Islander summary analyses will be available by 1992. We want this promise kept. The comparable data from the 1980 census was not released until 1988. As committees across the nation gear up to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, we question whether our participation makes any sense. We hope these hearings will produce concrete changes in the bureau's approach toward the undercount of Asian Pacific Islanders and Native Americans. Thank you for this opportunity to address our concerns about the census issues in the Greater Philadelphia area.

"Voices" of the Asian American community is an open forum designed to present and discuss issues of concern to the Asian American community. The opinions expressed here are those of the author only. Asian Week welcomes your comments on this subject and on any other subject of interest to the Asian American community.

I Was A Census Enumerator, And I Thought It Was A Farce

By Suzanne R. Lee

OAKLAND -- Friday, Feb. 9, 1990: "Census Needs To Hire 15,000 In California." The headline in the newspaper grabbed my attention and I quickly applied for a census job. I did not receive official word about the job until April 20, and even then I had to call the bureau back to confirm my employment as an enumerator.

On April 30, I and 15 others showed up for training. Our trainer was Ed Pixley. Everyone traded stories about how slow and disorganized the census office was. In dealing with the inept group at headquarters, we found out that our original applications had been lost. Those of us who had been contacted, had to repeatedly phone the district office before the job was confirmed. Similarly, there were those whom the bureau never phoned, and they had to make the connection on their own. One woman, Ruth, got a call from the bureau, but the bureau was looking for some other applicant; they had no idea who Ruth was. It seemed that the bureau had matched up applicants' names with the wrong telephone numbers.

leader we trained with (all of whom got along rather well), but shipped off to other crew leaders in other areas.

As if we were not misinformed enough about our enumerator roles, a most ugly thing was unearthed about the census form itself: the box to fill in if you had to mark the "other" box as your race was just there as a token. In truth, "others" were not counted, or else lumped together, meaning African Americans, Cambodians, Hispanics, any group not already listed on the form, would not really count in the final compilations. The census job changed before our eyes.

Chinatown Assignment

I got a call from Susan Claypool, my new crew leader, who told me that work would start on Monday, May 7. We would meet every morning at the North Oakland Cultural Center (Studio One). It was just by chance that I got the Oakland Chinatown area; non-response address (ARA) books were handed out at random. Pure luck that a Chinese person was assigned a Chinese area.

Only one problem -- one that

people who were qualified. What happened to them, she does not know.)

Determined to count the people in Chinatown, I set out to find my own interpreter, one who would volunteer to do the work the census was supposed to be doing. In the three days I worked while awaiting word from the census, I found only two people who could speak English. I had to delete most of the addresses because they were restaurants, commercial buildings, sewing factories, or just did not exist. Of the six vacant units I enumerated, one was a boarded up tenement.

I went to the Oakland Chinese Community Council in hopes of finding help. Working out of OCCC and hired by the city of Oakland to get Asians counted, Serena Chen was shocked to find out that I had actually lived what she and her counterparts had feared would happen come census time: bilingual workers would not be hired and minorities would not be counted.

Serena made a call to the census district office in hopes of getting an answer for me, if not an interpreter. Bill Connor answered the call, claiming to be a part-time temporary person filling in for the vacationing head, Phillip Willis. Connor denied that there was a problem in the hiring of bilingual census workers, and accused me of being a liar, saying that I told them I was fluent in Chinese. Besides that, Connor said that I was in the wrong for going outside of the Census Bureau for help. For one thing, he could not say that I was assigned the Chinatown area because I was bilingual, for as I said, it was totally by chance that I got that ARA book. And another thing, I did follow standard procedures by telling my crew leader my need for an interpreter, who in turn encouraged me to find outside help.

It would seem a safe bet to say that other non-English-speaking communities are facing the same problem of having trouble communicating with enumerators, and the enumerators are having trouble getting the necessary information in these areas. Because the census is a government agency, a lot of people are wary of it. Americans and foreign-born people alike feel threatened by the census, thinking that information provided will be used against them.

Getting the Asians counted was very important to me since I live in Chinatown. It is good to match up a person with her community, but a person with the ability to speak another

language should be assigned to a corresponding area. Since the bureau thinks matching people with areas is too hard, an interpreter would seem the next best thing to assign to an enumerator. A translator working with a hometown enumerator would get the job done more efficiently and completely.

After the talk with Connor and other talks between Serena and census officials, Christina Mei, my crew leader's supervisor, approached me (10 days after my original request) about my need for an interpreter. She acted as if she had just heard the news, and she tried to make the problem seem small by saying, "You have about 12 Chinese-speaking households!" In actuality, at that point, I had at least 50 remaining in one building, and at least 20

weeks that she was going to need someone to replace me. She at the Census Bureau knew all the problems I had, and yet they sent out a black couple to the Chinatown area.

For the past 10 years we know that the census would place this year, and we know another one will occur in the year 2000. Were none of the problems I have come across, which I'm sure are only a part of the whole, taken into consideration in the pre-planning stages of the census? Is anyone listening what we are saying about our field experiences? I doubt the census cares.

The census is used to determine the number of representatives that state will receive in the House. I find it hard to believe that we are being allotted the correct

It seems to me that enumerators and crew leaders are hired only to take the blame for the disorganization of the bureau.

When all the information is finally compiled, Chinatown will be grossly misrepresented.

As we "trained," we found out that the job of the enumerator was different than what the "self-study" manual said; the procedures were different than what we were led to believe when we accepted enumerator positions. We would not be working in "safety" groups; instead, we would be going out by ourselves on our own time schedules. Unlike the original plan, practice work in the field was no longer part of our training sessions because of lack of time and organization. The emphasis was placed more on the housing questions than on the insightful people questions.

We had been told that we would receive a \$100 bonus upon completion of the two and a half days, but that was not the case. We would have to first fulfill a quota. The money was not so important, it was just upsetting that we could not get a straight answer, or a correct one. To top it all off, we would not be working with the group and

the bureau failed to deal with or refused to solve -- I do not speak Chinese. I thought I could enumerate some of the units, but two large apartment buildings (City Center Plaza and Phoenix Plaza on Franklin Street) filled with mainly Chinese-speaking residents were too much of a problem for me to handle without an interpreter; I had about 86 units at City Center and 13 at Phoenix.

I called Susan immediately and told her my problem. I waited for three days, hoping the bureau would come through; after all, in training we were told that if we came across non-English-speaking people, someone who spoke whatever language it was would take care of it. But then we were not given the Language Assistance ID Cards and Foreign Language Guides that we were told about. Susan only had this message for me: There are no bilingual people working for the bureau as of May 7. (Susan had told me that she tested bilingual

other houses in the area. It was at this time that I was finally given the ID/Foreign Language Guide.

