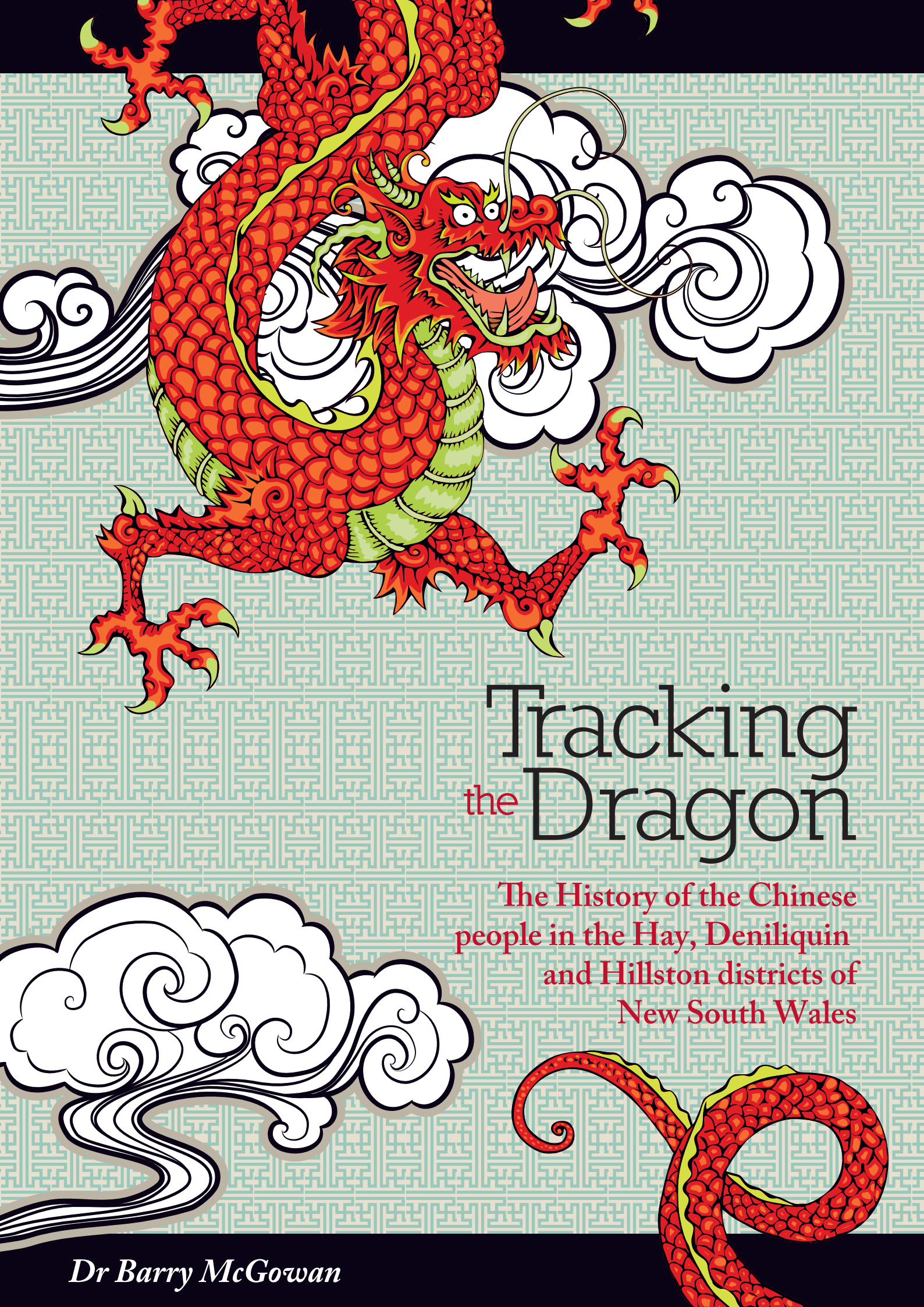

Tracking the Dragon

The History of the Chinese people in the Hay, Deniliquin and Hillston districts of New South Wales

Dr Barry McGowan

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Wagga Wagga
Museum of the Riverina

NSW GOVERNMENT Arts NSW

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Designer: Suz Keough

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Published by the Museum of the Riverina

The Museum of the Riverina is part of Wagga Wagga City Council's Cultural Services Division

Contents

Introduction

This essay complements 'Tracking the Dragon: A History of the Chinese in the Riverina', exhibited by the Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga, NSW, from December 2010 to March 2011. The exhibition was funded by the Wagga Wagga City Council, Arts NSW and the NSW Migration Heritage Centre. Work commenced in November 2008 with the task of research, artefact and photographic assemblage, and the writing of the catalogue and captions undertaken by Dr Barry McGowan, a Canberra-based historian, heritage consultant and Visiting Fellow at the ANU School of Archaeology and Anthropology. Geographically, the scope of the exhibition was very broad; it stretched from Hillston, Booligal and Balranald in the west, to Temora in the north, Tumut and Adelong to the east, and south to the Murray River. The time span was also very broad; from 1850 to the present day, with the themes illustrating all aspects of Chinese life in the region, such as work, leisure, family life, religion and race relationships. The exhibition travelled to Albury in May 2011. This essay is one of a series outlining the lives of the Chinese people in selected Riverina districts.

From the outset, it should be noted that there is some overlap between the separate regional essays. Put simply, the Chinese people were very mobile, readily moving to where employment and kinship could be found. Intermarriage was also very common, and the interconnectedness between different Chinese families is striking. Hence Hay's Chinese history will include references to families and businesses in Wagga Wagga, Junee, Narrandera and Tumut, to name but four towns. For some districts the sources are silent over certain time periods, as there are often gaps in the press reports. In these instances, examples of incidents, functions and institutions from other districts will be used to give a broader picture of Chinese life in the Riverina.

Significance and Provenance

The first known mention of Chinese people in the Riverina was in the early 1850s, though some may have arrived in the late 1840s. These early arrivals came as indentured labourers. They were indentured in Amoy (Xiamen), China by signing a contract which set out their terms of service and period of indenture; five years, and specified the type of work to be done. Shepherding was specifically mentioned. The contracts were legally enforceable under the *Master and Servants Act*, which was heavily weighted in the employer's favour, many of whom were also magistrates.

However, it was not until the mid-1860s that the Chinese people assumed a more visible profile in the Riverina, their numbers growing rapidly with the spread of settlement, farming and pastoralism north of the Murray River and out west to the arid fringes of New South Wales (NSW). Their presence was unique and significant, for they were not, as in so many other parts of Australia, dependent on gold mining (apart from Black Range near Albury and Adelong in the late 1850s and early 1860s), but on agriculture and pastoralism. The significance of this population shift can be gauged by the wide range of occupations that the men had and the length of time they stayed in the region. They were not sojourners, but rather settlers and pioneers, and a vital part of the community fabric, with many of their descendants living in the region today.

Meaningful population figures are difficult to obtain, for the peak numbers did not coincide with the Census dates, and it was a moving population, with many men shifting between the towns and pastoral stations. But a combination of Census results and other reports gives some pointers. In the 1871 Census the total Chinese population in the region was 777, with the largest concentrations near Tumut and Albury. Only 150 Chinese lived in the five main Riverina towns of Albury, Deniliquin, Hay, Narrandera and Wagga Wagga . In an 1878 report a total of 1,466 Chinese people were recorded in the towns and villages of the Riverina District. A subsequent report on Chinese camps in the Riverina prepared by both Sub-Inspector Martin Brennan and a prominent Chinese entrepreneur, Mei Quong Tart, recorded 869 Chinese as residents or frequent visitors to the Chinese camps in the five main Riverina towns in 1883, an increase of 298, or 34 per cent, on the 1878 total for these towns. Using a simple method of extrapolation, the total Chinese population in the Riverina in 1883 could have been about 2,200. And this figure may well be an understatement, for many Chinese lived on the pastoral stations, which were akin to small villages. A comparison with the predominantly rural Cairns, Atherton and Innisfail districts in North Queensland is instructive. The Chinese arrivals in these districts post-dated the Chinese presence in the Riverina, and by 1901 the Chinese population was 2,550.[1] The only other comparable region in NSW was the New England district, which in 1878 had a Chinese population of 2,134. However, in distinct contrast to the Riverina, over 90 per cent of the Chinese men in New England were miners.[2]

Between 1878 and 1883, Narrandera and Wagga Wagga were the key destinations for the Chinese, the Chinese population of Narrandera leaping from a mere 27 to 303 and Wagga's from 123 to194.

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[1] 1871 Census, *Votes and Proceedings*, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Vol.2, 1872, pp.324-429; Edmund Fosebery, 'Chinese (Information Respecting, Residents in the Colony) *Votes and Proceedings*, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1878-1879, Sydney, pp.469-473; Sub-Inspector Martin Brennan, "Chinese Camps', *Votes and Proceedings*, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1883-1884, Vol 2, pp.659-666; Cathie May, *Topsawyers: The Chinese in Cairns*, Studies in North Queensland History, No.6, James Cook University, Townsville, p.14.

[2] Fosebery, Chinese (Information Respecting, Residents in the Colony, 1878), pp.469-473.

The Riverina district of New South Wales, Australia showing some major pastoral properties.
Barry McGowan and Clive Hilliker, Australian National University

Between these two years, the Hay population fell from 113 to 100, and the Deniliquin population from 128 to 113. But in the Hay and Deniliquin area many more Chinese lived on the pastoral stations, so these figures may be an understatement. In 1878, Jerilderie had 83 Chinese residents, Booligal 55, Darlington Point, 40, Balranald and Maude 34 each, and Hillston 28. Hay's Chinese population was relatively stable over the next two decades, in contrast to many other towns, including Deniliquin and Hillston. For instance, in the 1891 Census, the Chinese population of Hay was 109 (including only one Chinese woman); the Chinese population of Hillston was 32; and Deniliquin, 41. In 1901 Hay still had 107 Chinese people, but Hillston had only 18 Chinese and Deniliquin, 51. An important caveat with the Census figures, however, is that they refer to country of birth and therefore exclude children born to Chinese or European Chinese families in Hay or elsewhere in Australia. This is an important qualification, for several Chinese or part Chinese families lived at Hay in the 1890s and early 1900s.[3]

The number of Chinese people in the Riverina may not seem large but it must be remembered that this was rural and outback Australia, not Melbourne or Sydney, or for that matter Bendigo or Ballarat.[4] However, proportionally Chinese men constituted a very large percentage of the adult male population in the Riverina towns. The late historian, Geoffrey Buxton, estimated that the presence of 300 adult male

[3] Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', 1883, p.659-666;1871 Census, pp.324-429; Fosebery, 'Chinese (Information Respecting, Residents in the Colony, 1878, pp.469-473; *Eleventh Census, New South Wales, Taken on the night of the 5th April 1891*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1894, pp.435-498; *Results of a Census of New South Wales, taken on the night of the 31st March, 1901,* Government Printer, Sydney, 1904, pp.265-354.

[4] C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1975, pp.28–33.

Chinese in a town such as Narrandera with a total population in the early 1880s of 1400 meant that every second man in town was Chinese.[5] The Chinese were not the only immigrant or non-European group in the Riverina. Large populations of Aboriginal people lived, like the Chinese people, on the fringe of the towns or on the pastoral stations, and people from other ethnic backgrounds included Indian hawkers and German settlers. This large and varied population, each with its own cultural traditions, gave a distinct multi-cultural flavour to the Riverina.

But who were these Chinese immigrants; where did they come from and why? Almost all Chinese immigrants to NSW were from Guangdong Province in southern China, in the area surrounding the Pearl River delta, and abutting present day Hong Kong. They were predominantly from the SzeYap (See Yap) district (counties of Kaiping, Xinhui, Taishan and Enping), although the Sam Yap district (counties of Nanhai, Panyu and Shunde) and Zhongshan, Gaoyao and Gaoming counties also contributed emigrants. The vast majority of the Sze Yap people in Victoria came from only two of its counties (Xinhui and Taishan), but in NSW there was a far wider representation of Guangdong districts.[6] According to historian Michael Williams, the homogeneity of the population narrowed over time, for it was influenced by those who had successfully established business and support mechanisms, and who could therefore sponsor and/or give credit to fellow district members.[7] These differences notwithstanding, overall the population was relatively homogeneous. In overseas countries such as the USA many more Chinese provinces were represented and the scope for fragmentation and division within these migrant communities was much greater.[8] It was also an overwhelmingly male population. As Williams has remarked, the primary role for a Chinese woman in marriage was not to care for her husband but to support his parents, this attitude virtually guaranteeing that Chinese emigration before the 20th century was almost exclusively male. In 1861 there were two Chinese women compared to 12,968 men in the colony and in 1881 just 64 to 10,141. The ratio had improved somewhat by 1901 when there were 675 Chinese women to 10,590 men, but it was still an overwhelmingly male society.[9]

A combination of powerful push and pull factors lead to an unprecedented rise in Chinese migration to other parts of Asia, the Americas and Australia in the mid to late 19th century, and it was no coincidence that the principal source of migrants was Guangdong Province, and in particular the Sze Yap district. The delta area was the heartland of the province, a collection of islands, ever changing natural channels and man-made canals, enormously fertile and productive, but also with an extraordinary population density. And parts of the Sze Yap District (in particular Taishan County) were hilly, rocky and barren. To compound these natural pressures were a series of man-made disasters.

For many centuries the city of Canton (Guangzhou) had been exposed to outside influences through trade and commerce, and was notorious for its independence. Fierce opposition to Manchu rule saw the formation of secret societies pledged to their overthrow, and the countryside devastated by a succession of highly disruptive events such as uprisings by clan and secret society members, feuds,

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[5] Geoffrey Buxton, *The Riverina, 1861-1891*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, p.224.

[6] Michael Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW: A Thematic History*, report for the NSW Heritage Office, unpublished, September 1999, pp.9-14; Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties. Chinese in early Victoria*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1982, pp.16-40; Arthur Huck, *The Chinese in Australia*, Longmans, Croydon, Victoria, 1968, p.16; Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions. The Chinese in the Rocks, 1890-1930*, Monash Publications in History, Melbourne, 1999, pp.88-91.

[7] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.12, 22, 23.

[8] Cai, Shaoqing, 'On the Overseas Chinese Secret Societies of Australia', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 4, 1, June 2002, pp.41-42.

[9] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.10; Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads: The Chinese in Regional New South Wales 1850-1950*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 2004, pp.55-56.

Map showing where the majority of Chinese in this essay originated from in Guangdong Province and where they came to in Australia.
Barry McGowan and Clive Hilliker, Australian National University

the Opium Wars, and the Taiping rebellion and its fierce suppression.[10] The rebellion was the most bloody civil war in human history, and in Guangdong Province alone about one million people died.[11] As historian Cai Shaoqing has commented, many Chinese immigrants were sympathetic to these rebellions and came to Australia, not only to make their fortune, but to flee persecution.[12]

Perhaps there is no better illustration of the importance of these political pressures than the near fatal circumstances of the father of Junee businessman, Clarrie Leslie. Clarrie's father entered Australia under the assumed name of Phillip Chun. He had been a member of the 'One Hundred Days of Reform' movement, a failed national cultural, political and educational reform movement, which lasted from 11 June to 21 September 1898, and fled to Australia when, allegedly, the Dowager Empress (Tz'u-hsi or Cixi) tried to poison the reformers at a banquet, though more likely it was the other way around. The movement was headed by the young Guangxu Emperor (the Empress Dowager's nephew), but was strongly opposed by the Empress Dowager and her conservative supporters, many of whom were on the Grand Council. According to historian Peter Zarrow the Guangxu Emperor issued a stream of decrees and edicts, but they were opposed by many who saw them as a threat to their own status and livelihood, and the bureaucracy made few, if any, efforts to implement them. By the summer of 1898 the Guangxu Emperor had begun firing important officials and replacing them with his own men. The Empress Dowager began to fear for her own position and probably believed court rumours of a plot to overthrow the Manchus. She staged a counter coup, putting the Guangxu Emperor under house arrest, cashiering his appointed officials, revoking almost all the reforms and executing six reformers without trial. According to Zarrow many more would have been killed, but some escaped with the

[10] Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter Sweet Soil. The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986, pp.7-31; Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America*, Penguin Books, New York, 2004, pp.1-19; Cronin, *Colonial Casualties*, pp.16-40; Haiming Liu, 'The social origins of early Chinese immigrants: a revisionist perspective', in Susie Lan Cassell, *The Chinese in America. A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennium*, AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, 2002, pp.21-36.

[11] Frederic Wakeman Jr, *Strangers at the Gate. Social Disorder in South China 1839-1861*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles,1997, pp.149-156.

[12] Cai, 'On the Overseas Chinese Secret Societies of Australia', pp.35-37.

help of the foreign legations, and perhaps Clarrie Leslie's father was one of these men.[13]

As much of the foregoing suggests, the new migrants were not coolies, but rather free or semi-free, and many had strong democratic political aspirations. Most entered the Australian colonies on the credit-ticket system, sponsored by merchants in Hong Kong and Australia or family and lineage associations, to whom they were indebted for their passage. Headmen or bosses, most likely clan members, in association with fraternal organisations such as native place associations or secret societies, monitored the migrants until their debt was paid.[14] After the debt was paid they were free to go where they pleased. As Haiming Lui, an American historian, has pointed out, Guangdong Province was characterised by a diversified economy, the prevalence of lineage organisations and a competitive social environment. The rural population was skilled in a wide variety of occupations, most migrants belonging to the middle or lower middle social classes, rather than the lowest. Most were also literate, for education was highly valued. Going to America and Australia was a 'rationale choice' for they were a 'highly motivated people'.[15]

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[13] *Junee Southern Cross*, 4 November 1999; Peter Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution 1895-1949*; RoutledgeCurzon, New York, 2005, pp.13-29; Rebecca E. Karl and Peter Zarrow (eds), *Rethinking the 1898 reform period: political and cultural change in late Qing China*, Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge, Massachussets, 2002; Luke S.K. Kwong, *Mosaic of the hundred days: personalities, politics, and ideas of 1898*, Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University. Cambridge, Massachussets, 1984.

[14] Lindsay Smith, 'Hidden Dragons. The archaeology of mid-to late-nineteenth-century Chinese communities in south-eastern New South Wales', PhD, ANU, 2006; 'Cold Hard Cash, a study of Chinese ethnicity and archaeology at Kiandra, New South Wales', MA, ANU, 1988, p.40; Jill Barnard, Mary Sheehan, 'The Chinese discovery of gold and settlement in Ararat', National Estate Program Grant No. 542, 1991, pp.11-12. Instances of exploitation and kidnapping to destinations in South America and Cuba are recounted in Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity. A Chinese Merchant Elite in Colonial Hong Kong*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 2003, pp.101-113; Report of the Select Committee on the Subject of Chinese Immigration, quoted in C.M.H. Clark (ed), *Select Documents in Australian History*, Vol. III, Angus & Robertson, Melbourne, 1977, pp.69-70.

[15] Haiming Liu, 'The social origins of early Chinese immigrants', pp.21-36.

Work

INDENTURED LABOURERS

The first Chinese people to arrive in any number in Australia came as indentured labourers in 1847. According to historian, Maxine Darnell, the number of indentured labourers would reach 3,500 over the next six years. Their arrival in Australia was the culmination of many years of agitation by the larger pastoralists in response to the difficulties of obtaining free labour on the stations, the loss of convict labour and the refusal of the Indian Government to allow Indian labour to be contracted to the colony. The 19th century saw a mass movement of thousands of Chinese under contract to countries such as Peru, Cuba and the British Caribbean. By contrast, the numbers going to NSW were very small. However, as Darnell has pointed out, the use of Chinese indentured labour was important in colonial history as it represented the period between the end of the convict period and the beginning of 'supremacy of free labour'. Contracts with the Chinese were very specific in stating the type of work, such as shepherding. Legislative amendments to the *Master and Servants Act* in 1847 meant that contracts with Chinese labourers were enforceable, but the Act was weighted heavily in the employer's favour. Labourers could be fined for unacceptable behaviour, and were often in debt through the purchase of goods from station stores at inflated prices. The fact that many of the magistrates were drawn from the ranks of the squatters served to increase this imbalance, as did the lack of provision in the contracts for medicines, sick leave and a suit of clothes for the passage out, unlike the contracts applying to labourers going to Peru and the West Indies. Rice was often precluded from the rations, and the *Vagrancy Act* worked alongside the *Master and Servants Act* to ensure that any wandering labourers, not just Chinese, could be forced back into the work-force.[16]

In the Riverina, some indentured Chinese worked on pastoral properties, such as William McLeay's Kerarbury station near present day Darlington Point, and at properties owned by pastoralists such as John Peter, owner of Gumly Gumly Station. The circumstances surrounding the importation of Chinese indentured labour into Australia were often controversial, and perhaps nowhere more so than in McLeay's case. The arrival of McLeay's Chinese labourers in Goulburn in March 1852 on their way to Wagga Wagga, and from thence to his property, caused a major scandal. John Stewart, a horse driver in the employ of McLeay, was charged with assaulting Loo Suck (or Laoo Seuh?), who was one of a group of 30 Chinese engaged by McLeay. The Chinese men were despatched from Sydney under the charge of Stewart. After leaving Sydney Loo Suck accidentally scalded his foot with hot water, which meant he had difficulty walking and keeping up with the party. Stewart beat him and when that cruel act did not inspire Loo Suck to greater endeavours, tied him to the dray with hobbles, dragging him along the road. In addition, for three days prior to their arrival in Goulburn, the men had lived on reduced rations, a pint pot of flour being the only allowance for every three men. As soon as they reached Goulburn, the party split up and went to different houses asking for food, Stewart repairing to a public house where he became drunk. He was afterwards found by the Chinese men, who were about to commit 'summary justice' on him when a Captain Howell intervened and persuaded Stewart to go to a butcher and baker to get food. As Stewart was unknown in Goulburn and had no order from McLeay the request was refused. The men were, however, later fed by other means. Subsequently, three men,

[16] Maxine Darnell, 'Law and the Regulation of Life: The Case of Indentured Chinese Labourers', in *The Overseas Chinese in Australasia: History, Settlement and Interactions*, Henry Chan, Ann Curthoys, and Nora Chiang (eds), National Taiwan University and Australian National University, Canberra, 2001. pp.54–69.

including Loo Suck, made their way to a place owned by a Mr Thorn, and when found later by McLeay stated that they had no intention of continuing the journey to Wagga Wagga. Another five absconded to Captain Edenborough's property; their fate is unknown. The three men were charged by McLeay under the *Master and Servant's Act* and brought before the Goulburn Bench. They were assisted in court by a Chinese man, Zuan Sing, a Christian convert (baptised into the Roman Catholic faith by Rev. McGinnis from Yass), who had been in the colony for three years, and could read and translate Chinese into English fluently. They were also assisted by a lawyer named Hamilton Walsh, who viewed his task as a 'labour of love'. It was noted by a correspondent that it was unusual for the case to be investigated in Goulburn as the parties did not reside in the district. However, because of the state of his feet Loo Suck could not travel to Wagga Wagga, and even if he did go, he would have been without an attorney or interpreter and before a bench of magistrates, the main members of which were now the employers of the men.[17]

During the court proceedings it transpired that there were important discrepancies between the agreements signed in Amoy and those signed in Sydney. Both sets of agreements provided for a period of servitude of 5 years at 12s a month. However, the Chinese agreement stated that sugar was to be provided, but no mention of this was found in the English contracts, a discrepancy which should have nullified the contracts. Furthermore, on their arrival in Sydney they were not given a translation of the English version of the agreements, which were signed by another Chinese man, one signature making do for all. Neither did the agreements have the signature of their prospective employer, Robert Campbell, which meant that if no work could be found for the men then they could be turned away to starve.[18]

McLeay admitted to the shameful treatment by Stewart and agreed to provide the men with the sugar. However, the three men were unmoved, and continued to refuse to go to Wagga, stating that they were afraid of being treated badly again. One of the men, Le Swa (or Le Soy?), said that he had been told in Sydney that he had only one day of travel to come to McLeay's property. The men were reminded by the Bench that if they refused to proceed to Wagga Wagga then they would be sent to gaol for two months and still have to serve out their period of indenture. One version has it that all three men indicated that they would rather cut their throats or in some other way do away with themselves than go up country again. Another version has only one of the men, Yass Pian, uttering intentions of self harm, stating that he would rather cut himself in two than proceed to Wagga Wagga, and that if the going became too hard in gaol he would cut his throat. It also transpired in the proceedings that their hardships had begun well before their arrival by boat in Sydney. Of the 225 Chinese on the 137 day voyage out from Amoy, 13 died. They only had rice once a day instead of the three times a day agreed upon, and were 'shamefully beaten'. All three men refused to comply with the Bench's orders, and were duly sentenced, despite the injuries to Loo Suck and the above-mentioned discrepancies. The case against Stewart was withdrawn on the understanding that McLeay would proceed against him in Wagga Wagga.[19]

These incidents gave rise to an active correspondence with the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Writing on 8 May 1852 one writer stated that there was a strong 'preference for English labour' if it could be had, but the difficulties that the pastoralists had felt some 11 months ago were now 'far less than what was expected eleven months ago, and that a large share of this benefit must be allowed to the

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[17] *Goulburn Herald*, 24 February, 10 April 1852; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March, 12 April 1852.

[18] *Goulburn Herald*, 24 February, 10April 1852; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March, 12 April 1852.

[19] *Goulburn Herald*, 24 February, 10 April, 1852; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March, 12 April 1852.

1000 Chinese who during that time had been imported.'[20] In the same edition another writer stated that during the last few years, 'thanks to my Chinese', he had been a successful sheep farmer and with their help he was not afraid of the effect of the gold rushes on his farm. He hoped that they would

> continue to assist the prosperity of the colony by labouring for themselves then, or when they return home, thereby encourage more of their countrymen to come to the 'golden shores of Australia.

The editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* was less enthusiastic. On 22 April he refuted the charges of slave dealing brought by opponents of indentured labour and argued that there was as much fairness in the selection, shipment and conveyance of the Chinese as there was with immigrants from England. He also stated, however, that the 'employment of an inferior race of men as labourers is a great evil.', and that 'We need go no further than America for an example and a warning'. He considered that because of their 'ignorance of 'our language', customs, and laws, they become 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. Deprived of a wife and children the Chinese were

> in a worse position than the negro slave in America, who, though deprived of the blessing of personal freedom, has at least the solace of domestic ties to cheer his hours of rest.

On 24 April 1852 he was even more forthright, referring to the 'sordid traffic' in Chinese labour, the squatters having to turn to Chinese labour or be ruined. He considered their importation to be a 'grand mistake', for 'every Chinaman who sets his foot on these shores keeps out ten Englishmen'. He considered that 'the encouragement of Chinese immigration is tantamount to the discouragement of English immigration'.

McLeay's role in the use of indentured labour was to haunt him for several years, for in the lead up to the NSW Legislative Assembly elections in 1855 he was described as 'the great Coolie and Chinaman importer into the south the 'Fancy Man ' of that very pretty lot of "would-bes" - the Australian Club'. To what extent this opprobrium concerned or hindered him is unknown. But it does not seem to have had much effect on his career. A magistrate from 1841, he sat on the Wagga Wagga bench from 1847 and was a member for the Lachlan and Lower Darling in the Legislative Assembly 1856-58 and the Murrumbidgee 1859-74. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1877 and served on many Parliamentary committees. Over the years he built up large pastoral holdings in the colony, particularly in the Riverina, and owned a 16 hectare vineyard at Lake Albert near Wagga Wagga in the 1870s. He was also a patron of science, accepting the first presidency of the Linnean Society of NSW in 1862, and was an active and serious researcher in entomology, ichthyology, and other areas of zoology.[21]

Chu Yin Sum and Hing Gim, the grandfather and father respectively of William Shai Hee, a well known and respected storekeeper in Tumut in the 20th century, were also indentured labourers. According to William's wife, Chin See Shai Hee, they came out on the same boat as other men from the same village prior to the 1850s gold rushes, and along with 300 to 400 other Chinese men worked for the Victorian Government, building roads and railways; clearing rocks and trees and cutting sleepers. Their pay was low, about 2s 6d a week, but out of that they made enough to cover expenses and send some back to China, ensuring that young Willie obtained a good education. By the time William arrived in Australia in 1899, Hing Gim had opened a store in Tumut and Chu Yin Sum had returned to China.[22]

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[20] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 May 1852.

[21] *Goulburn Herald*, 3 February 1855; Michael Hoare and Martha Rutledge, 'Macleay, Sir William John (1820-1891) in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Volume 5, 1974 or http://adb.anu.edu.au.biography/macleay–sir-william-john-4125.

[22] Information from Chris Shai Hee and Jean Chin (née Shai Hee), February 2012; Chris Shai Hee, interview of Chin See, unpublished manuscript, March 1984.