The census interpreter was an enumerator by the name of Wilson Lee, a man in his 60s. After getting 30 cases completed in just one morning with the interpreter from OCCC, Mr. Zhou, I was expecting at least the same with Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee filled out the forms for the people instead of asking them all of the questions, and after two days (a total of four hours) Mr. Lee said that he found my job to be "too much work." It was a waste of time for me to go out in the field with Mr. Lee, for since I could not communicate with the people he enumerated, all I could do was sit and wait for him to finish the job.

Once I had exhausted what I considered to be all of my attempts and tactics, I felt that I could stop working for the census. After spending a week in City Center Plaza going door to door, posting notices, leaving phone numbers and setting up in the lobby for half a day, I felt that I had completed my job and done my best. I turned in my census work on May 24.

I ran into my replacements at City Center -- a black man and woman. The woman said they needed an interpreter, no surprise to me. Susan knew for two

number of seats. Also, the census is supposed to be used to determine the amount of money given to the state for education and public assistance. However, most people fill out the short forms, and there are no questions about income, schooling or job status. The short form is mainly housing questions. Of the long forms, 20 percent of all forms sent out, what percentage is sent out to each community, and how could that minute percentage paint an accurate picture of what is really needed in each community?

Using Chinatown as an example because this was my assignment, the picture I'm getting looks like this: When the information is finally compiled, Chinatown will be grossly misrepresented. The population will be far less than the true number, housing will appear ample and the boom businesses will make residents appear well-off. Funding obtained will not be as much as should be received. Statistics will represent everything but the people.

Police Say Their Chinatown Sting Ties Mob to the Garment Industry

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NY 3/20/90 By SELWYN RAAB

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on the surface, the loft was just another noisy garment factory in Chinatown with 25 women hunched over sewing machines at a company run by six supervisors.

But now law-enforcement officials say the supervisors were police agents. The company was the centerpiece of an undercover operation that produced evidence that organized crime has a stranglehold on New York City's garment industry through its control of trucking companies.

For decades, investigations of claims that organized crime influences the trade have met with limited success because authorities had relied largely on anonymous tips, informers and on coaxing reluctant victims to come forward. This inquiry, however, relied on firsthand evidence gathered directly by investigators.

"This time we are focusing on the major entrenched players," the Manhattan District Attorney, Robert M. Morgenthau, said in an interview last week. "And we are going to do our level best to get rid of these illicit activities that can make the difference of whether a company can survive in the city or has to leave to stay in business."

Law-enforcement officials, who agreed to be interviewed if their names were not used, said investigators secretly recorded conversations about the hiring of trucking companies in which threats and extortion demands were made. The officials said the agents were told by trucking company representatives which trucker had the sole right to move their goods and that there could be no negotiations over prices. If the company used another trucker, it would still have to pay the

Continued on Page B5, Column 1

one designated by organized-crime figures, the officials said.

Mr. Morgenthau confirmed that investigators found what he described as "double-billing" and threats but he refused to be more specific.

Michael G. Cherkasky, an assistant district attorney in charge of the inquiry, said he expects a grand jury to hear evidence of extortion, price-fixing and racketeering in several months.

Records Seized in Raid

On Jan. 30, the District Attorney's office obtained a search warrant and seized the financial records of ten garment district truckers. Seven of them, authorities said, are controlled by Thomas Gambino, who has been identified by Federal and state law-enforcement officials as a captain in the Gambino crime family.

Two of the others are affiliated with figures in the Lucchese crime-family, prosecutors said.

According to court documents, the seized records included information about Mr. Gambino's personal investments. The court papers provided no details, but a law-enforcement official said the records showed that his trucking companies grossed more than \$40 million last year, and made \$13 million in profit.

The records also suggested that Mr. Gambino was worth about \$100 million, the official said.

'Hysterical Accusations'

"The evidence we have so far turned up shows that organized crime has a monopolistic stranglehold over trucking companies and the truckers are the lifeblood of the city's garment industry," Mr. Morgenthau said.

Mr. Gambino declined to be interviewed. His lawyer, Michael Rosen, said suggestions that his client was connected to criminal activity were "hysterical accusations by people in law enforcement who have to justify their existence."

Mr. Cherkasky, the head of the District Attorney's investigation division, said his office paid \$20,000 for a garment contracting company with sewing machines and other equipment in Chinatown. Agents ran it for most of last year, sewing skirts and jeans and delivering them to jobbers or manufacturers who had provided the fabric and patterns.

Employed 25 Sewers

Chinatown, in lower Manhattan, has become the city's chief clothing-manufacturing area while the garment district in midtown is still the hub for the offices and showrooms of wholesalers and designers.

The undercover contracting company on Chrystie Street employed about 25 sewing machine operators. Its business affairs were handled by six State Police investigators. State investigators were used instead of city police officers, Mr. Cherkasky said, to reduce the possibility that an undercover agent might be recognized.

Mr. Cherkasky said jobbers paid the company about \$1.50 for each skirt or pair of jeans sewn. The garments generally retailed for less than \$20.

Employees were given two weeks notice before the factory was closed and the sewing machines were sold. The employees were not union members but Mr. Cherkasky said they were paid top wages and given all fringe benefits. The business lost \$10,000.

Not Trying to Make Money

"We lost money because we were not trying to be sharp business people," Mr. Cherkasky said. "Our main purpose was to investigate crimes."

As part of the inquiry, two Chinese officers from the Police Department

Mr. Morgenthau declined to disclose the names of the companies the investigators set up. Doing so, he said, could compromise the investigation.

The seven trucking companies in which prosecutors said Mr. Gambino has an interest are Consolidated Carriers, Dynamic Delivery, Clothing Carriers, Greenberg's Express, G.R.G. Delivery, JHT Leasing and Astro Carri-

Agents sewed \$20 skirts and recorded extortion threats.

ers. They operate about 500 trucks, according to the state Department of Motor Vehicles.

All of the companies except Astro have their offices and shipping depots on West 35th Street between Broadway and Seventh Avenue. Astro is at 205 West 35th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.

Gambinos Are Officers

State incorporation records list Mr. Gambino as president and his brother Joseph as secretary-treasurer of Consolidated and Dynamic. State law does not require corporations to identify their officers or shareholders and none are listed in the public records for the five other companies.

Mr. Gambino, who is 60 years old, is the son of Carlo Gambino. Law-enforcement authorities have said Carlo Gambino founded the Mafia family

that bears his name and built it into the largest and most powerful crime group in America before he died in 1976.

Thomas Gambino is married to Catherine Lucchese, the daughter of the late Thomas Lucchese, who officials said founded the Lucchese crime group.

On November 30, Mr. Gambino was acquitted in Brooklyn on Federal charges of obstructing justice. He has never been convicted of a crime.

'His Trucks Roll in Full View'

"There is nothing nefarious about Mr. Gambino," said his lawyer, Mr. Rosen, who also represents the seven trucking companies. "His trucks roll along the streets in full view and nobody is hiding anything from anybody."

The other companies whose records were seized in a raid by the District Attorney's office are AAA Garment Delivery at 242 West 36th Street, Lucky Apparel Carriers and I.M.C. Carriers, both at 327 West 36th Street. None of their officers are identified in incorporation papers.

Anthony (Gas Pipe) Casso, who Federal and state authorities say is the underboss or No. 2 leader in the Lucchese crime family, is a consultant to AAA Delivery, prosecutors said. Mr. Casso did not return messages left for him at AAA's office.

Continued from New York Times article " Police Say Their Chinatown
Sting ties Mob to Garment Industry" April 30, 1990

Asked about Mr. Casag's relationship with AAA, Gerald L. Shargel, a lawyer for the company, said: "Putting labels on people is no substitute for proof. This is a fishing expedition by prosecutors and they'll find no evidence of wrongdoing."

Prosecutors said another member of the Lucchese family, Michael Pappadio, had been affiliated with Lucky Carriers. "Lucky has been in business for many years and there is no evidence showing they are in any way connected with organized crime," said Jeffrey C. Hoffman, the company's lawyer.

Mr. Pappadio has an unlisted telephone number in Bayside, Queens, and did not return telephone messages left for him at Lucky's office.

Mr. Cherkasky said I.M.C. was in "the club" under investigation for purportedly allocating garment-industry trucking routes in Manhattan. The president of I.M.C., David Stuart, declined to reply to the assertions last week.

About 100,000 people are employed full- and part-time in the city's garment industry, mainly in Manhattan, said Walter Mankoff, the associate research director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The number of companies and employees making and distributing clothing, however, has declined steadily in the last 30 years because of high costs and competition from other regions and countries.

The current inquiry is reminiscent of a Federal and city Police Department undercover investigation in 1973 and 1974 but that time civilians were used to run two garment-center companies. That investigation led to the convictions of two organized-crime figures and a dispute between city and Federal law-enforcement officials over whether the case had been mishandled.



Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

Recent fears of political and economic change in Asia have created a new wave of Chinese immigrants, who are straining an already overburdened community, taking menial jobs with low wages at places like Hong Fong Sportswear in Chinatown.

Immigrants Strain Chinatown's Resources

By CONSTANCE L. HAYS

Jenny Zeng left her home in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou 18 months ago. She was a teacher in an elementary school there. Now she works in a Chinatown garment factory, stitching together dresses that she later sees for sale along Canal Street.

"The pay is very cheap," Miss Zeng said. "I start at 9 A.M. and finish at 6 P.M., six days a week. It's piecework, and I do it very slowly, so I take home only about \$200."

Bending over a sewing machine all day fills her with despair. "I always feel very tired," she said. "The workday is very long. In the garment factory, there are a lot of people who are engineers, but because they can't speak English, they just work in a garment factory."

Chinatown was built on the backs of generations of people like Jenny Zeng — immigrants working long hours for small wages

To pay off smugglers, aliens face 'a form of indentured servitude.'

in garment factories and restaurant kitchens.

Now, though, fears of political and economic change in Asia have created a wave of new immigration to Chinese communities in New York and on the West Coast. And those crowds of newcomers are straining an already overburdened community, as even menial jobs become scarce and wages stay too low to buy much of a new life.

Many of those new arrivals come to America legally; uncounted others do not. Theirs is often a cycle of immigration that

begins with a fistful of cash and a great deal of risk. Some pay as much as \$30,000 to be smuggled into the United States; when they arrive they become little more than indentured servants, working for years to repay their debts.

"In our community, there is a lot of frustration," said Wing Lam, executive director of the Chinese Staff and Worker's Association, a nonprofit group that trains immigrants for better jobs.

As a paper presented by Mr. Lam's group to the Dinkins administration says, "More than ever before, Chinese workers — old and new immigrants — are being locked into a segregated cheap labor market where wages are often below minimum-wage levels, along with extremely long hours, no benefits, no job security and little chance for advancement."

The immigrants come not only from

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Strain Chinatown's Resources

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China itself, but from places like Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

"One factor is the Hong Kong situation, what will happen in 1997," when the colony is returned to Chinese rule, said Betty Lee Sung, chairwoman of the Asian studies department at City College. "Another is in Taiwan, where people are again fearful about Taiwan being reunited with China. Then there is the Tiananmen Square situation, so all of this pressure is creating a huge immigration influx."

The most recent available statistics for legal immigrants from China show a steady climb, from 24,787 in 1985 to 28,717 in 1988, said Duke Austin, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington.

It is impossible to count the illegal immigrants, but the number of mainland Chinese apprehended has risen from 196 in 1987 to 984 last year, Mr. Austin said, and there are clearly far more than are caught.

The illegal immigrants fall into two main groups: those who overstay their tourist visas and those who are smuggled in. The smuggling networks, based in China and Hong Kong, charge as much as \$30,000 a person and make few guarantees. Investigators have intercepted would-be immigrants from China at points from the Buffalo area to northern Washington State to the Mexican border.

'We Never Saw Them Again'

"Three years ago we had 13 of them come up through Mexico," Mr. Austin said. "We set bond at \$10,000 apiece. A guy showed up with a bag of money, counted it out and took off with them. We never saw them again."

Last year, four people drowned after their raft overturned in the turbulent Niagara River near Buffalo. They were on the last leg of a journey each of them had paid at least \$5,000 to make, investigators said.

They are becoming more sophisticated," said John J. Ingham, the service's district director in Buffalo. "We had other ratters in that same location, where the smugglees were using cellular phones to stay in contact with their pickup, who was waiting in a car on the other side."

Traditionally, Chinese immigrants had relatives or friends who were their connections once they arrived in New York. But that has begun to change, in particular with people from Fujian Province in southeast China, which is home to many of the newcomers.

Who Runs Smuggling Networks

While the smugglers seldom provide immigration documents as part of the fee, fake ones can be bought.

Simon Chow, director of the refugee program at Hamilton-Madison House, a social-service agency in Chinatown, said travel agencies in Chinatown were supplying people with fake "green cards," which are issued to aliens who have permanent-resident status.

Investigators say they have little information about who runs the smuggling networks, and people who are intercepted seldom seem to know anything about the hierarchy. But while many immigrants must find jobs on their own, others have jobs waiting for them, set up by the networks.

"Our concern is, obviously these people don't have that kind of money," Mr. Ingham said of the smugglers' fees. "What happens to them is a form of indentured servitude. They get a job at a restaurant somewhere at wages that would take them many, many years to pay that kind of debt. The alternative is to pay it off more quickly by becoming involved with more illicit activities."

Sat There All Day

Mr. Chow told of an unusual case in which an 18-year-old told him he couldn't take it anymore and was turning himself in to the authorities. "He was working in a restaurant, running er-



Jack Manning/The New York Times

"I always feel very tired," said Jenny Zeng, a former teacher in China who now works in a Chinatown garment factory. "The workday is very long."

rands," and did not feel it was worth the pressure, Mr. Chow said.

Lately, finding even a job like that has become tougher.