GOLD MINERS

The gold rushes had profound consequences for the Australian colonies, many historians seeing them as one of the singularly most important events in Australian history, an event which reshaped the demographic, political and economic contours of the country.[23] The Chinese miners were integral to this success story, and because some of them eventually migrated to the Riverina, their involvement in this industry is recounted here in some detail. Over 18,000 Chinese people arrived in Victoria between 1851 and 1855, and a further 24,000 arrived over the next five years. The significance of this immigration flow can be measured against the population of Victoria, which on the eve of the gold rushes was only 77,000; three years later in 1854 it was 236,000.[24]

While Chinese miners also worked on the NSW goldfields, the main wave of immigrants did not arrive until 1858, over 10,000 arriving in that year compared to a few hundred the year before. This population surge was not a coincidence, but largely a reaction to punitive taxes and immigration restrictions imposed on Chinese immigrants in Victoria and South Australia, and the opportunities provided by a substantial reduction in the licence fees in NSW (now named the "Miner's Right") to ten shillings a year, one twelfth of what it had been. Armed with a Miner's Right, men could also pasture stock and obtain water supplies on Crown Land.[25] Their main destinations in the Riverina were the Black Range goldfields near Albury and Adelong. Elsewhere in southern NSW, they arrived in large numbers on the Braidwood, Kiandra and the Lambing Flat goldfields (near present day Young). The introduction of the *Chinese Immigration Regulation and Restriction Act*, following the Lambing Flat riots in 1860 and 1861, interrupted the flow of Chinese miners to NSW. It imposed a £10 poll tax, tonnage restrictions and prevented any Chinese person from becoming naturalised. However, by 1861, the main wave of Chinese immigrants into NSW had already arrived and many mining fields were soon to enter a period of decline because of the exhaustion of the more easily won alluvial deposits. The legislation was repealed in 1867.[26]

Most Chinese miners in the Riverina were located on the Adelong goldfields. Speaking of the Adelong miners in June 1860, a local correspondent stated that

> These industrious Mongolians that hang upon the skirts of European miners like jackals, seem to be reaping some reward for their incessant labours at the lower end of Golden Gully if we are to judge from the constant rattle of their cradles, the increased number that appear to be working, and the claims that they have taken up.[27]

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[23] C.M.H.Clark, *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900*, Vol.II, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1979, p.2; Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age. A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851-1861*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977, p.369; R.M. Crawford, Australia, Hutchinson & Co.,1963, London, p.117; Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1963.

[24] Cronin, *Colonial Casualties*, pp.135-149; Serle, *The Golden Age*, p.382.

[25] Serle, *The Golden Age*, pp.324-31. In 1855 an entry tax, poll tax and immigration restrictions were introduced into Victoria. The Chinese traffic was diverted through South Australia, but by 1857 this colony had also introduced immigration restrictions, and in Victoria a combined poll and residence tax and an entry tax on Chinese arriving overland were introduced. For NSW legislation see Barry McGowan, *Dust and Dreams, Mining Communities in Southern New South Wales*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2010, pp.29-30.

[26] Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred. Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979. pp.14-34.

[27] *Adelong Mining Journal and Tumut Express*, 25 June 1960.

Chinese gold mining cradle from Adelong, New South Wales.
Private collection

Soon the Chinese miners were using their new wealth to buy claims from the European miners, and obtaining all the valuable claims on the goldfield, the correspondent also stating that the Chinese were 'not half so bad as some people would have us believe, whilst their sobriety and cleanliness in this district are worthy of imitation'.[28] In October 1862, a correspondent spoke highly for the 'systematic way Chinamen have of working ground, by which they live like kings whilst Europeans are starving'.[29]

[28] *Wynyard Times,* 2 April, 5 October 1861.

[29] *Wynyard Times*, 14 March, 21 October 1862.

PASTORAL WORKERS

After the gold rushes the main occupations for the Chinese in the Riverina were in the pastoral sector. Chinese men were a vital source of labour for pastoralists, who used the services of Chinese contractors to engage large groups to ringbark trees and clear their properties of timber. Ringbarking involved cutting a continuous ring of chips around the trunk, which eventually led to the death of the tree, and avoided the work involved in cutting down trees and grubbing stumps immediately afterwards. It was very effective in improving grass growth. Generally, where ringbarking was practiced, up to double the number of stock could be carried. Scrubcutting and "suckering" were sequels to ringbarking and were considered the most expensive items, for the young tree suckers had to be cut annually for five to six years after ringbarking. Throughout the 1880s newspapers advertised thousands of acres of "ringing and suckering", almost all of which was done by the Chinese gangs.[30] A report in 1881 stated that 'perfect armies of Chinamen were going about ringbarking every tree at the rate of 9d per acre'. This work was not without controversy, the reporter commenting that squatters could regard ringbarking as improvements to their property, thus discouraging free selectors from going onto their land, as long as useful timber such as pine and ironbark was excluded. However, these exemptions were often ignored and the pastoralists accused of ringbarking indiscriminately.[31] The Chinese were also used for many other tasks on the pastoral stations, such as fencing, dam construction, wool washing, market gardening, shearing and cooking.

Details on the Chinese ringbarkers and pastoral workers are rare. However, George Gow, a station manager and later a stock agent, wrote a comprehensive account of Wong Gooey, one of the Narrandera contractors. Although no accounts are available of the Hay contractors their working methods would have been very similar.

> If a station owner wanted some ringing or scrubbing done he sent to an agent in Narrandera who, in turn, informed Wong Gooey. He would come out on his old grey horse, inspect the proposed contract and then start haggling for terms, usually asking very much more than he was really prepared to work for ... These contracts were sublet to a body of Chinese, who gave Gooey five per cent for organising the job. Sometimes he had several jobs going at once, extending into thousands and thousands of acres, and he would move to and fro inspecting them, but he never did any manual work himself. Europeans would perform all kinds of bush work ... but did not care for ringing and scrubbing; they called it "Chinamen's work", and it was usually left to the latter.[32]

> After making a deal he would return to Narrandera and interview Sam Yett, a Chinese storekeeper and financier, who supplied the rations and delivered the men on the job. It being a community matter all the men shared in the contract, tuckered and worked together as one man. Sam Yett would load up his two horse caravan, collect the men (sometimes as many as twenty), and all would take to the road, the baggage wagon bringing up the rear. As they generally walked along the road in single file, all about 12 to 20 feet apart, they were rather a peculiar sight. They yabbered away in a sort of sing-song, sometimes in a high voice, sometimes a low, so that they all appeared to be talking together.[33]

Gow remarked that

> Their dress was after the style of loose pyjamas, and their heads were adorned by large hats something

[30] Buxton, *The Riverina*, pp.247-248.

[31] *Riverine Grazier*, 11 June 1881.

[32] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, publisher unknown, Barellan, 1975, p.36.

[33] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.36-38.

> like a cross between a pith-helmet and frying pan without a handle - some of the hats had curved rims like the verandah of a suburban villa. The march might take days, and if Gooey accompanied it he led the procession on his old grey horse while the others walked.

He commented that when the men arrived at the property 'the tents and bark cooking galley would arise as if by magic, with a pallisade built around them. Everyman knew his job, and there was no overlapping; in method they could run rings around Europeans'.

Local informants have advised that while the men were on the stations, contact was maintained by the use of carrier pigeons, and a pigeon loft was erected at the Narrandera camp for this purpose. A pigeon loft was also located at the Hay Chinese camp, alongside one of the gambling houses, which may have also been a store.[34]

According to Gow, the Chinese men on the stations, be they cooks, gardeners or scrub cutters, would be moved like pawns by the ruling Chinese, such as Sam Yett, who always had another man ready to replace the one leaving. Sam Yett, who controlled the Narrandera Chinese camp, very often did so through Wong Gooey, Ah Hem and Ah Sam, two other contractors who were rivals of Gooey, the latter mainly responsible for organising the gardeners and cooks.[35] George Hock Shung succeeded Sam Yett on the latter's death in 1903, though he may have commenced contracting work well before that. In his study of the Narrandera Chinese, Kelvin Maxwell has stated that the contractors rarely worked on the stations, as they were busy supervising the various contracts, and appointed gang leaders to oversee the men in their absence. Contractors such as Wong Gooey would have several gang leaders working for them. According to Maxwell the Narrandera labourers were widely dispersed and worked on a number of properties in the district. The 1891 Census shows that 24 Chinese were working on Holloway's Mumbledool, of whom 21 were scrubbing, six were working on Bygoo, also scrubbing, 14 were working on Nariah, one on Conapaira, 11 on Ballantry, one on Barellan, and 21 on North Barellan. At North Barellan, two Chinese men were mentioned, Ah Chak, who was one of a party of 10, and more than likely the gang leader, and Ah Looey, who was one of a party of 11, and also likely to be the gang leader. At Kerabury, two Chinese men were mentioned, Youm Foo, who was one of a party of 12, and Ah Lim, who was one of a party of 14. Youm Foo and Ah Lim were the likely gang leaders. At Tubbo, 19 Chinese were recorded, including Ah Gan, who, along with seven others was located at the fencer's camp, and Ah Slam, who, along with nine others was located at the burr cutter's camp. Here Ah Gan and Ah Slam were the likely gang leaders.[36] The same pattern would have applied to the Hay labourers.

Buxton commented that as the years passed, the contracts gradually grew smaller, and the pine forests were killed by the chopping down of the small pine scrub and the ringing of the larger timber. The box trees were also ringed, the work often followed up by subsequent grubbing of the shoots or suckers. Seedlings also had to be dealt with repeatedly.[37] Commenting on the Temora district, historian R. Webster lamented the 'tragedy of their employment', which resulted in the total destruction of great areas of valuable timber for they 'razed good and bad in a face and millions of magnificent old pines,

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[34] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.35-40; *Riverine Grazier*, 26 March 1945, 9 January 1970.

[35] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, 20-23, 50-54; Buxton, *The Riverina*, pp.262-263, 280.

[36] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.22-23; Kelvin Maxwell, 'The Chinese in Australia, with particular reference to Narrandera', unpublished research paper, Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga Wagga, 1980, page numbers not available.

[37] Buxton, *The Riverina*, pp.247-248.

free of knot and pith, fell before their relentless axes'.[38]

According to Gow the last large contract of any kind taken by Gooey was on Barellan station at the end of 1910. A Mr F.R. Clayton had sold the property to a syndicate, who intended to subdivide it. Messrs. Grant, Forsyth and Thorpe were the committee for the syndicate, and before the place was handed over to the syndicate, Mr. Clayton was asked to arrange a contract to clear 6000 acres (2400 hectares). Gooey took the job on, using 11 men to start work. Gow commented that

> if eleven Europeans took a clearing job of this size there would be internal dissensions, and at the completion of the job, the personnel of the camp would be entirely altered. Not so with the Chinese; only one man fell out, and that was because he died.

When the property was taken over by Gow, so too were Gooey and his gang, who were camped on a dam towards the Merribee boundary. Gow remarked that 'they had a good garden going, and when they left the following year vegetables practically grew wild there'. During the course of the contract, Gooey would come out from Narrandera to visit the camp, and he was held responsible for the proper completion of the work.

> One day, when the contract was well under way he came up and asked for his first draw, which was £1000. He wanted it in cash rather than a cheque as it was easier to divide between the men. He banked the money in Narrandera for the gang who could not leave work to do it for themselves. He did some clearing after at Bynya, but he was failing fast so the Chinese community sent him back to China with some other old men.[39]

The land clearing contracts could be strongly contested, as the Chinese workers were not a servile labour force. C.F. McDonald, the manager of Wantabadgery station in the early 1880s, recounted the instance of the Chinese labourers refusing to work at the prevailing rates and bargaining for higher ones.[40] Gow also recounts the attempt by Gooey to obtain a better paying contract from John Holloway, the owner of Moombooldool station. He had decided to ringbark 60,000 acres (24,000 hectares) of box trees and had let the contract to Gooey at one shilling an acre. At the appointed time Gooey rode up and said that the men wanted one shilling and one pence an acre or they would not do the job. This angered Holloway and he told Gooey to leave. The next day another Chinese man rode up and said that he would take the ringing contract at one shilling an acre without inspection as he knew the country. He had a gang of men coming along the road so they could form a camp and start work at once. When Holloway rode into the camp he saw Gooey and with some relish told him that he had lost the job to another man, to which Gooey replied that it was ok for the other man was his cousin, the incident illustrating the lengths the contractors would go to bargain for a better price and the close relationships between the Chinese men, almost all of whom would have lived at the Narrandera camp and belonged to the same clan, district, or fraternal, association.[41]

Some idea of the wages paid to the labourers can be gleaned from James Kelly's Cambusdoon Station Ledger (Cambusdoon was near Yerong Creek, south of Wagga Wagga), in which separate pages identify 'Jimmy the Chow' and 'Sam the Chow'. In February 1903, Chinese grubbers were contracted

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[38] R.H. Webster, *The First Fifty Years of Temora*, reprinted by the Temora Heritage Committee, Temora Shire Council, Temora, 2001, p.73.

[39] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.50-54. This latter statement is curious for he is reputed to have had family at Narrandera.

[40] C.F. McDonald, *Wantabadgery Station Diary, 1879-1881*, A33/20, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

[41] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.20-23, 50-54.

to clear 160 hectares at 2/6 per acre, amounting to £50. They were only paid £46/6/3 because the contract was not completed. In 1905, 'Jimmie the Chinaman' started grubbing.[42]

By all accounts, the Chinese labourers lived very well. According to Gow

> Each man seemed to take his turn at cooking, and weird and wonderful were the dishes they concocted. Preserved ginger, all kinds of dried fish, and pork were on the menu; rice of course figured largely, but it was of a specially prepared kind. I have often heard it said that Chinamen could live on the smell of an oil rag, but it is a fallacy, they live exceedingly well – much better than Europeans under similar circumstances.
>
> They are fond of fish, either fresh or dried – I remember once Gooey had a camp on a dam on Warri, which was swarming with minnows, (a small kind of native fish, which seems to have disappeared now). They netted these, and put about a quart of them straight from the dam into the frying pan ...[43]

Mrs Ruth Genat, the daughter of Walter, the second son of James and Margaret Fong from Broken Dam near Temora recalled that

> Walter and his brothers were always welcomed by these men and plied with food. It seemed that only the man in charge had any English and there was not much communication with the wood-cutters. Their cleanliness deeply impressed the boys, who thought it a bit strange to see men bathe themselves so thoroughly and often. Especially [sic] when water was so scarce and only tin dishes available in which to wash.

Grandfather Fong imported much food from China for the local Chinese workers and Father could still remember seeing the split and flattened carcases of duck as they were unpacked, and the ricepaper packages of Chinese rice and tea.[44]

Mr I. C. Fisher from Ariah Park near Temora made similar comments, stating that

> they lived well, their diet being mainly soup drunk out of a bowl, with chop sticks to handle the solid pieces. They were especially fond of pig's cheek and salt fish.[45]

By the 1880s, the ringbarking frontier had moved further north, following the copper mining, then gold mining, boom in the Mt Hope, Nymagee, Cobar and Mt Drysdale areas. However, a significant number of Chinese remained in the Riverina district for decades to come. The last known record of large scale ringbarking and root grubbing in the Riverina was in 1920 on Tubbo Station, near Narrandera. King Fan, who lived at the Narrandera camp, was by then the main labour contractor. In 1919, he was paid £436 10s 9d for this work and in 1920, £466 1s 8d.[46] King Fan's obituary writer stated that he had a lucrative business as a clearing contractor and employed gangs of as many as 20 or 30 men, his contracts taking him to practically all the district and as far away as Rankin's Springs.[47]

Other than Gow's account, details of the lives of the Chinese labourers on specific stations are rare but some information has come to hand from information contained in court reports and station

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[42] Yerong Creek Public School Centenary Committee, *Yerong Creek Public School Centenary 1881-1981*, Yerong Creek, pp.24-32.