"It's so difficult, because so many people want to come here," said Yi Tong, owner of the Dong Mei employment agency on East Broadway in Chinatown. One day early this month, her waiting room was filled with men, many of whom had sat there all day, waiting for a call from a restaurant, a construction foreman or a shop owner who needed a temporary or full-time helper. Most of the men, their faces bronzed from years of outdoor work, sat with their heads in their hands.

Ms. Yi said wages for "kitchen men," who prepare food for cooking, are often as low as \$400 a month; dishwashers earn as much as \$900. People who cannot speak English cannot work as waiters, and so have no chance to augment their income with tips. Because New York City seems saturated, many people are forced to commute to suburban restaurants, she said.

On a recent day, a 29-year-old graduate of the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, who has an engineering degree, was running between three employment agencies on East Broadway and Eldridge Street. He was a native of

where his skills could be useful. One agency had placed him in the kitchen of a Chinatown restaurant, but he hated it. "I quit after one day," said the man, who did not want his name used.

Lessons In English

The situation is reflected in a textbook called "English for Practical Living," sold in Chinatown. Under the heading "Parts of Speech," a short list of nouns starts out with: immigrant, waiter, wife, seamstress. It ends with factory, restaurant, Laundromat.

Even those who have been in America for years are being strained by the new immigration.

"There are a lot of undocumented aliens here now, and jobs are hard to get," said a father of three, who works six days a week, 10 hours a day, in a restaurant and takes home \$300.

The garment factories that honeycomb Chinatown are for the immigrant Chinese women what the restaurants are for the men.

Half Are Illegal Immigrants

There are about 1,500 registered factories, most with corporate owners, said Hugh McDaid, program administrator for the state's Apparel Industry Task Force. Typically they employ about 40 people, and like small factories in other parts of the city, they draw heavily on immigrant labor and have been the targets of inspectors trying to enforce fair labor standards.

It is not the inspectors' job to ask about workers' immigration status, but Mr. McDaid estimates that about half the employees are illegal immigrants.

Both legal and illegal immigrants are exploited, "because no one else will take these jobs," said Paul Kalka, one of the inspectors. "One shop we found on Division Street, the owner sponsored his whole town and they're working for him now."

'She Earns \$60 a Week'

On the fourth floor of a building on Elizabeth Street, 50 Chinese women and a couple of men employed by the Hong Fong Sportswear company are hunched over their work: sorting piles of pre-cut fabrics, sewing elastic bands on evolving trousers, snipping threads from finished products, shoving clothes on hangers onto wheeled racks. Fans whir and Cantonese opera whines over a loudspeaker. Thick clots of dust line the boxes where time cards are supposed to be, and the clock stopped long ago. The women wear improvised dust masks, pieces of white fabric draped

Chinatown Boom Fueled By Hong Kong Capital Flight

FROM DOWNTOWN EXPRESS June 11

1990

Downtown Developers are 'Frying Real Estate in a Wok'

By LAURA ROWLEY

Development in Chinatown is skyrocketing, boosted by the influx of refugee capital—Hong Kong money from investors fearful of political upheaval when the British colony is returned to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Hong Kong investors are aggressively financing new condominiums, hotels, banks, and commercial buildings, driving up real estate values.

"Hong Kong capital is an unknown quantity which is fueling speculation in Chinatown," says Peter Kwong, author of "The New Chinatown". "Every owner is hoping that the irrational investor will put money in something way above market value. When confronted with political uncertainty, the Chinese traditionally rely on gold and real estate."

The physical evidence of that reliance is rising in bricks and mortar over the face of lower Manhattan. New developments include:

- Honto 88, a 15-story, \$11 million condominium on Henry and Market Streets
- Mandarin Plaza, a 25-story, \$37 million condo on Broadway and White Street
- A new commercial tower on East Broadway at Market Street financed by the Hong Kong-based Kah Wah Bank
- A seven-story, \$10 million building on Canal and Mulberry Streets financed by The Bank of East Asia
- A \$35 million, 227-room hotel on Broome and Lafayette Streets expected to be completed in 1991
- And a one-story, blond brick honeycomb-like mall of shops, located directly under the Manhattan Bridge, which opened last fall.

In addition, smaller Hong Kong investors are ferreting funds through the pipeline of family-owned garment or restaurant businesses or family-owned real estate in Chinatown. By one estimate, nearly \$5 billion flowed out of Hong Kong in 1989.

According to John Wang, executive director of the Chinese American Local Development Corporation, 28 new residential developments with 800 units of market rate housing are in the planning stages or have been completed in the last five years in Chinatown. These range from small condominium conversions with only ten units to the developments such as Mandarin Plaza, with 161 apartments.

Dozens of banks have opened new branches in Chinatown to take advantage of the economic activity, and to funnel more Hong Kong money here. "There's a little bit of a saturation in Chinatown," says Alexander F. Chu, chairman of the

Chinatown-based East Bank. He downplayed the role of the new banks in channeling Hong Kong money to the local community, asserting that the large, Asia-based multi-nationals are simply using the area as a base for their trade ventures.

But downplaying the impact of Hong Kong money is the rule, not the exception. There are few renegade, flashy or Trump-esque figures in Hong Kong-financed development in Chinatown. One person acts as a public figure, fronting for an elaborate network of silent partners in Asia who don't want publicity about the flight of their millions. "There are not that many individual operators. It's generally a complex partnership," says Peter Kwong.

One of the better-known local developers is Danny Li, who immi-

grated to the United States 20 years ago and worked in a garment factory until he saved enough to establish his own garment business. By 1974 he owned two more shops and began investing in local real estate. In 1982 he brought Maria's Bakery, a Hong Kong chain, to New York; there are now four bakeries. Li is currently developing the luxury hotel on Broome and Lafayette Streets. Another figure is Thomas Lee, who brought together the investors to finance Mandarin Plaza. Lee bought his first property in the 1970s, after working as an auto mechanic in Chinatown.

While Hong Kong-financed ventures are effecting New York's Chinatown, community leaders say the city could entice even more investment here if it worked a little harder on its image. Hong Kong-financed development has been even more frenzied in Toronto and Vancouver, where a new condo, marketed solely in Hong Kong, sold

out in hours last year. By contrast, 60 percent of Mandarin Plaza has sold over the last year.

A more voracious demand has not descended upon New York City for several reasons. First, developers are attracted to the geographical proximity of cities on the other side of the Pacific. In addition, Canadian immigration laws are more relaxed—a\$250,000 investment in a business buys citizenship. (The United States admits only 5,000

Continued from Downtown Express "Chinatown Boom Fueled
by Hong Kong Capital Flight" June 11, 1990

Hong Kong residents annually.)

Finally, New York is gaining a reputation abroad as a metropolis confounded by crime, drugs and racial violence, compared to the genial Canadian cities and prosperous California. "To attract development, the city needs to make a greater effort in marketing itself," says John Wang, who works to attract new investment to Chinatown. "While California is closer to the Far East geographically, there is also a perception that it is safer and the climate is more conducive to business." Alexander Chu agrees. "As taxes go up and the city passes laws that make development more difficult, the competitiveness of New York is being questioned," he said.

Despite the influx of Far East money, retail and commercial real estate in Chinatown not immune to the economic woes facing the rest of the city. Currently there is a glut of office space because so many lofts were converted in the last five years, says Harold Yacker, Vice President with Irvin Raber Co., a real estate broker that has operated in Chinatown for almost 50 years.

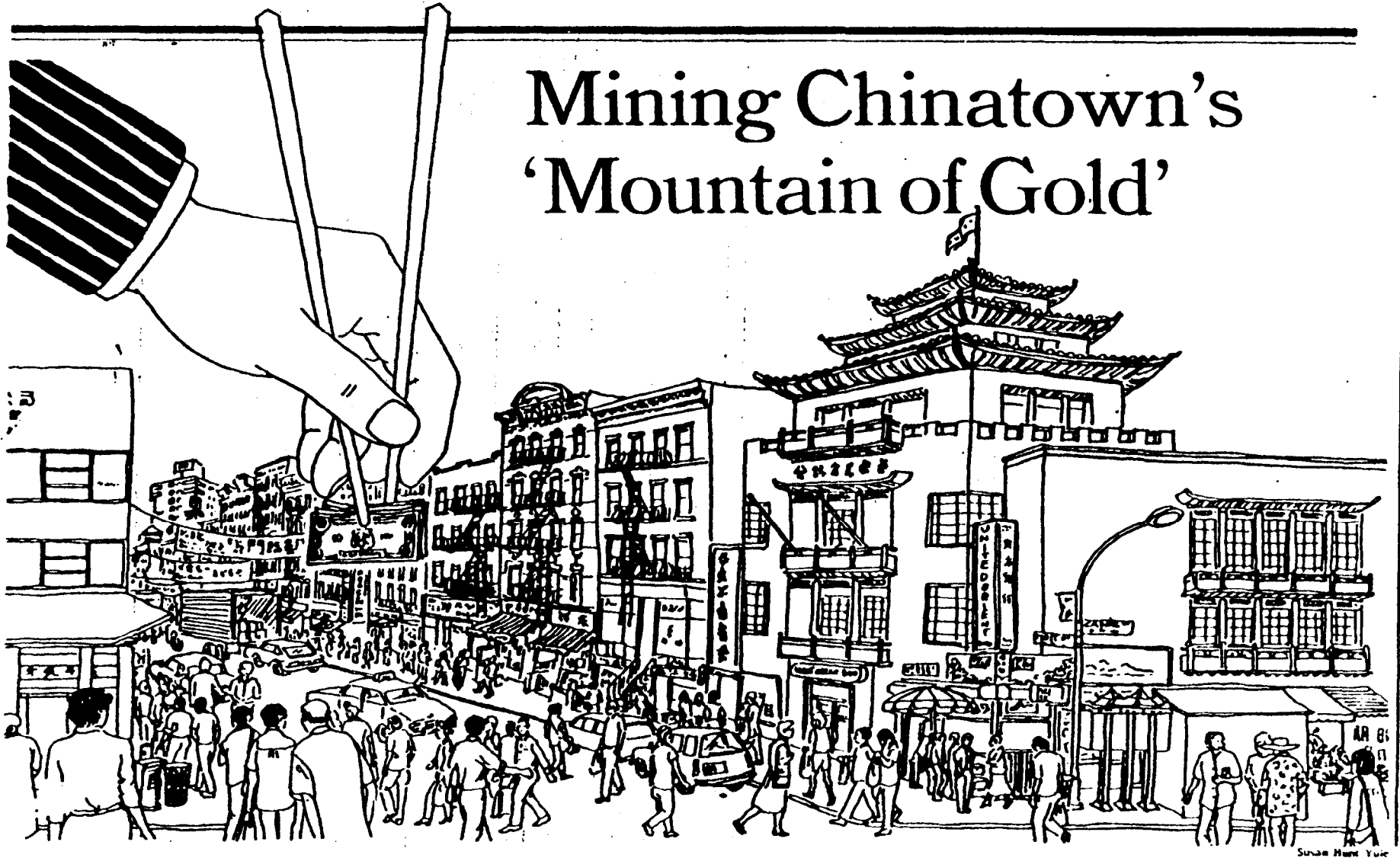
Retail space is averaging \$85 to \$150 per square foot—comparable to rents in Soho—with Canal Street and the Bowery commanding the highest rents. But new leases are averaging increases of only 6 percent a year. "Five to seven years ago, you could double the rent and wait for someone who could afford it," Yacker recalled. "You can't do that anymore.

"It's a natural cycle of adjustment to what the market needs," says Chu of East Bank.

In spite of the current soft market, owners continue to hold unimproved buildings for investment. This practice, known as "frying the real estate in a wok," is based on the hope that over the long-term the panicked Hong Kong investor will further inflate real estate values. Because of this, smaller businesses still can't afford the available space. "You look at the vendors on the street on the weekends and you think it's fantastic," says a wong, a longtime resident of Chinatown. "But nobody asks what they're doing on the street."

Along with new immigrants, a new generation of white collar Chinese Americans is establishing a network of law practices, accounting firms and financial brokerages to see Hong Kong money through the system and into new ventures. There is little doubt that as 1997 draws nearer, more refugee capital from cautious Hong Kong investors will find its way into Chinatown. And as Confucius said, "The cautious seldom err." ■

Mining Chinatown's 'Mountain of Gold'



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Alexander Chu of Eastbank



Ming Chan, H.S.F. Restaurants



Hung Luk of the Fashion Group



Danny Li of Maria's Bakeries

The New York Times/Don Hegan Charles

Immigrant entrepreneurs have struck it rich in real estate - and in dumplings and dresses, too.

By N. R. KLEINFELD

IN 1949, when young Joseph Chu got his first glimpse of Chinatown's crooked streets, his impulse was to turn and leave. Fewer than 10,000 people, most of them down at the heels, lived in the area, making do in some of the city's most dilapidated housing. What future, what fortune could possibly lie there?

Unlike many other Chinese immigrants, he could pick his opportunities. The son of a Hong Kong judge, Mr. Chu had graduated from college and gravitated to real estate. Though he possessed only a fumbling

command of English, he suspected brighter horizons lay in America. But finding Chinatown so desolate, he retreated to Hong Kong. Not until 1955, his purpose rekindled, did he return.

Replaying those days on a recent afternoon, the smartly dressed, jockey-sized Mr. Chu sipped tea and laughed. He shook his head. He laughed some more. "Yes," he said. "At first, I come here and there is nothing. A big zero."

Who can better laugh now than Joseph Chu. For many years he has been Chinatown's biggest landlord and one of its most prosperous citizens. Once his buildings loomed everywhere, but he has moderated his activities in recent years. "I'm 66 now," he said. "It's awful. Too old."