[43] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, p.38.

[44] Bill Speirs, *The Beehive and the Broken Dam,* J.A. Bradley & Sons, Temora, 1987, pp.44-45.

[45] Webster, *rst The First Fifty Years of Temora,* reprinted by Temora Heritage Committee, Temora Shire Council, Temora, 2001, p.73.

[46] Tubbo Station, *Ledgers 1866-1930,* Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, Wagga Wagga.

[47] *Narrandera Argus,* 19 August 1954.

Chinese sucker cutters' camp on Moroco West *near Deniliquin 1921-25. Much of the land clearing in the Riverina was undertaken by Chinese contract labourers, most of whom were recruited from the Chinese camps in the larger towns. Ten to fifteen men lived in this camp.*
Deniliquin and District Historical Society

ledgers. The Tubbo ledgers reveal that Chinese men were engaged in a variety of labouring tasks, particularly ringbarking, and as market gardeners and cooks from at least 1866 (the earliest known record) to the 1920s, after which their activities were confined to cooking and market gardening. The contract labourers were paid through the headman or contractor. Other workers such as cooks and market gardeners were paid individually at rates comparable with European wage rates. For instance, 25 Chinese men were engaged during 1868, though their occupations are unknown. In 1876, Ah Goon was engaged as a wool picker, Men Sing as a cook and Ah Foot as a scrub cutter. As Ah Foot was paid £61 18s 2d he must have had several men working under him. In 1891, Ah Sam and party and Ah Goon and party were engaged on wire netting, and Ah How and three men were employed as fumigators.[48] In 1895, Mack Goon was engaged as a cook at the house. The turnover rate was high, however. In 1896 and 1897, Lee Chew was employed as a gardener; in 1898 the gardener was Lee Lay, and in 1899 Ah Ling. The Tubbo Letter Book is also revealing. The correspondence was mainly between the station manager and the contractor, care of Sam Yett or his nephew George Hock Shung (George Sam Yett). In 1903, several letters were addressed to Ah You, contractor, care of George Sam Yett, and in October several letters concerning a scrubbing contract were addressed to George Quing Moon care of George Sam Yett. In a letter in 25 July 1904 the manager stated that the men had arrived without their mattocks and that they would not be paid until the tools arrived. On 29 July the manager commented that their work was 'done satisfactorily', but to get the contract done in time he would need to engage 10 more men.

At Hay, one of the Chinese contractors was Cheong Ah You, and one of the contractors at Deniliquin

[48] Tubbo Station, ***Ledgers, 1866-1930***, Tubbo Station, ***Letter Book***, Boxes 21-24, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, Wagga Wagga.

Wicker baskets such as these were used with shoulder yokes to carry loads of dirt in dam construction as well as for market gardening purposes.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

was Ah Sue. In 1883, a Deniliquin reporter commented on the departure of 40 Chinese men for Coree station for scrub cutting, the contractor or headman (probably Ah Sue) having hired one of Cobb and Co's coaches for that purpose. In early 1884, Ah Sue had about 60 men working at Hartwood and Coree stations. He purchased his goods from a Melbourne merchant and had them sent to Sing Lee's store in town. Ah Sue was probably the same man as Louey Suey, who advertised himself as a wool scouring, scrubbing and clearing contractor in the *Pastoral Times* on 21 July 1888. According to historian, John Bushby, another Deniliquin contractor was Paddy Hing Gook.[49]

In commenting on the way in which the Chinese ringbarked and cleared the stumps, historian Max Leitch, stated that a Chinese gardener employed on Berry Jerry station near Wagga Wagga had most of the contracts for ringbarking, clearing scrub and burning off, and would have up to 50 Chinese men on the job.

> They worked in pairs-each pair had a pole with a piece of chain in the middle which they used by putting the pole across their shoulders and hooking the chain around a log to be moved. One, two, four or more pairs, according to the size of the log to be moved, were used and the timber stacked in this way for burning ... They always used a large heavy axe which was too big for them, and in consequence put an uneven and untidy ring around each tree. Looking at a paddock ring barked, it was very easy to see if it had been done by Chinese or Europeans.[50]

Chinese workers also constructed earthen built dams (tanks). According to local historian, Ada Trevaskis, in the Lockhart district, 20 or more Chinese built the large dams, breaking the soil with picks and shovels, and carrying it away in wheelbarrows or baskets. Those using baskets carried two on each end of a yoke across shoulder, and when one carrier returned with empty containers, others were filled and ready for transportation.

She commented that the dams had two steep sides, with two ends sloped for transporting the soil, though many of the dams did not have steep sides and were gently sloped.[51] Sometimes the dams enclosed a swamp or natural drainage area or trapped the water from the creeks. Examples of the latter exist at present day Brailong and Grubben stations in the Yerong Creek area, south of Wagga Wagga, the large embankments damming the creeks and in the case of Brailong forming small lakes.

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[49] John E.P. Bushby, *Saltbush Country, History of the Deniliquin District*, the author, Deniliquin, 1980, p.276; William E. Mulham, *The Best Crossing Place, some highlights of life in Deniliquin and district during the period 1859 to 1890, as recorded in the columns of the Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, the author, Deniliquin, 1994.p.12; *Deniliquin Pastoral Times (hereafter, Pastoral Times)*, 17 March 1883, 19 January 1884, referred to in Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.11.

[50] Max Leitch, unpublished memoirs, supplied by Ms Jenny Taylor, Wagga Wagga..

[51] Ada Trevaskis, *A Schneider Family History 1849-1979*, the author, 1979, p.87.

The top of the embankment at Brailong was wide enough to serve as a road. At Grubben, some of the water was channelled into a small dam for market gardening, and a stone packed causeway built along the main road to mitigate the effects of flooding.[52]

While the Hay and Deniliquin camps were the main source of Chinese labourers in the district, many labourers in the Deniliquin area came from Victoria, in particular the Chinese camp at Wahgunyah. One of the contractors was Chen Ah Kew, a well-to-do Wahgunyah-based merchant. Writing in 1945, His eldest son, George Wing Dann, tells the story;

> My father came to Australia by a sailing boat, which took over six months to get here. He settled in Wahgunyah and opened up a general store and commenced importing all his merchandise from China. Very soon he had the largest store in Wahgunyah and employed many hands.
>
> He became very friendly with Mr. MacFarlane [Patrick McFarland] and a Mr Hay, who lived 12 miles from Corowa. Mr MacFarlane suggested that he go in for contracting, so he arranged for about 500 laborers [sic] to come to Australia and soon began clearing the surrounding country. Mr. MacFarlane's property was the first one he cleared and then on to Mr. Hay's place until eventually he had travelled as far as Deniliquin. He used to send out gangs of 20 to 40 men with twenty horse teams, working relays of 10 and they used to carry enough stores to last them up to six months. The gangs used to dig around the roots of the big trees, and then set a fire in the hole until the tree fell, when it was cut up and either burned or carried away. My mother cannot remember the names of the stations he cleared, but she says that he went as far as100 miles away and was often away for two and three weeks at a time.[53]

There are some caveats to this story. For example, it is questionable if as many as 500 men were recruited simultaneously, given the daunting logistics of transport and supply, though that may have happened over time. At any one time the Wahgunyah camp had far fewer men. A 500 strong labour force would have been almost unmanageable. Also it is likely that the men began with Henry Hay's Collendina station near Corowa, given its proximity to Wahgunyah, before moving onto Patrick McFarland's Barooga station, then, as stated in the *Border Morning Mail* of 13 August 1945, one station after another to Coreen, Daysdale and Deniliquin. The method of clearing also sits at odds with the more common practice of ringbarking. Burning was used to get rid of cut timber, tree roots and suckers. Whatever the exact details, it is, however, an invaluable account and further evidence that Chinese labour was used extensively for land clearing.[54]

Another curious and unstated detail of George Wing Dann's letter is the timing of this activity. According to his account and the account of a granddaughter of Chen Ah Kew, Elizabeth Chong, Chen Ah Kew did not come out as a gold miner, but an indentured labourer, and that he hired some of the men whom he had overseen. The great wave of land clearing in the Riverina was definitely post gold rush from the 1860s on, and many Victorian Chinese would have crossed into the Riverina before the NSW immigration restrictions of 1888, which included a prohibitive poll tax of £100. Although, as will be discussed later, many men used illegal methods to avoid these restrictions, it is difficult to contemplate that a man of Chen Ah Kew's standing would have done so. Historian Rod Lancashire suggests, however, that Chinese labour from Victoria may have been used in the Riverina

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[52] Black Mountain Projects, *Lockhart Heritage Inventory*, 2008, p.21.

[53] George Wing Dann, letter to Mrs Eileen Brown, 23 July 1945, Doris Schofield Collection, Federation Museum, Corowa.

[54] *The Border Morning Mail*, 13 August 1945; Barry McGowan, *Tracking the Dragon. A history of the Chinese in the Riverina*, Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 2010, pp.9-40; Cora Trevarthen, 'Chinese Communities in northeast Victoria, 1861-1914', *Journal of Chinese Australia*, Issue 2, October 2006, pp.1-15; Rod Lancashire, 'European-Chinese Economic Interaction in a Pre-Federation Rural Australian Setting', *Rural Society*, Vol.10, No.2, 2000, pp.229-241.

Chinese made dam on Brookong Station near Milbrulong, New South Wales.
Barry McGowan

after 1888. He cites the *Rutherglen and Wahgunyah News* report of 24 July 1891 that 20 free shearers had been smuggled to MacFarland brothers' Barooga station. At a pastoralist's meeting in Corowa on 7 July 1891, the 'free labourers were described as the 'riff-raff from Little Bourke Street', a euphemism, according to Lancashire, for Melbourne's Chinese district. Other evidence for the use of Wahgunyah and Rutherglen-based Chinese labour, both pre and post Federation, in either Victoria or the Riverina, is provided by several newspaper advertisements.[55] For example, in 1892, Ah Lun, a storekeeper in Wahgunyah, announced that with a staff of 50 men he was open to undertake contracts for grubbing, scrub cutting, ringbarking and all other station work. Further particulars could be obtained from Sun Cheong's store, Wahgunyah.[56] In 1903 the Rutherglen storekeepers Sen Loo Kee and Hin Wah advertised a large number of men available, up to 100, for ringbarking, scrubbing, clearing and burning off.[57]

According to historian Mona Terry, Chinese labour from the Rutherglen area was used extensively in the Oaklands district near Jerilderie. She has commented that when the Rutherglen mining ceased, the Chinese miners sought work on the stations, clearing timber, lining wells, and digging wells, dams and post holes. The wells were three metres square and timbered. A dam on Len Marcus's property

[55] Lancashire, 'European-Chinese Economic Interaction in a Pre-Federation Rural Australian Setting', pp.239-240.

[56] *Corowa Free Press*, 26 February 1892.

[57] *Corowa Free Press*, 13 March 1903.

was dug by the Chinese by pick and shovel, and the soil taken away by horse and dray.[58] The Tyson Brothers, including James Tyson, were the first owners of Goonambil Station, which William Wilson bought in 1875. Duncan Rankin was Wilson's bookkeeper and was on Goonambil for 35 years. In his diary he stated that the Chinese were remarkable in the assessment of the money due to them and were very accurate and truthful. They used an abacus for all their calculations. James Tyson also employed Chinese labour on his Tupra property, west of Hay.

As in the alleged case of the Wahgunyah Chinese, over time some Chinese labourers in the Riverina were recruited directly from China under arrangements between Chinese merchants in Australia and recruiting companies, some of which were based in Hong Kong. In this process, family and fraternal associations were critical, with the recruitment focusing on specific villages. The late William Liu OA, a prominent Sydney merchant, recalled that the Hong Kong based Sam Yick Co was the contractor for land clearing in Narrandera (though there were probably others). They hired labourers from the village of Hor Chung Hong Li Toon, in Taishan County, Guangdong Province, and his father had been one of these recruits.[59] Willie Ah Kin (or Kinn), originally a market gardener in Deniliquin and Urana, later diversified into labour contracting, recruiting men from his home district and forming them into gangs to work in the Urana area.[60] There is no date for this activity but for the men recruited from China it must have been pre-1888. In percentage terms, the increase in the Chinese population in the Riverina between the late 1870s and the early 1880s was large, and more than likely many of the new arrivals came directly from China. It stands to reason that this was so. Land clearing was hard work and by the early 1880s, if not before, many of the gold mining fraternity would have been well into their 40s, if not 50s. This was no country for an old man!

But the Chinese workers excelled at more than ringbarking and well digging. In 1887, a correspondent for the *Melbourne Argus* reported on the large numbers of Chinese labourers engaged in wool scouring in the Hay district. In answer to the question, 'why not employ whites?', he was told 'The Chinamen do the work better; they neither waste the wool nor damage the plant; there is in fact no bother with them at all; they do their work faithfully and well and earn higher wages than the ordinary white workmen'. Observing the amount of wool barged down river from Burrabogie Station, he lamented that the 'best of the work was passing out of the white men's hands, and simply because of their inferiority or idleness'. Chinese labour would scour all of Burrabogie's wool clip for the year. They did not work for a 'low wage', but had 'organisation, industry, carefulness, thrift which the available white work men lack'. Between 20 and 30 of them were busy on the washing punts and it was described as 'nice, cool, comfortable, pleasant work'.[61]

Writing in 1893, Harold Mackenzie stated that at Burrabogie there 'was a small army of Chinese wool-washers, who are on contract work for a 'smart Anglo-Chinese boss', and that at Toganmain there were 30 Chinese wool scourers. He remarked that water for the washing in the vats was supplied by a 12 hp engine with a centrifugal pump, with a capacity of 900 gallons (40,500 litres) a minute. The wool was forked out of the vats and deposited in one of Broadbent's Patent Wringers, which formed the wool into a compact mass on its sides, squeezing out 'every last drop of water. Afterwards the wool was

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[58] Mona Terry, *The Light Shines On: A History of Oaklands*, the author, Oaklands, 1985.

[59] From Manchu to Mao. The Life story of 'Uncle Bill' Liu", *The Asian*, November 1977, p.5.

[60] Shire of Urana, *Commonwealth Jubilee Celebration 1901-1951, Shire of Urana, Jubilee Carnival, Saturday 21 April 1951*, Souvenir booklet and programme, publisher unknown.