These days, Mr. Chu lives in the posh Galleria in midtown Manhattan. He likes to bicycle in Central Park. A keen interest is grooming his 38-year-old son, Alexander, to take command of his empire. Mr. Chu still has eight Chinatown buildings and enough money to live out any fantasies.

"I make out O.K.," he said. "I say that I'm very comfortable. Very comfortable."

Since the 1980's, New York's Chinatown has been a sweet land of plenty for scores of footloose and ambi-

tious immigrants like Joseph Chu. Yet the squalid streets and ramshackle tenements make Chinatown seem like a ghetto. In some ways, it is. Women toil in sweatshops, sewing garments for meager wages. Waiters shuttle plates for 15 hours a day. But that is a partial picture. Peter Ng, the head of the Quee-dun Corporation, one of Chinatown's biggest realtors, supposes that there are at least 50 millionaires among a population of 100,000. It is no wonder that when the Chinese talk of America, they call it Gum Shan, the Mountain of Gold.

It was 145 years ago that Chinese people began filtering into the twisting streets of lower Manhattan. First there was a tea merchant, Quimpo Appo, who made Doyer Street his home. After that, a man named Wo Kee opened a general store at 8 Mott Street. Slowly, more Chinese came, and more. When the Government loosened immigration quotas in 1965, tens of thousands poured into the quarter-mile square below Canal Street, and it jelled into a miniature world of teeming sidewalk markets and tightly bunched restaurants.

Over the last 10 years, in particular, many millions of dollars have poured into what has become the na-

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tion's largest Chinatown. The British lease on Hong Kong expires in 1997, and hordes of jittery Chinese want to get their assets out of the colony. Chinese from many other parts of Asia also keep pressing in, and Chinatown's borders have spilled across Canal Street into Little Italy and along East Broadway to claim portions of the Lower East Side.

The core businesses of Chinatown are its 450-odd garment factories and the more than 300 restaurants. For the last decade, however, real estate has been the most dazzling lure. Prices seem to climb hourly, and are rarely justified by the low rents that the buildings throw off. Yet speculators turn them over for still steeper sums. Virtually no building can be had there for less than \$1 million.

"Speculation has been undercutting some of the dynamism of Chinatown," said Peter Kwong, a professor of politics at the State University Center at Old Westbury, who has studied the community for years. "Because of high real estate prices and high rents, factories are having trouble maintaining themselves. Restaurants have to get bigger to survive. So you have a very unstable economy."

In a sense, the golden period that started in the 1960's is drawing to a close. No longer is anyone likely to come to Chinatown penniless, start a garment factory and retire a millionaire. Even real estate investment is being viewed as too dicey by some long-time players, prodding them to place their bets elsewhere.

Still, opportunities persist in the traditional ethnic community for those willing to try something different. Any number of real estate investors are angling to convert run-down space into something grander — a hotel, a shopping mall. Gourmet bakeries and specialty restaurants are winning a prosperous clientele.

The Chinese are secretive. They prefer not to discuss how much they have. Some operate through front companies, so no one will know that their dollars are involved. Nonetheless, over the years, it has become apparent who some of the money people are, and the differing paths they took to their personal mountains of gold.

Snagging Real Estate

Joseph Chu's name scarcely ever turns up in print. Ask to photograph him, and he begs off. And though he could afford many of them, he chooses not to keep his own office. But he is one of the high citizens of Chinatown. The other day at Eastbank, a

community bank where his son Alexander is chief executive, Mr. Chu sat still for a bit and gave a rare glimpse of a life spent making money.

After his initial trip here and swift retreat, Mr. Chu returned to work as a personnel clerk at the United Nations. At the same time, he represented a group of Hong Kong friends who wanted to invest in real estate.

Mr. Chu soon fell in with Irving Raber, one of the few brokers familiar with the community. Mr. Raber, an exception to the prevailing rule that only the Chinese operate in Chinatown, had drifted into Chinatown real estate in 1933 and is still the biggest manager of property there. He took some plunges with the young Mr. Chu in his maiden ventures, and to this day manages all of Mr. Chu's buildings. "The Chinese are great buyers," Mr. Raber says. "They'd rather have bricks than dollars."

Working with Mr. Raber, Mr. Chu first looked to Brooklyn, where he bought the mammoth St. George Hotel and tried to convert it to apartments. He failed and wound up losing money. Soured, he trained his sights back on Chinatown, where he quickly developed a winner's aura.

With Mr. Raber's help, he snagged five buildings clustered around Chatham Square in the early 1970's for about \$500,000; they were sold a year or two later for a handsome profit. "We bought all the good corners, like Mott and Canal," Mr. Chu said. "We bought and sold, bought and sold." As his riches grew, Mr. Chu increasingly bought buildings on his own.

Now, even though brokers report that building prices keep escalating, Mr. Chu has become inactive in Chinatown speculation. "The price is too high," he said. "How can you buy for \$1 million and no return?" Noting that many of the buyers are from Hong Kong, he added, "They want to get their money out. So they don't care if there's no return."

Mr. Chu has stepped into Flushing, Queens, where the numbers make more sense. Two years ago, he was part of a group that acquired an empty Korvettes store on Kissena Boulevard and transformed it into Flushing Plaza, a complex that combines apartments and offices.

Mr. Chu is still keen to fulfill a long-time vision for Chinatown. He owns land off the Bowery that houses the Canal Arcade, a sprawl of 33 stores. One of his adjacent tenants is the Silver Palace, Chinatown's largest restaurant. Mr. Chu wants to build a 400-room, \$40 million hotel on the site. Standing in his way are the lengthy leases his tenants hold.

He says he has interested a number of investors and has had talks with

Holiday Inn as a possible operator. But he has not yet freed the land. "I am waiting," he said. "I am trying."

The heir apparent to the Chu empire, Alexander Chu, is a reed of a man who studied urban design at Harvard and got a law degree at Fordham. He practiced law for six years before forming Eastbank.

Banking is considered glamorous by the Chinese, and new lending institutions keep springing up, despite the failure of the Golden Pacific National Bank last summer. Roughly 20 banks now handle the money of Chinatown.

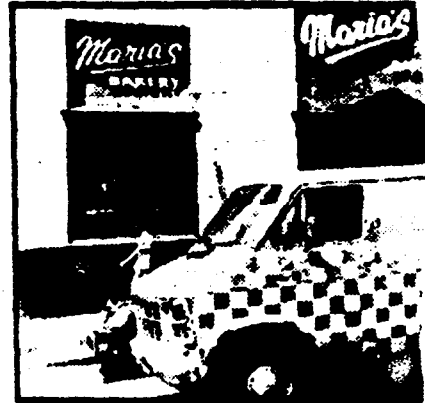
The younger Chu is also nurturing real estate deals of his own. He recently bought raw acreage in Hunterdon County, N.J., on which he hopes to build homes. Chinatown prices exasperate him, too.

He compares it to maintaining a wine cellar. "When you drink a bottle, you want to buy another one to put in its place," he said. "In Chinatown, you drink the bottle and you can't replace it. Because you can't afford it."

Selling Dim Sum

Ming Chan cut hair. He was a barber.

In 1962, when he was in his early 20's, he came here from Canton, where his father, aunt and grandfa-



ther were opera performers. Mr. Chan, as a youngster, sang in the opera, too; he carries pictures of himself on stage, looking very strange in fanciful costumes and headgear.

When he arrived here, his eye settled on the restaurant business. Mr. Chan wanted to introduce the Cantonese specialty known as dim sum — steamed and stuffed buns, fried dumplings, chicken wrapped in lotus leaves and other finger foods, all shuttled on heated trolleys so diners can pick what whets their appetite.

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What's more, usually gone in the restaurant business in Chinatown, you have to please the American palate — and that would take time. So Mr. Chan toiled at various restaurants, learning the ropes. To make ends meet, he clipped hair.

He acquired a wife, Grace, who had come here in 1963. She had multiple occupations: she sold souvenirs at the World's Fair, she was a radio announcer for the Chinese Broadcasting Corporation, she rang up checks in Chinatown restaurants.

In 1971, using savings from Mr. Chan's family and some friends, the couple opened their own dim sum restaurant on the Bowery. The establishment was called H.S.F., from the Chinese phrase "Hee Seung Fung," meaning "happy reunion."

The Chinese immigrant population had ballooned by then, and business was brisk right away. Before long, H.S.F. was one of Chinatown's biggest hits. In 1978, a second restaurant opened in Kip's Bay, and in 1980, a third H.S.F. went up in tony Bridgehampton, L.I., where the Chans own a weekend house. A fourth just opened in midtown Manhattan.

The Chans related all this over the inevitable cups of tea at the original H.S.F. restaurant. Mr. Chan's English is ragged, so his wife did most of the talking.

One of their ventures, she said, was a total bust. In 1979, they tried to take H.S.F. nationwide through franchising: they hoped to have dim sum fast-food eateries dotting the country. But the Chans badly misjudged the time and money necessary to get each franchise off the ground. In 1981, with eight franchisees signed up, the whole idea dissolved. "That is a total failure for us," Mrs. Chan said. "We ran short of capital. For everybody, it was a bad investment."

After that fiasco, the Chans began speculating in Chinatown real estate, and, with friends, they have bought and sold a number of buildings. Grace Chan has even become a licensed real estate broker.

At the moment, the Chans are leading an 11-member investor group that is attempting to make splendor out of rubble. There is room to build something under the Manhattan Bridge across from the Bowery. Nothing is there, yet it borders on the busy thoroughfares of Chinatown. Small wonder, then, that despite the overpaid hunder, investors have wished to develop it. Some came and pondered a parking lot. Others thought of apartments. But they left.

The Chans' project is the East Broadway Mall, which would be the biggest mall in Chinatown. The venture would cost in excess of \$4 million. "We are at the stage of signing some of the leases," Mrs. Chan said. "Construction will start after we get all the approvals. Hopefully, we break ground in July."

Factories and Fashions

When a guest enters the musty Lafayette Street office of Hung Luk, the manager at John Lam's Fashion Group, the eye settles on the dresses dangling on the rack next to the door and the clothes piled on the filing cabinets. Fabric swatches lie on Hung Luk's desk. Sewing has made John Lam's fortune.

Now 34, John Lam came here from Hong Kong 17 years ago with his parents, who were small merchants in the handbag and accessory business. He worked in garment factories, and then, with some savings of his father's, he started his own factory in 1971. At the time, Chinatown garment factories trafficked almost exclusively in budget clothing. Mr. Lam decided to turn out moderate- and higher-priced garments. The idea clicked, and Mr. Lam opened more factories. His sisters worked as supervisors. His brother and his parents helped manage the plants.

"Down here, it's really a case of looking for your niche at the right time," Mr. Luk said. "When John got into apparel, there was a demand for quality garments and so he picked the right time."

The empire has grown to 15 factories, employing 1,200 workers. They do sewing for such companies as Evan Picone, Leslie Fay and Liz Claiborne, ringing up some \$40 million worth of business a year. In recent times, though, the Chinatown factories, which pay union wages of \$5 or \$6 an hour, have come under fierce pressure from lower-priced overseas labor and from the wild real estate speculation in Chinatown, which has made factory space very costly. Mr. Lam's operations are no exception.

"We're looking right now to move some factories, because the leases are coming up," Mr. Luk said. "Rents are going to triple what they were four or five years ago." Some garment executives figure that in time many of the factories will be driven to other boroughs and to Long Island and New Jersey.

"We're O.K., but we're not growing," Mr. Luk said. "I think the future growth of our business will be if

the retailers come straight to us as a place to source goods and not go through the designers. The Limited is going in that direction."

Mr. Lam, though, has a mix of other businesses to keep the fires burning. His Shanghai cousins got him into silk, and his wife, Winnie, presides over their stable trading company, the Silk Dragon. Fibers from China are woven in Hong Kong, then sold as finished garments in this country. There is Mr. Lam's own higher-priced Silk Dragon line of blouses, skirts, pants and dresses, in addition to the private label business.

Like other Chinatown money people, Mr. Lam has been diversifying into real estate and banking. With various partners, he has bought several buildings. He is also one of the stockholders, along with the Chus, in Eastbank. Money in Chinatown often bumps into itself.

An Eye for Sweets

Maria Lee rarely appears in Chinatown. People think of her, though, when they eat. Ah, the butter egg rolls. The mango cream cakes. She is the Chinese pastry queen.

You get these goodies at one of Maria's bakeries. Five of them have opened in New York in the last two years. Each mimics the others: There is an orange awning outside and the simple name "Maria's."

In Hong Kong, where she lives, Mrs. Lee is omnipresent. At the age of 58 she is a multimillionaire from her Hong Kong empire of 62 bakeries and fast-food establishments, catering services, kitchenware, television programs, cooking school and a monthly women's journal. The daughter of a Chinese cookbook writer, her reputation as a cook spread when she got her own show on Chinese television. Looking to cash in on her fame, she began opening bakeries and has never stopped.

In New York, her partner is Danny Li, a man of 50 with a wise, puckish face. His offices are in the basement of a nondescript building on Canal Street. When guests drop by, someone is dispatched across the street to Maria's bakery for sweets.

Mr. Li had been an opera manager in Hong Kong, when he decided to come here in 1970. He worked in a garment factory, saved up, and opened his own sportswear factory. Soon there was a second factory. The businesses did well, but there were always aggravations. His wife, in particular, suffered from nervousness. Twice she had miscarriages. Mr. Li, wanting to father a child, concluded that the demon was the factories. So he sold them in the late 1970's and returned to Hong Kong, where he rejoined the opera for three years. Sure enough, Mrs. Li gave birth to a healthy girl.