[61] *The Argus*, 22, 29 October 1887.

spread on the grass for drying.[62] Writing in 1945, a local Hay resident recalled that the washing punts held a number of perforated galvanised iron crates about two metres by one metre, the tops of which were level with the surface of the stream. Equipped with a long stick, the Chinese workers would bundle an armful of wool into the crates, swishing it to and fro, the river current carrying the dirt away. The clean wool was placed in a large basket to drain, after which it was taken to the drying ground and spread on canvas to dry. This account suggests a rather more primitive, but nevertheless effective, operation than that described in 1893.[63]

The economic value of Chinese pastoral labour was undisputed. In 1890, a *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent stated that nearly all the pastoralists to whom he had spoken had the same opinion of the Chinese workers. It was not so much that their labour was cheaper, for in many cases they received the same wages or even more than the Europeans; it was because they were steadier and more reliable. He stated that as cooks and gardeners they were invaluable and produced nearly all the vegetables grown in the bush. They also worked as rabbiters and were willing to do nearly all the rough work on the stations.[64] One squatter criticised the European labourers, saying that

> They can't do it at the price, and if they take a contract they only do so to get a draw of rations and then clear out and take the tools with them. Its [sic] quite different with the Chinese; we only deal with the head man and whatever price he accepts the work is always done, even when they can't earn tucker at it, and then they don't get drunk, and kick up rows.[65]

It was not just at MacFarland's Barooga station that Chinese shearers were employed. Andrew Learmonth, the owner of Groongal station, was reported to be experimenting with Chinese shearers (date unknown but perhaps the 1890s) since his white shearers had previously attempted to strike for better wages.[66] However, by the late 19th century the Chinese were not generally welcome at such work. Thomas Booth worked as a station-hand in the late 1870s on Corrong station near Booligal, and remembered when a group of rouseabouts and shearers attacked 20 Chinese who were offering to work for James Tyson on Tupra station at 15s a week, as against the general wage for workers of one pound a week.[67]

By the 20th century, such antagonism had faded, and Chinese-Australians worked in the pastoral industry as wool classers, shearers, general hands or drovers, so long as they were members of the Australian Worker's Union (AWU). One of these men was Alex Pack from Hay, who worked as a groom at Daisy Plains, where an older sister, Kathleen, also worked. Alex then began shearing at the station, and in 1945 commenced shearing professionally on O.J. Smith's and Ray Congdon's teams until 1955, when he returned to Daisy Plains. In 1970, he recommenced shearing on a freelance basis, averaging about 160-170 sheep a day. His highest tally was 228. He was always a union man, remarking that the union made the job a lot safer and more comfortable. In the early years the living conditions were often primitive and the shearers were given two chaff bags to fill with straw for use as mattresses. Alex estimated that he had shorn almost 200,000 sheep during his lifetime.[68] Another Chinese-Australian shearer was Clarrie

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[62] Harold M. Mackenzie, *Mackenzie's Riverina. A Tour of the Hay District Pastoral Holdings of the 1890s*, Hay Historical Society, Inc, 2008, pp.54-58.

[63] *Riverine Grazier* 26 September 1945.

[64] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December 1890.

[65] *Town and Country Journal*, 19 May 1888.

[66] www.daao.org.au/legal/eula.html

[67] Hay Historical Society website Newsletter, February 2006, No IV.

[68] *Riverine Grazier*, 6 November 2002.

40 years among the wool

Mervyn Shung (centre) pictured at Uardry, Hay, with (from left) sheep classer Tom Limburne, shearing contractor Cec Kem, former contractor Ron Smith and Uardry manager Rod McCulley.

This year's shearing was the 40th at Uardry for Mervyn Shung of Narrandera. He estimates that he has classed well over a million fleeces on this board.

In his long and highly respected career as a wool classer, Mr. Shung has worked in over 40 sheds, from Booligal to Goulburn and south to Holbrook.

He believes that he has classed fleeces from over five million sheep in that time.

Mr. Shung said he had worked with three shearing contractors at Uardry, in the past 40 years.

The first was Fred Brown and the last Cec. Kem, both for very short periods. However, for the vast majority of the time the contractor in the shed had been O. J. Smith and Co.

Mr. Shung was high in his praise of the improvement he has seen in Uardry wool over the years. He said the fleeces are now brighter and their weight has been dramatically improved. He also commented on the seasons he had experienced in the wool "game", seeing a lot of properties through good times and bad.

Looking back over other changes he has observed, Mr. Shung said that the new objective measurement of wool has been one of the most important.

Uardry is now classing on a modified scale, using three main fleece lines.

However, Mr. Shung can remember when he classed the clip into ten lines.

His other comment was on the wool output. He said the number of bales at any particular shearing is a difficult yardstick for comparison as the "old days" saw bales going out at 320 pounds, whilst they are now pressing 400 pounds into a bale. However, the top shearings Mr. Shung can remember at Uardry would produce around 1100 bales.

Cutting from the Narrandera Argus, May 28, 1984 describing Mervyn Shung's woolclassing career.

Leslie (formerly Clarrie Chun). At first an expert farm hand, he was befriended by a gun shearer, who got him a learner's pen with a big shearing contracting firm. Later, he became a gun shearer himself, reputed for his clean, fast shearing. His team shore in sheds such as Glen Iris, Merbindinyah, Yammatree, Caragabool, Brindabella, Wantabadgery, Ballengoarrah, Dollar Vale and Cooba station, travelling as far as western Queensland. Later, in partnership with Jack Neighbour, he went contract shearing himself. With a two stand portable shearing plant they sheared in the open in the Snowy Mountains for many years.[69] One of the best known wool classers in the Riverina was Mervyn Shung from Narrandera. He began work as a qualified sheep and wool classer in 1932, working in the industry for about 60 years from as far north as Moree, south to Seymour in Victoria, Bredbo in the east and Deniliquin and Ivanhoe in the west. Mervyn estimated that he had classed about eight and a half million fleeces in his time in the industry.

The stations he worked on included Boonoke, North Moonbria, Uardry, Goolgumbla, Brewarrana, Coonong, Pooginook, Wonga, Gala Vale, Stud Park North, Cooinbil, Bundidjarie, Cowabbie, Booberoi, Bringagee, Benerembah, Nulabor, Yamma, Tooma, Yarabee, Kerarbury and Buckingbong, where he classed the clip for over 40 straight general shearings, and Neylona, the largest Corriedale stud in Australia. He worked at Uardry for 40 years, which placed him as one of the longest serving persons to be associated with a particular wool clip in the Hay district. He was made a life member of the Woolclasser's Association of Australia in 1986, making him only the sixth life member in NSW since the

[69] *Junee Southern Cross*, 4 November 1999.

association's formation in 1933.[70]

Eric Doon from Tumut was also a wool classer. After a short period in the family business, Eric decided he wanted to gain qualifications as a wool classer – which involved Eric leaving home in Tumut to study in Sydney for three years. In previous years, all the wool purchased from the farmers was baled and sent to Sydney or Albury to be classed by wool classers. Wool classing was a very necessary but expensive process in the wool industry and wool classers were in high demand, so it was celebrations all round when Eric became a fully qualified wool classer in 1944.[71]Walter Clarke (Fong) from Broken Dam worked for a time as a drover's boy. He had resented the heavy-handed treatment of his stepfather, Millington Clarke, and at age 13, in about 1899, left home. Part of his work was to ride ahead to find a suitable campsite and place where the sheep could be held and shepherded during the night. He spent much of his time in the Snowy Mountains in the Talbingo area.[72]

Mervyn Shung, Narrandera Chinese Camp site, 2009.
Barry McGowan

[70] Mervyn Shung, 'Probis Address. My Life Story by M.W. Shung', undated; *Narrandera Argus*, 28 May 1984, 1 September 1987.

[71] Recollections from Grace Ching (née Doon), Melbourne, September 2011.

[72] Speirs, *The Beehive and the Broken Dam,* p.44.

MARKET GARDENERS

The economic value of the Chinese as market gardeners was equally appreciated, not only on the pastoral stations, but also in the towns. Market gardening and fruit growing could be highly profitable, for it was relatively inexpensive to set up a garden, often on leased land, in partnership with other Chinese men, and stock such as pigs were often raised as well. The gardening was very labour intensive and some of the methods and technology differed little from that used in China for centuries past.[73] Equipment included hoes, shovels, rakes, harrows, ploughs, and heavy wooden shoulder yokes for carrying the watering cans. However, sometimes the water was raised from the creeks and rivers by using engines powered by wood fired boilers or by petrol. The task of watering the plants was mainly done with watering cans.

Almost all town gardens were located near waterways, usually on the fringe of towns near the camps. The gardeners lived in small huts, usually built of timber and galvanised iron, comparable in comfort with shepherds' huts and some shearers' quarters and with the huts in the Chinese camps. Small market gardener's huts can still be seen at Tupra station, west of Hay, the Homestead station (formerly part of Kerarbury) near Darlington Point, North Wagga Island, and Tubbo station west of Narrandera.

At Tubbo the oldest hut has a shingle roof and measures six metres by two, with three bunks located on either side of the interior, and a bath tub. A larger, more recent, fibro hut (now also disused) with several rooms is located nearby.

An account of market gardening at Hillston by Tom Parr in 1900 provides a glimpse into the technology employed in some of the gardens. The men raised water from the river by small buckets, holding a little over two litres, which were fastened to an endless chain, with the buckets completing the circle, thus circulating a continuous stream of water. The chain was driven by a blindfolded horse going around continuously. Some of their vegetables such as potatoes and pumpkin, and their fruit trees were flood irrigated. But much of the water was pumped into a drain and into small holes dug

[73] F.H. King, *Farmers of Forty Centuries. Organic farming in China, Korea, and Japan*, Dover Publications, New York, 2004 (original publication 1911).

Shoulder yoke and watering can. The Chinese market gardeners were meticulous in their care and attention to individual plants, using techniques that differed little from those used in China for centuries. The gardeners carried water to the plants in large cans, one on either side of a shoulder yoke.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

Market gardeners' hut, Tubbo Station, Darlington Point, NSW.
Barry McGowan

A Chinese gardener at Merowie, *Hillston, New South Wales.*
Hillston Historical Society

in the garden holding about 1,350 litres, with a plank running into the water hole on one side and out the other. Each of the Chinese gardeners 'had two huge watering cans on a bamboo stick across their shoulders, one each side, and as he jogged through, he dipped both cans into the water, the cans having a spray nozzle on the spout'.[74]

Market gardening was a major activity in Deniliquin, perhaps more so than in any other Riverina town. A favourable climate and adequate water meant that three crops could be harvested each year, and a major destination for the crops was the Bendigo goldfields. According to Bushby the first market gardener was Hong Ming King, and the first large garden was established in 1864 by Ah Quong & Co, on three acres leased at £20 a year. A report in November 1864 referred to a market gardener by the name of Cooey (possibly the same as Ah Quong), who had sent up dray loads of vegetables from Bendigo to Deniliquin for a good price and had by then leased three acres in Deniliquin for a market garden. In a later report the extensive use of night soil was mentioned. It was mixed in two pits and applied periodically and the garden was watered three times daily, with the plants grown on long ridges about 22 centimetres high. The garden was described as 'a perfect oasis in the surrounding desert', the first dray load of vegetables leaving for the Bendigo area in April 1865. Other gardeners soon followed suit, a correspondent in that year commenting favourably on their industry, sobriety and general good conduct. At Ah Guy's garden the aphids were controlled by the application of a strong solution of soda to each young plant. He referred to the Chinese as the 'coming man' of the Riverina.[75] In 1870 the editor of the ***Pastoral Times*** remarked that the local population was 'greatly indebted' to the Chinese for a cheap and good supply of vegetables all year round.[76]

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[74] Tom E. Parr, *Reminiscences of a NSW South West Settler*, Heatherstone Book, Carlton Press, Inc, New York, 1977, pp.14-16.

[75] *Bendigo Advertiser*, 14 November, 20 December 1864, 15 April, 8 September 1865.

[76] *Pastoral Times*, 16 July 1870.

According to Bushby, other Deniliquin market gardeners were Tommy Ah Mon and Pelly Ah None, who worked at the Butter Factory garden, Tommy later going to the River St garden with Chun Ah Yin, who delivered his vegetables in a horse drawn cart. Tommy delivered his vegetables in a green Chevrolet van. Mow Ong had the Brewery Garden for many years. He was assisted by Ah Louey, who delivered his vegetables around town in two baskets suspended from a yoke.[77]

Chinese gardener, Hillston.
Hillston Historical Society

Chinese market gardening soon spread to other towns. At Hay in 1867 the Pastoral Times correspondent waxed eloquent on the industry and thrift of the Chinese gardeners, commenting that 'for industry and sobriety he is a pattern to the whites'. He referred to the Chinese as 'the universal cabbage grower in the sunny land of Australia', and referred to six Chinese gardeners living well on less than an acre of Crown land. The correspondent also referred to the Chinese practice of taking all the town refuse, 'the scrapings of our streets, the refuse of our stables, the debris of our back slums' and converting 'them into cabbage', and the meticulous way they looked after their plants, ridding them of aphids by brushing the plants individually with soapsuds. He stated 'that no whites would do this for they did not have the patience'.[78] In 1892 the Chinese established a market garden on land leased from the Council, and erected an engine and pump at a cost of £280. He remarked that 'The enterprise of our Chinese friends merits the success which their indefatigable industry will no doubt command'.[79]

Despite the comments of the Times' reporter the use of night soil on the gardens was often derided and applications to establish market gardens near town precincts sometimes opposed. In March 1896 Quan Sing sought approval from the Hay Council to start a market garden of between three and three and a half acres (about 0.6 hectares) on land owned by Mr Drury on Piper Street. When news of the intended garden became public the inhabitants of Piper Street, in particular a Mr Stranger, objected and 27 of them signed a petition protesting that the garden would lower the value of their properties and be a menace to the health of their families. At the next Council meeting Alderman Byrne pointed out that no objection had been raised to Ye Yen's garden, which was in a more thickly populated part

[77] Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.276.

[78] *Pastoral Times*, 6 April 1867.

[79] *Riverine Grazier*, 24 June 1892.

The "Butter Factory" Chinese market gardens after flooding, Deniliquin. Deniliquin and District Historical Society

of the town. He claimed that

> if a European had proposed to make the garden there would have been no hubbub, but when an unfortunate Chinaman tried to make a living, he was presumed to be a creator of a nuisance.

Although Alderman Byrne was supported in these sentiments by other Council members, a round of acrimonious correspondence ensued, and the matter was referred to a Council committee. The committee upheld the original decision to supply the garden with water.[80]

Chinese gardens were established further north at Hillston and near Mossgiel, probably in the late 1860s, early 1870s. In 1876 the local correspondent spoke very highly of the Chinese gardeners at Hillston, of whom there were about 20 working in a cooperative arrangement, distributing vegetables around the district in half a dozen carts. He commented that the district 'would suffer materially without the aid of our Asiatic friends'.[81] The garden was owned by Chong Lee and Company and sold to Harry Ping Tong Fong, a manager of a store in Hillston and a partner of the firm, in 1898. While in the firm he leased out 40 acres (16 hectares) to Yet Foo.[82]

At Darlington Point the first Chinese market garden was established in 1880, when the town was still in its infancy. A year later the garden was described as 'fearfully and wonderfully irrigated' and a 'spectacular success'. It was 'washed by the Murrumbidgee River, watered by two wells, and traversed throughout by canals'.[83] A Chinese market gardener also existed at Dunbar. In late 1890 his garden

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[80] *Riverine Grazier*, 17, 20, 24, 27, 31 March 1896.

[81] *Riverine Grazier*, 2 February 1876.

[82] *Riverine Grazier*, 7 April 1899.

[83] *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser* (hereafter, *Daily Advertiser*), 25 December 1880, 12 May 1881; *Riverine Grazier*, 4 May, 8 June 1881.

Chinese market garden in flood, Darlington Point.
Private collection

was devastated by locusts and rabbits.[84] By 1896 two Chinese market gardens had been established at Booligal, west of Hillston. Both were irrigated by windmills, which pumped water from the Lachlan River.[85]

Further complementary remarks on the Chinese gardeners were made by Harold Mackenzie in 1893, when he stated that

> Were it not for Chinamen in this district, it is hard to say how people would fare in regard to fruit and vegetables…These born irrigationists – I speak from a personal knowledge of them in the precincts of Canton as well as Australia – are the only people who can make arid wastes smile by their patient industry. Rather than spurn the Chinamen, we should at least hail him as a public benefactor in dry regions.[86]

Other Chinese market gardeners in the Hay region were Fan Chuck, Low Dick and Ah Pack. Fan Chuck and Low Dick had worked a market garden at Carrathool in partnership for 14 years, until Low Dick's death in 1920. On the day of his death Low Dick had been in the engine room lighting a fire to pump water for the house, so presumably the pump was also used for gardening purposes. The gardens were subsequently owned by Quong Sing, and purchased by George Hock Shung, the Narrandera merchant, in 1924. Together with his brother George, Ah Pack was brought to Australia at the age of 15 by his father, Law Pack, who then returned to China after working at the gold diggings in Victoria. Ah Pack was a market gardener on Til Til station between Balranald and Ivanhoe, often selling vegetables in Hay when he returned to see his family. He died in 1930. George worked as a market gardener on Lilliwah station and hawked vegetables in Hay. Another Hay gardener was Fang Hi, who also died in 1930. He was known as 'the hard case Chinaman', for his ability to get a good price for an indifferent product and leave the customer in good humour.[87] Other local gardeners were Ah Fat, Kem Hing, Young Way, and Dep Choon.[88] In 1898 Dep Choon applied for a special lease of ten acres (4 hectares)

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[84] *Riverine Grazier*, 11 November 1890.

[85] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May 1896.

[86] Mackenzie, *Mackenzie's Riverina*, p.114.

[87] *Riverine Grazier*, 15 June 1923, 11 January 1924, 22 July, 25 November 1930, 6 November 2002.

[88] *Riverine Grazier*, 26 March 1945.

to validate his current occupation of his garden, which was on Crown land, and had been leased to him in error by the Council. The lease was granted for 10 years at an annual rent of £10.[89]

Some Hay market gardens were highly profitable. In 1911 it was reported that at the Chinese gardens at South Hay a considerable area had been planted out to oranges and mandarin trees and had 'evoked general admiration'. The reporter stated that the trees must have 'returned the enterprising planters quite a substantial profit, judging by the numbers of people who could be seen visiting the gardens on holidays and Sunday in order to obtain oranges'.[90] In 1919 a reporter remarked that

> The call of the orange grove in the Chinese gardens in the Council Paddock is very powerful at present, and on Sundays in particular attracts many visitors. The trees just at present are a magnificent sight, and the enterprise of the Celestial is a striking object lesson of what might be equally well accomplished at very many spots along the river bank. The local Chinese are evidently after an early tomato crop this season, and have made preparations for growing that crop on an extensive scale. That tomatoes cannot be placed on the market as early in Hay as in Echuca is an apparent absurdity, in view of the warmer climate here, and the experiment of the Chinese will be watched with some interest.[91]

At Wagga Wagga, most of the Chinese gardeners lived and worked at or near the Chinese Camp in Fitzmaurice Street or at North Wagga Island near or about Parken Pregan Lagoon. Frank Rynehart lived on Marah Street with his parents, and remembered the Chinese gardeners who lived at North Wagga in the 1930s and 1940s. Charlie Wong Hing was one of these men, and according to Frank, 'the mainstay of the setup'. He didn't recall seeing any other Chinese men, only Charlie, for he was the only one with a horse and wagon. Frank said that Charlie ran the market garden with several other Chinese men on about five to ten acres (between two and four hectares) of leased land. He recalled that Charlie had a good run of customers in North Wagga and in town, and probably sold produce through Edmondson's, a large department store. During World War II Charlie ran a market garden for the RAAF at Uranquinty. Chinese market garden produce was in very high demand by the army and air force at Kapooka and Forrest Hill respectively.[92] Another Chinese market gardener at North Wagga in the 1930s and 1940s was Frank Angnea and his relative George Moy and his son, Keith. During World War II Frank had contracts to supply vegetables to the RAAF base at Uranquinty and the army at Kapooka.[93] Other market gardens were located along Tarcutta Road and at East Wagga near the river. According to Frank Rynehart the 1950s floods proved too much for many of the gardeners and they left not long after.[94]

Most of the Albury gardens were located between the camp area and the Murray River. But the largest was at Mungabareena, where it extended over several hectares, and included pumps, brick and concrete lined water channels and concrete piping. Most of the better known Deniliquin gardens were next to the camp (for example, the Brewery garden), and the Edwards River. The Butter Factory garden is still in situ, with water canals, mounds and barrow ways still visible.

Almost all the Chinese gardens at Junee were located in the wet land area behind Broadway, through which ran a drain excavated by the Chinese gardeners to provide a regular supply of water. Among

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[89] *Riverine Grazier*, 29 November 1898.

[90] *Riverine Grazier*, 22 August 1911.

[91] *Riverine Grazier*, 18 July 1919.

[92] Claire McMullen, *Transcript of interview with Frank Rynehart*, Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga, 2013; Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads project*; Information from Russell Danswan, Junee, 2010; information from Wendy Hucker, Goulburn, 2010.

[93] Information supplied by Keith Moy, 2009, 2010.

[94] *Narrandera Argus*, 31 March 1950; *Daily Advertiser*, 21 June 1952; McMullen, *Transcript of interview with Frank Rynehart*.

Market Gardener Frank Agnea with his truck and a load of vegetables at Borambola Station, Wagga Wagga, NSW.
Private collection

the gardeners in the 1900s were Tommy Ah Wah, Gordon Wee and Georgie or Tommy Ah Yeck. Local resident Greg Duck remembers Georgie, who had one or two men working with him on the garden. Every Christmas his family used to get some ginger from him. Georgie later moved to Bethanga, and often sold vegetables at Old Junee and around the farms. The last gardener was Gordon Wee.[95] At Temora one of the main market gardeners was Thomas Wah Sue, who sold his produce by wagon, buying skins, hides and fleeces in return. Other gardeners were He-Lim and Charlie Wong Lip.[96] The Narrandera gardens were located primarily in the vicinity of the Chinese camp, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, virtually surrounding the camp on all sides. One of the legendary gardeners was Harry King Fan, who had a market garden near the camp for almost 40 years.[97]

Because the Chinese market gardens were almost always located near the waterways they were very susceptible to flooding, and many of the accounts of the gardens come from the flood reports in the local press. One of the most devastating floods in the district was in May 1870. At Wagga Wagga many residents were stranded, Chinese and Europeans, and dependent on an 'unlikely armada' of assorted boats for their rescue. The *Daily Advertiser* correspondent commented that the 'Chinamen from Brown's Island have also a boat; or, rather, a sort of punt, a most unwielly [sic] looking craft, admirably handled, however, by the celestials, who, in boating as in other matters, if they have a strange way of doing things, generally do them well'. While other rescues were under way in the town and at North Wagga

> the Chinamen's boat had been busy amongst the celestial portions of the community. From the roof

[95] Sherry Morris, *Junee: Speaking of the Past*, vol.2, Junee Shire Arts Council, Junee, Section 12, Migration/ethnic influences, Junee, 1997.

[96] Temora Centenary Committee, *Temora Yesterday and Today, 1880-1980*, Temora Historical Society, 1980, p.250.

[97] *Narrandera Argus*, 19 August 1954.

The Chinese camp and gardens in flood, Narrandera, date unknown.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

> of the Chinese boarding-house [in North Wagga] eight men were taken. They had passed the night in darkness on the rafters, but in the morning broke their way through the bark roof[98]

The 1900 floods were equally ruinous. At Darlington Point, the gardeners were 'swamped out' and their gardens 'utterly ruined', the police having considerable difficulty in persuading the Chinese to leave their dwellings.[99] In the 1925 flood the council and townspeople assisted the Chinese gardeners in walling in their garden, thereby saving a large crop of vegetables. At Gundagai, Kim Lip, a Chinese gardener on True's Flat, had to be rescued from the top storey of his home by a boat party led by Constable Ryan.[100] The 1931 floods affected almost every market gardener in the Riverina. At Gundagai, True's Flat was again submerged and the vegetable gardens completely destroyed.[101] The Chinese gardens and homes at Narrandera were also flooded, while at Wagga Wagga Constable Norrell had his work cut out rescuing Willie Chong, a Chinese gardener at North Wagga. While persuading Willie to leave, he was bitten on the leg, though not severely, by Willie's dog. At Hay, the Chinese market gardens 'near the bridge, which had a splendid show of vegetables', were 'to a great extent, under water', as were many other gardens, both Chinese and European.[102]

In 1950 floods again ravaged much of the Riverina. King Fan, a leading Chinese market gardener in Narrandera, remarked that the flood was the highest he had ever seen in the town. He expected to be a heavy loser, as the whole of his vegetable garden would be ruined, and expected other market gardeners along the river to also suffer. Further floods in June 1952 caused the evacuation of the Narrandera market gardeners.[103] According to Bushby the 1956 floods at Deniliquin were very severe. Chin Soo occupied the Butter Factory garden at this time and to escape the flood he moved himself and his belongings to Nisbet's farm at Wandook.[104] No accounts are available of the 1952 and 1956 floods at Hay.

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98 *Daily Advertiser*, 4 May 1870.

99 *Narrandera Argus*, 27 July 1900; *Narrandera Ensign*, 13, 20 July 1900.

100 *Daily Advertiser*, 13 June 1925; *Gundagai Times*, 29 May 1925.

101 *Gundagai Times*, 26 June 1931.

102 *Daily Advertiser*, 26 June 1931; *Narrandera Argus*, 19 June 1931.

103 *Narrandera Argus*, 31 March 1950; *Daily Advertiser*, 21 June 1952; *Riverine Grazier*, 26 June 1931.

104 Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.277.

FARMERS AND GRAZIERS

In the early 1870s the Chinese turned their attention to other forms of cultivation – tobacco and maize. Little, if any, tobacco was grown in the Hay and Deniliquin district. However, tobacco growing was an important industry in the Riverina and an excellent example of Chinese initiative and entrepreneurship, and is recounted here for those reasons. On 23 November 1889 a correspondent for the *Sydney Mail* stated that the first attempt to grow tobacco in the district in 1875 was by three Chinese men. They had no previous experience in tobacco growing but having heard that some of their countrymen had started the industry at Albury resolved to try it, and were rewarded with a first crop of three tons, which they sold to a Sydney factory for a very good price of 8d a lb. Other Chinese soon followed.[105] Almost certainly the first farmers were originally from the King Valley and Yackandandah areas of north east Victoria, where farming for tobacco, maize and hops had been commonplace for some time.[106]

The Chinese were tenant farmers, renting the land from European land owners and paying an annual or quarterly rent, usually at a higher rate than most Europeans.[107] They were financed by Tumut-based entrepreneurs, of whom the main one was Dang Ah Chee. He helped them set up their farms, taking a share of their crops as payment, and bargaining with the landowners and the tobacco buyers on their behalf. The growth of the industry was rapid, and by 1885 the Chinese were regarded as the most successful growers in the Gundagai, Tumut and Adelong districts; they had also 'taken a hold of the hops industry'.[108]

In 1887 a correspondent remarked that large quantities of tobacco were on road to the market, and that the growers were doing well. Production was entirely in the hands 'of the almond eyed, your white not being possessed of the patience absolutely necessary to the successful production of this well paying, but delicate crop'. The correspondent commented that the 'colonial farmer leaves it to struggle as best it can and with consequent failure, for, if not scorched up, caterpillars devour it'.[109]

By 1888 the Chinese tobacco growers were firmly established in the Tarcutta area, at Hillas Creek and Lacmalac. But in other respects these were not happy times for the Chinese tobacco growers, as anti-Chinese feelings were running high in many parts of the colony. An Anti-Chinese League was established in Tumut in late 1887, one of its main aims being to discourage European landowners from leasing land to the Chinese farmers. 1889 was perhaps the high point for the Chinese tobacco growers, but by the 1890s a depression in the tobacco industry had forced many Chinese growers to leave.[110]

Jack Bridle, in his reminiscences, remarked that the tobacco industry revived in 1904 when British American Tobacco persuaded growers to erect kilns to cure and dry leaf rather than sun drying it in open sheds. He commented that in the 1920s twenty or more Chinese tenant farmers were growing tobacco and maize on the Tumut Plains at Wermatong. He worked for them as a young man in the Depression days of the late 20's and early 30s', mainly cutting and carting wood for their kilns.

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[105] *Gundagai Times*, 14 January 1876; Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.277.

[106] Jocelyn Groom, *Chinese Pioneers of the King Valley*, Centre for Continuing Education, Wangaratta, 2001; *Sydney Mail*, 23 November 1889.

[107] *Town and Country Journal*, 13 April 1889.

[108] *Gundagai Times*, 30 June 1885.

[109] *Goulburn Herald*, 18 January 1887.

[110] *Gundagai Times*, 21 September 1888; *Sydney Mail*, 22 September 1888, 23 November 1889, 7 July 1890; *Narrandera Ensign*, 26 August 1898.