WHAT BENEFITS THE CENSUS CAN BRING TO YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY

(Keynote address, Flushing, N.Y. June 11, 1989)
by Professor Betty Lee Sung, City College of New York

I am honored to be invited by five community leaders of Queens, Messrs. Franco Kwan, Henry Cheng, Jeffrey Chen, Paul Wu, and Mrs. Florence Tse, to be your keynote speaker for this census forum. I will speak on the topic "What Benefits the Census Can Bring to You and Your Community." Before I address this topic, I'd like to take a few minutes to reflect on the earth-shaking events that have taken place in China the last several days.

Everyone throughout the civilized world has recoiled in horror at the brutal suppression of the Chinese people's yearning for freedom and democracy by guns and tanks. Those of us of Chinese descent are especially grieved for our brothers and sisters in China. Just as we thought that China was finally emerging from more than 50 years of warfare starting with the Sino-Japanese War, World War II, the Communist Revolution, then the Cultural Revolution -- just as China was beginning to enjoy a little bit of peace and stability, this tragic turn of events happened. And once again, the people of China are caught up in the throes of gun fire and unrest. How our hearts bleed for several generations of Chinese people who have lived all their lives under wartime conditions. How our hearts ache for those who have never known freedom or justice.

We in the United States enjoy a priceless heritage of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, liberty, justice, and civil rights. We accept the peaceful transfer of governmental power without military might. We enjoy economic opportunities and a comparatively high standard of living. Americans are truly blessed, and when I see the suffering of the Chinese people on the television screen, I say a silent prayer of gratitude that I live in this great country.

Over the past few days, we have witnessed how thousands are willing to die for democracy. They were willing to fast to death. They stood in front of tanks. They form human barriers against overwhelming military force. Hundreds and perhaps thousands died calling for democracy. Yet in this country, many of us take what we have for granted. Democracy entails civic responsibility, and that takes me to my topic today.

Every ten years, the government counts its people so that it can put its democratic process into effect. The number of representatives that we send to Congress and to the State and local governments are based upon headcount. If you are not

counted, you are not represented. You have given up your voice and your opinion in the democratic process. You have thrown away what the Chinese in Beijing are willing to die for.

Next year, in 1990, on April 1st, you are going to get a census form to fill out. I know many Chinese people tend to throw the form away. Either they do not understand what the census is about or they are wary about the government asking questions. Remember, this is the USA and the census information is confidential. No one can get at that information except yourself or until 72 years later. If you do not understand, take the form to special places set up to help you. If you are not counted you will be underrepresented. If too many do not fill out the forms, then we may lose a representative at all levels of government. Remember democracy in this country is representative government. A majority vote carries. If you have one less representative, you have one less vote.

Numbers count. Numbers speak. If there are few of us, politicians and government will ignore us. In spite of the fact that our numbers are increasing rapidly and we are here, if you are not counted in the census, officially you do not exist. You have caused an Asian American undercount, which may result in the loss of many government benefits.

For example, the allocation of monies for government services is based upon population count. These monies may be federal, state, or local monies. Let us say your neighborhood school is terribly overcrowded and you need more schools. The state government will look at the census and base its decision upon the number of school-age children in that district. If you and many others like you weren't counted, the government will not build you the additional school facilities because your need was not registered through the census. Are good schools an important benefit to you? You won't get them if you are not counted.

Governments allocate funds for low-cost housing, for employment programs, for social services to the elderly and handicapped, for health programs, and many others. Funds are allocated based upon headcount and need. If there are few elderly, hospitals and nursing homes funds may be cut back or cut out, and you will lose these facilities. If the number of people in your neighborhood is small due to the fact that you and others like you were not counted, then your tax dollars will go to service areas where the population count is greater. Are health programs, employment programs, social services, hospitals important to you? Can you afford not to be counted?

Let us say you take the bus to work every morning, but the buses run only every half hour. Yet the buses are packed and you never get a seat. The reason may be that the bus company based

the frequency of bus runs on the population count in that area. The bus company went by the census data. It had no way of knowing that you weren't counted, so you are not going to get enough buses to service your area.

Companies, factories, retail stores all study the census data before locating in an area. They want to know if there are enough people to support their business or if there is a qualified labor pool that can be hired for the jobs. A high tech company will ascertain the presence of highly educated, skilled personnel. A hardware store will make sure that there is a large number of private homeowners. Information like this is obtained from the census survey which not only provides headcount but many social and economic characteristics as well. If you aren't counted, businesses or plants may not even consider locating in your town or city, and you may lose out on employment opportunities.

At a later date, you may be required to prove your presence in the United States for immigration purposes or for genealogical research. For example, the amnesty provision of the 1986 immigration act required proof of residence in the United States in 1982. If you had entered the country illegally, but were here since 1982, you could apply for legal status provided you could prove you were here at that time. If you were here and counted in the 1980 census, you would have proof of residence.

Seventy-two years after the 1990 census, the data comes into the public domain and is available to researchers or descendants who want to trace their ancestry. At the moment, the 1910 census is open. For example, I am researching the early history of New York's Chinatown, and I am going back to the censuses of 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900. In this way, we can recreate our history, and descendants who want to trace their ancestry can do so.

Have I given you enough specific benefits to convince you that you should not ignore the census form when it comes next year? As a legal requirement, you must fill it out. As a resident or citizen of this great democracy, it is a privilege and civic duty. What others fight and die for, you have at hand. The benefits to you and your community are many. If you waste the opportunity, you will have to wait another ten years. During this time, you will be the loser. So make sure you are counted and make sure your relatives, friends and neighbors are counted as well.

DISCLAIMER FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF THE 1990 DECENNIAL CENSUS REPORT SERIES, REPORTS # 1- 24 (EV -01 THROUGH EV -29)

Disclaimer: This is the final report for one of the 29 independent Joint Statistical Agreement projects which conducted an ethnographic evaluation of the behavioral causes of undercount. All 29 studies followed common methodological guidelines. This report is based on an analysis of the results of a match between the author(s)' Alternative Enumeration to data from the 1990 Decennial Census forms for the same site. Each ethnographic site contained about 100 housing units. Information was compiled from census forms that were recovered through October 10, 1990. The data on which this report is based should be considered preliminary for several reasons: Between October 10, 1990 and December 31, 1990, additional census forms MAY have been added to or deleted from the official enumeration of the site as a result of coverage improvement operations, local review, or other late census operations. Differences between October 10, 1990 and final census results as reported on the Unedited Detail File were incorporated in later analyses of data from this site. The consistency of the authors' coding of data has not been fully verified. Hypothesis tests and other analyses are original to the author. Therefore, the quantitative results contained in this final JSA report may differ from later reports issued by Census Bureau Staff referring to the same site.

The exact location of the study area and the names of persons and addresses enumerated by the independent researchers and in the 1990 Decennial Census are Census confidential and cannot be revealed until the year 2062. The researchers who participated in this study were Special Sworn Employees (SSE) or staff of the Census Bureau.

To request copies of this report, contact Statistical Research Division, Room 3133-4, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20033.