Sampling the tobacco leaf: from left to right, a very well dressed Chinese man, possibly Dang Ah Chee, a prominent Tumut & Gundagai entrepreneur, two Chinese tobacco farmers and a European buyer.
National Library of Australia

Chinese men carrying harvested tobacco.
National Library of Australia

They were good to work for...they were never known to try and cheat anyone, which is more than I could say for many of my own countrymen at the same time. He remarked that the Wermatong owners were very happy with the Chinese as tenants because they were 'industrious, honest, and above all, because of their system of banking with their local storekeeper their rents were always paid on time.[111]

James Fong of ***Broken Dam,*** *Ariah Park, New South Wales. Temora Historical Society, Inc*

Some Chinese men turned to wheat farming and grazing on their own farms. One such man was James Fong of Broken Dam near Ariah Park. In 1876 he selected 40 acres [16 hectares] near the Broken Dam, where there was a hotel, but little else. His selection was surveyed in 1881, by which time he had improved it with the construction of a house and store (which also acted as the receiving office for local mail). He augmented his income from the store by selecting a 320 acre [128 hectare] block between his property and the northern boundary of Samuel Harrison's 'Ariah Park' in 1884.[112]

The new property was called 'Wattle Farm', and over the next 18 months the boundary of the block was fenced and divided into three paddocks. An earth tank (dam) to provide stock water was added and ringbarking and grubbing on the timber began using Chinese contract labour. After his death in 1885, his wife Margaret married Millington Clarke. When he died in 1897 Margaret was left to tend to the property and store on her own. By 1906 she owned over 1000 acres (405 hectares).[113] Bill Clarke, the second youngest of her sons also farmed at Broken Dam on a 900 acre (360 hectares). He later sold out at and purchased a large holding at 'Dungary', to the west of Dubbo.[114] Several other sons also became farmers. Walter Fong began sharefarming for Mr I. Fisher at Beckom. From there he share farmed on the Thompson Brother's 'Murrill Creek' holding, 16km south of Ardlethan. When 'Murrill Creek' was eventually subdivided he purchased a block and farmed there on his own account until 1947. Harry

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[111] Jack Bridle, 'Memories and information of the Chinese', *Memories of Tumut Plains*, residents and ex-residents, Wilkie Watson, Tumut, 1993, pp.12-14; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 6 August 1935.

[112] Bill Speirs, *The Beehive and the Broken Dam*, pp.12-43.

[113] Speirs, The Beehive and the Broken Dam, pp.12-36.

[114] Speirs, The Beehive and the Broken Dam, pp.70-71.

Margaret Clarke (formerly Fong) and her younger children outside the store at Broken Dam.
Private collection

Fong established himself as a farmer on 'Jasper Woods' at Mirrool.[115]

In another example, Betty Menzies (née Choy) recalled the story that her grandfather on her mother's side, William Quong, worked with a farmer after school and asked him if one day he could have the corner of the main paddock, to which the farmer agreed on condition that he continue to work for him. He subsequently acquired the property and grew wheat on it. Later he purchased a number of farm properties, 'Redbank', east of Grong Grong, 'Hillview', north of Grong Grong, and 'Riverside', south of Grong Grong on the Murrumbidgee River.[116] The ubiquitous James Ah (Wong) Chuey owned a 600 acre [240 hectare] property near Junee, and was a wealthy grazier and wheat farmer.[117]

[115] Speirs, *The Beehive and the Broken Dam*, pp.66-71.

[116] Discussions with Betty Menzies, Wagga Wagga, 2010.

[117] C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain. The Chinese in Australia*, 1901-1921, Raphael Arts, Adelaide, 1977, p.161; *Braidwood Review*, 8 August 1916; Sydney Szue Yup Kwan Ti Temple, *Sydney Szue Yup Kwan Ti Temple 100 year Centenary*, 1998, p.21.

IN REPLYING, ADDRESS THE CHAIRMAN, CLOSER SETTLEMENT BOARD NO. 1.

Closer Settlement.

AND GIVE THIS NUMBER.

Department of Lands

32 *Elizabeth-street,*

Sydney, 22nd May 1916.

SIR,

REDBANK ESTATE.

I have the honor to inform you that the Board has valued the farm applied for by you on the above Estate, under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Promotion Act, at £ 6:2:0 per acre, which price the vendor has unconditionally agreed to accept.

You will understand that, as the value of the farm does not exceed the £2,500 limit of advance under the Act, and as the vendor has agreed to accept the Crown valuation, you will not be required, if the matter be completed, to pay him anything for Purchase of land, as the whole of the purchase money will be paid by the Commissioners of the Government Savings Bank.

Farm "C"

Approximate Area 385 acres

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. NEVILLE SENDALL,

Chairman,

per

MR. W. Quong

Grong Grong

60851

In 1916, William Quong purchased a farm property in the Grong Grong area, subsequently purchasing a number of other farms in the area
Private collection

STOREKEEPERS, TRADERS AND RESTAURANT OWNERS

Many Chinese were storekeepers. Some stores were located in the Chinese camps and others in the main town area. They were mostly general in nature, selling not only Chinese goods, which invariably included Chinese tea, but an increasingly wide range of goods and produce of European manufacture, including ironmongery, drapery, groceries, hardware, furniture, galvanised iron, fencing wire, boots, shoes, picks, shovels, stationery, earthenware and 'fancy goods'. Some also bought and sold skins and hides, and were labour contractors. The store owners ran advertisements in the local papers from the early 1870s on and were not backward in offering lower prices or large reductions in prices. In 1882 John On Wah, who owned the Hong Kong store in Hay, advertised 'Still greater reduction in prices. All summer goods at greatly reduced prices.'[118] In 1912, Hop Sheong & Co, who had a store in Lachlan St Hay, and who described themselves as fruiterers, green grocers, tobacconists, stationers and fancy goodsmen, advertised their 'Fresh Supplies of Best Season's Fruit Daily'.[119] The same boldness was evident elsewhere in the Riverina. In December 1888, Dang Ah Chee, who owned stores in Gundagai and Tumut, stated that 'Ah Chee is no stranger to the Gundagai public; they know he is a square man and a fair dealer, and he will not forfeit the confidence placed in him'. In August 1900 the Narrandera merchants, Sun Hong Shing, advertised themselves as 'The poor man's friends. Patronise the poor man's firm. All at Bedrock Prices'.[120] The Man Sing store at Temora was originally owned by George Mee Ling senior and his brother. After George's death in China the store was run by his daughter Annie and her brothers, Albert, Andrew and George Junior. The Mee Lings frequently ran large advertisements, proclaiming in November 1895 that the store was 'Cheaper Than Ever', and 'Our Prices Cannot be Beaten'. In January 1909 the store was advertised as the 'Cheapest Store for Everything'. By this time a store had also been established at West Wyalong. In January 1912 the Mee Lings advertised 'The Greatest Sale ever held in Temora', with 'Sensational Reductions in Prices.'[121]. Established in 1882, the Man Sing store was one of the first in Temora and one of the most popular. It was later renamed as Mee Lings.[122]

To all appearances it seemed good healthy competition, but as with so many of their endeavours the success of the Chinese provoked resentment. At the monthly meeting of the Narrandera Half Holiday and Early Closing Association in April 1899 the Chinese stores were criticised for selling after recognised closing hours. A deputation was formed to interview the stores concerned and ask them to assist in maintaining the principles of the Association by refusing to sell on the regular half holiday and after 6 pm business days. Members visited Hun Cheong and Sun Hong Sing, who immediately promised to accede to the demand. 'Their readiness to comply with the request was a pleasant surprise to the deputation.'[123] In 1904 the NSW Country Storekeepers' Association launched a campaign to lure customers away from Chinese-owned stores and force their closure. They were criticised for undercutting other storekeepers, paying low wages and sending the profits out of the country. The

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[118] *Riverine Grazier*, 20 September 1882.

[119] *Riverine Grazier*, 13 February 1912.

[120] *Gundagai Times*, 25 December 1888; *Narrandera Ensign*, 17 August 1900.

[121] *Temora Independent*, I6 November 1995, 20 January 1909, I2 January 1910; information from Meredie Mee Ling, February 2012.

[122] Temora Centenary Committee, *Temora Yesterday and Today*, p.250; information from Meredie Mee Ling, February 2012.

[123] *Narrandera Argus*, 14 April 1899.

The Man Sing Store at Temora with the Mee Ling Family outside.
Private collection

campaign was not successful and most Chinese stores continued for many years more.[124]

Unlike their European counterparts the stores were multifunctional. Historian Jane Lydon has remarked that the Sydney Chinese stores were 'Ideally placed to play an essential role within Chinese-Australian society – to house newly arrived countrymen, providing them with board and lodgings, as well as information, assistance and protection'. These stores acted as conduits, channeling the new arrivals into jobs in the city and country areas. The linkages between the city merchants and the country storekeepers, were not just commercial, but had a much wider social importance, particularly if reinforced by district, fraternal, and clan linkages. Like their Sydney counterparts the country storekeepers helped with finding jobs, an easy task where the storekeeper was also a labour contractor and/or a market gardener, and lodgings. They also helped in the purchase of travel documents such as shipping tickets, in the writing of applications for Certificates of Exemption from the Dictation Test (CEDTs), and with translation, letter writing, banking and the remittance of money to China or elsewhere. One such store in the Hay Chinese camp was owned by Harp Lee. Tommy Chong Why visited it in the early hours one morning in September 1896 to write some letters.[125] Wong Pack would have owned a similar store, for he was a leading light in the Chinese Masonic Lodge in Hay.

Two other such stores in the Riverina would have been the Narrandera store owned by Sam Yett and his successor George Hock Shung, and James Wong Chuey's store in Junee. [126]

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[124] Wilton, *Golden Threads*, p.26.

[125] *Riverine Grazier*, 11 September 1896.

[126] Lydon, *Many Inventions*, pp.83-84; Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, pp.12, 22, 23.

Annie Mee Ling in the grocery section of the store in Temora.
Private collection

Sam Yett's store in the Chinese camp, Narrandera.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

A rare account of activities at Dang Quong Wing's store at Tumut was recalled by Josephine Oh, one of his daughters

> Each weekend the Chinese came in from their farms in horse and dray to collect provisions, mail from home and to socialise with each other. As it was a lonely existence for them, not having their families here, the weekend trip to town eased the isolation they endured for the whole week. They stayed the night, bedding down in the sleeping quarters, or overflowing into the end of the storeroom. There were stables at the back of the house and a vegetable garden behind at the rear of the property. The place was like a trading post.[127]

William Shai Hee's Yee Hing Company Store at Tumut was multifunctional too. The Shai Hee family were one of the first (if not the first) Chinese storekeepers in Tumut, moving there from Victoria in the late 1850s, early 1860s. The role of founder rested with William Shai Hee's father, Hing Gim. At first he specialised in selling gold mining equipment to the Adelong and Kiandra miners. By the 1900s it was more of a general store, selling 'everything but the kitchen sink'. Jean Chin (née Shai Hee) recalled that the store served as a type of headquarters for the Chinese people in the district. The store had been a stopping over place for Chinese men en route to and from the Kiandra and Adelong goldfields in the 1860s and later, and Chinese men would stay there prior to returning to China. Her father looked after the men, helping pay their fares back home, if necessary. If they died he attended to all their affairs, withdrawing their money from the banks, and sending it back home to their families. Before sending any belongings or money he would check to make sure that they were going to the right family. Joe Shai Hee remembers wooden cubicles and opium containers at the back of the old shop, which suggests that the area was used as sleeping quarters. [128]

Storekeeping was not the only form of Chinese business in the towns. Chinese doctors were sometimes referred to as herbalists, for they practiced traditional Chinese medicine. Dr Young Lee, late of Tamworth and as of 1883 a resident of Temora, was one such practitioner.[129] In an undated advertisement in the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times (hereafter Pastoral Times)*, You Kee advertised his skills in curing cancer, consumption, poisonous wounds, broken bones and other diseases. He was visiting Deniliquin for two months and listed his address as the Chinese store, Sun Quong Hie.[130] Other Chinese business men were blacksmiths, wheelwrights and gunsmiths. Tommy Ah Tack, late of Gulgong, but a resident of Temora in 1883, advertised his skills in repairing and repainting coaches and buggies, and repairing sewing machines.[131]

Some of the Chinese merchants and storekeepers were very successful. Dang Ah Chee was a prosperous tobacco merchant and landowner in the Gundagai and Tumut area, but his prowess as a general merchant was no less impressive. At one time a gold miner and carrier, he had a store at the Upper Adelong goldfield, and later established two large stone or brick built stores in Tumut and Gundagai. In 1900, on the eve of his departure for China, his Gundagai and Tumut stores, associated properties and stock, including tobacco leaf, were valued at £50,000, an enormous sum of money for those times.[132] A fellow clan member, Dang Ah Hack, on his death in 1905, was described as one of the

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[127] Josephine Oh, letter to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004, courtesy of Pam Archer; letter to Pam Archer, 30 June 1988.

[128] Information from Jean Chin (née Shai Hee) and Joe Shai Hee, March 2012.

[129] *Temora Star*, 10 March 1883.

[130] Information from Deniliquin and District Historical Society.

[131] *Temora Star*, 10 March 1883.

[132] Alan Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, unpublished manuscript, 1998, pp.40-41; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 20 October 1905; Dang Ah Chee, *Letter Book*, Tumut and District Historical Society. Folio 378.

TOMMY AH TACK,
Late of Gulgong,
GENERAL BLACKSMITH, WHEELWRIGHT, AND
PRACTICAL GUNSMITH,
Upper Temora.

STRENGTH AND NEATNESS COMBINED.

Coaches and Buggies repaired and repainted
at the shortest possible notice.

☞ SEWING MACHINES REPAIRED.

Advertisement for Tommy Ah Tack ,
Temora Star, *March 10, 1883.*

Hand rendered drawing of the Hong Woo Store in Lachlan Street, Hay
Riverine Grazier, December 6 1889.

HONG KONG STORES, HAY.
Still Greater REDUCTION IN PRICES

☞ TO SUIT THE TIMES. ☞ COME and INSPECT for YOURSELVES.

PRICE LIST:

No. 1. white sugar, 4½d
„ 2. „ „ 4d
Flour 28s 6d per bag
Best tea 2s 6d
2nd best tea, 1s 3d lb., by half chest, 1s 1d lb.
Bottled fruits, 1s 3d
Barley 4d per lb.
Rice 3d per lb.
Cocoa, 4½d packet, 1s 5d per lb.
Coffee 1s to 1s 4d per lb.
Currants 6d lb
Preserved milk 9d per tin
Soap 5d bar
Cake tobacco, 2s to 4s 0d per lb.

Sultanas 10d lb,
Brown sugar 3½d
Large box sardines 10d
Starch, white, 6d per lb.
Oatmeal, 1s 11d per 7lb bag
Best sago 4d per lb
Fresh herrings 8d per tin
Tapioca, 5d per lb
Coffee 1s to 1s 4d per lb
Biscuits 8d lb.
Raisins 8d lb.
Keen's blue 11d per lb.
Kerosene oil, 14s 6d case
Twist tobacco 2s to 4s 6d per lb.

Large bottle salad oil 1s
Small „ „ 6d
Small box sardines 6d
Maizena 8d per lb.
Corn flour 8d per lb.
Arrowroot 8d per lb.
Candles, 8d per lb.
Castor oil, large bottle 10d
Castor oil, small „ 6d
Lea & Perrin's sauce, 1s 2d per bottle
Salmon, 10d per tin
Dried apples, 8d
Washing soda 2d lb

All summer goods at GREATLY REDUCED PRICES.
JOHN ON WAH.
6006-754

Advertisement for John Ah Wah's Hong Kong Stores, Hay
Riverine Grazier, September 20, 1882.

wealthiest men in Gundagai. He was considered to be one of the shrewdest produce dealers in the state, and had made enormous profits from trading in maize and tobacco. In the bulk of these business transactions he had a joint interest with Dang Ah Chee.[133]

While little information is available on the Chinese storekeepers in Hay, it is noted that Hong Woo's store, which was illustrated in the *Riverine Grazier* on 6 December 1889, was a very substantial stone or brick building located in Lachlan St in the main part of town. In the illustration a very wide range of products, including clothes, were displayed in the windows. Outside the store on the footpath were many well-dressed citizens (prospective customers), male and female.

Another Chinese storekeeper in Lachlan St was Charlie Why. Lo Yin, the brother of the Carrathool market gardener, Low Dick (who died in 1923), was a Hay storekeeper and almost certainly lived in the camp.[134] Storekeepers in Deniliquin included Paddy Hing Gook, the labour contractor, and Ah Louey, the owner of the Sun Quong Hie store at the camp. He was described by Bushby as a 'spotlessly dressed man who rode a well-kept bicycle to town.'[135]

Another very prominent Riverina merchant was James Ah (Wong) Chuey, a wool, skins and hides dealer, commission agent, general storekeeper, contractor and wool scourer, who also advertised separately his Chinese tea, which he imported direct from China. In the early 1900s his main business was at Broadway in Junee, but he also had branch stores in Cootamundra, Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Wyalong and Barmedman. He also owned the Yee Hing and Co. store in Tumut in partnership with William Shai Hee. Like Dang Ah Chee he was also heavily involved in farming enterprises. As a wool buyer he built up a large trade between Australia and the East, and in 1916 his turnover was £200,000.[136]

Further into the 20th century the Chinese people diversified into many other businesses such as garages, theatres, trucking and dry cleaning. One such man was Dang Charles Doon. Working first as a cook at the Reno goldfields near Gundagai, he later came to Tumut and worked as a market gardener and tobacco grower, and a cook at the Royal Hotel. Later he set up a store and wool, skin and tobacco buying business near the Chinese camp. The skins were transported to Sydney, and other goods like hardware brought back in return. His sons Bob, Eric and John helped Charles on his buying and selling runs around the district. The family also operated Four Star Dry Cleaners, and a trucking company, C. Doon and Sons Transport, which carted pine and hardwood for the local mills and for projects such as the detour for Canberra's Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and the Snowy Mountain's scheme. Perhaps their best known business venture was a very successful horse syndicate. Horses from their stables won many races in the Riverina district, and no horse was better known or loved than Arwon, the winner of the 1978 Melbourne Cup. [137] In 1955 Grace (née Grace Doon) and Raymond Ching opened a shoe repair business in Tumut and later became agents for Clarion Drycleaners (which had bought out 4 Star Drycleaners) and a luggage agency for Myco. During this time, Ray also serviced black and white TV sets and installed antennas for Mr A.J. Kain of Railway End Mixed Business, Tumut, and soon had

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[133] *Albury Banner,* 26 May 1905; see also Kate Bagnall, 'The Tiger's Mouth. Thoughs on the history and heritage of Chinese Australia. A Trove Travelogue.' www.chineseaustralia.org/Archives.

[134] *Riverine Grazier,* 15 June 1923, 26 March 1945.

[135] Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.276.

[136] *Yong, New Gold Mountain,* p.161; *Braidwood Review, 8 August 1916; Sydney Szue Yup Kwan Ti Temple 100 year Centenary, 1998,* p.21.

[137] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 28 August 2007, 21 May 2010.

The Choy family's Reliance Garage and Eclipse Café, Grong Grong in the 1930s.
Private collection

customers from Tumbarumba, Adelong and Batlow.[138]

The Choy family from Grong Grong and Narrandera, who were related to the Hay-based Pack family, played a very significant role in the commercial life of Grong Grong.

The sons and stepsons of Charlie Choy, the patriarch, owned a large number of enterprises in the town. Bert Choy was the first barber in Grong Grong and owned a pool hall, next to which was the Reliance Garage, opened by Harry and Percy Choy in the 1930s. Harry also ran a garage with his son Bill, which later became an engineering and steel fabrication business. Bill also ran the local school bus service, which by 1976 was catering for 120 children. Harry ran picture shows in the local hall every Saturday night. The shop and deli next door to the Reliance garage was owned originally by Florence Choy (Harry's wife and a daughter of Ah Pack from Hay), and sold vegetables and groceries and supplied school lunches. In 1965 Betty Menzies (Florence's daughter), Jean Choy (Florence's daughter-in-law) and two other ladies reopened the café (it had closed in 1963). Albert Choy ran a garage in Griffith, later shifting to Narrandera where he opened the Sunshine Dry Cleaners. The Choy family still run the business today. Percy eventually moved to Leeton, where he also opened a dry cleaning business.[139]

Another garage operator was Tommy Ah Wah (originally Ah War), who built a garage, service station and boarding house in Junee in 1928. The garage was rented out until 1933 when the family took over, running dealerships for cars, trucks, tractors and all types of machinery, such as dozers, front-end loaders and concrete mixers. In its heyday the garage had a fully equipped panel beating and spray painting shop.

From the 1930s to the 1950s the family also owned a garage in Wagga Wagga. Thomas Allan, the youngest son, drove a taxi (the business was owned by his sister Linda), ran a newsagency, and

[138] Recollections from Grace Ching, September 2011.

[139] Grong Grong History Committee, *Grong Grong. The Spirit of a Small Town,* The Committee, Grong Grong, 2003, pp.34-130, 169-170.

Bill Choy senior & junior outside their Sunshine Dry Cleaners, Narrandera, NSW.
Barry McGowan

held picture shows in the Athenaeum at Junee.[140] Another Junee garage owner was Clarrie Leslie (formerly Clarrie Chun). He bought the Schwartz Brothers garage in Lisgar St, moving it to Main St, where he took on the school bus runs as well. He also bought the Loftus Hotel. Later he built a service station, McDonald Motors, in North Junee.[141]

Post World War II a number of Chinese people opened restaurants, in part a response to a decline in market gardening and traditional storekeeping. One such restaurant owner was George Young, who opened the Dragon Restaurant in Wagga Wagga in 1952. He later opened a Chinese restaurant in Albury.[142] Another restaurant owner was May Doon, who opened the Eastern Jade Chinese restaurant in Tumut in 1966.

Not all Chinese storekeepers were prosperous, though they occupied a special niche in the local iconography. They were especially popular with the children, who would be given sweets or, if the

George Young outside his Dragon Restaurant, Wagga Wagga. The restaurant opened in 1958.
Private collection

[140] Information from Russell Danswan, Junee, 2010.
[141] *Junee Southern Cross,* 4 November 1999.
[142] *Daily Advertiser,* 10 June 1992.

Left to right: Stan Hancock, Lesley Ah Wah, unknown and Linda Ah Wah.
Junee and District Historical Society

occasion presented itself, steal them. One such storekeeper at Deniliquin was Louey Wee, who ran a 'well-conducted store' in the laneway dividing the camp. Described as a 'dignified man, well dressed and tall', his front room was set aside as a café and was a favourite haunt for the young people who would buy their crackers and consume ginger beer. He became plagued by small boys who asked for unusual items that required him to make a trip to the store room, giving them an opportunity to 'knock-off' crackers and lollies within reach. To counter this practice he installed a grille across the counter. He was the 'boss' of the dwindling camp until his death in 1933. Another Deniliquin storekeeper was Paddy Hing Gook, who had his store on the southern side of Cressy St. He was also a labour contractor, and in 'keeping with his status he always smoked the best cigars.'[143]

At Upper Adelong one of the iconic Chinese storekeepers was Foo Lee. In her reminiscences Constance Sullivan remembered that:

> In the rooms at the back you could sometimes catch glimpses of other Chinamen in long, straight robes and heel-less slippers, and you could not escape the smell of opium though you must pretend not to notice it.'[144]

Not that far away was another popular Chinese storekeeper, Lee Loong, also known as 'Deafy', who lived at Middle Adelong, where he also grew tobacco. In his reminiscences (recounted by Alan Turner) Will Carter said he was 'a very intelligent, genial, generous, obliging and extremely humorous character'. When most of his countrymen returned home, or moved on to other fields, he chose to stay, living for many years alone in his store.[145]

Perhaps the best illustration of a successful Chinese trader in the Riverina (and beyond) was the Wentworth-based John Egge. Historian Morag Loh described him as 'a key figure in the development of Murray-Darling-Murrumbidgee navigation and the river trade, which opened up the west of New South Wales to non-Aboriginal settlement'. Egge was born in Shanghai in 1829 or 1830, and left China

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[143] Bushby, *Saltbush Country,* pp.276-277.

[144] Constance Sullivan (Kitty Barnes, ed), *There's Gold,* the author, Mosman, 1986, pp.131-132.

[145] Barnes, *There's Gold,* pp.156-157; Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield,* pp.40-41.

as a crew member on a ship commanded by Captain Francis Cadell, who had been in China during the Opium Wars, and was at the siege of Canton (Guangzhou) and the capture of Ningpo, near Shanghai. Egge arrived in Australia in 1852 and initially served on boats trading between Port Adelaide and Melbourne under the command of Cadell. Egge began working on Cadell's river boats in 1854 and was a cook on the Albury, which was named after the town of the same name. Later he was a cook on the Gundagai and a cook and steward on the Lady Augusta. Egge's Chinese name is unknown. On board the boats he was known as John Bull; Egge was based on a Scandinavian word for harrow. Egge's compatriot, John Ling, was known as Sam Chinaman. Egge met his wife Mary at Goolwa, where he courted her by swimming across Goolwa Arm from the mainland. Both John and Mary worked their way up the Murray River, John as a cook and Mary as a stewardess. In 1860 he bought an allotment in Wentworth's first sale of Crown allotments. In Wentworth, Egge began by baking little pies and pasties in a camp oven for sale on the streets and door to door. In 1861, he opened a bakery, and operated, as a general dealer in partnership with Elizabeth Botten, a butcher shop, and later a boarding house.

John Egge was born 26th April 1829, at Shanghai, China 'on the banks' of the Yangtze River - he died on 11th September, 1901 at Wentworth, NSW, 'on the banks' of the Darling River.

Wife Mary (nee Perring), born 3rd October, 1839, either in Totnes, Devon, UK or South Australia - she died 1st June, 1891 at Wentworth, NSW.

www.murrayriver.com.au/paddleboats/john-egge/

In 1866 or 1867 he chartered his first river boat, the ***Teviot***, and carried on a successful hawking business. Next he chartered the *Moira* and in 1868 bought the *Endeavour*. which was one of the first boats to run regularly between Echuca and Albury. By the early 1870s he was one of the biggest traders on the Murray – Darling, a position he held until his retirement 30 years later. He also traded along the Murrumbidgee River, as far upstream as Gundagai. Over this period he owned and chartered at least six boats and three barges. His onshore business interests expanded at the same rate as his river trade and several times he had a general store at Wentworth and one on the wharf. The store supplied station properties with bulk goods and served as depot for his boats. He leased or owned four hotels, held shares in various companies and owned residences in Wentworth and property in other towns along the rivers. In 1891 Egge combined the styles of both onshore and river trading. His SS *Murrumbidgee*, originally used to

transport wool, and later adapted to take passengers, was reconstructed as a floating department store with showcases, polished counters and wholesale sections. The grocery and hardware departments offered every 'conceivable article in these lines'. Later, as a new venture, he sold boots and shoes, drapery and fancy goods from the boat. The ***Federal Standard*** claimed that the stock was sold at 'prices so low that as to be hitherto unheard of'. Morag Loh has commented that by carrying goods more cheaply than the overland bullock teams, the river boats were crucial to the opening up of western NSW for non-Aboriginal settlement. Household supplies went into the hinterlands for at least two-thirds, and sometimes at much less than the cost of overland transport. By offering household goods at regular intervals and reasonable prices the boats made life more tolerable for women and their families.[146]

[146] Morag Loh, 'John Egge: A Champion of the Rivers,' *Hemisphere,* No.28, 1983, pp. 35-39; Geoffrey Egge's papers, Box 3173/5, MS12707, State Library of Victoria; *Adelaide Observer,* 21 September 1901.

Beliefs, fraternities and factions

The Chinese immigrants brought their traditions and beliefs with them. They could hardly have done otherwise, for they were integral to their lives, particularly as the majority of emigrants entered Australia on the 'credit-ticket system'. In a form of indentureship, headmen or bosses, in association with fraternal organisations such as native-place associations and *hui* or secret societies, provided for the immigrant Chinese until they could repay their debt. An extensive social network surrounded these men, securing their employment and taking care of their needs. Historian, John Fitzgerald has argued that these arrangements enmeshed the Chinese miners in trust-based networks reinforced by an elaborate system of oaths, rituals and punishments overseen by secret society networks.147 In every respect, from transport to labour supply to living conditions, these organisations played a crucial role.

Native place associations were formed by men with the same district or county of origin, the most common in NSW being Sze Yap. They differed from the organisations that Westerners understood as secret societies (or *hui*), which were based on sworn brotherhood and could include men from different districts or counties. The associations were primarily benevolent institutions promoting mutual interest among members and doing charitable work, and were important in protecting the interests of new immigrants and helping them become established. Their premises also served as meeting places and lodging houses, and the associations played a crucial role in the transhipment of the dead.[148] The offices of the district associations appear to have been located in metropolitan cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, the main points of disembarkation for Chinese migrants to Victoria and NSW. The only building in the Riverina specifically associated with the Sze Yap Society (or association) was at the Chinese camp at Tumut. Almost all the headmen in the camps, such as Sam Yett from Narrandera, were members of the Sze Yap Society, and their stores would have served as de facto association premises. James Wong Chuey from Junee was a strong patron of the Sze Yap Society and the Kuan Tia (or Kwun Ti) temple in the Sydney suburb of Glebe, and his Junee store would have certainly been one of these. In 1904 he was awarded a gold medal in honour of his work in support of the temple and the Society. The medal entitled the wearer to travel anywhere in China, and to military protection at all times. He had had two buildings built on the left and right hand side of the temple, which was located in the Sze Yap complex.[149]

The absence of any buildings in the Riverina erected by district associations, other than at Tumut, perhaps confirms the observations of historian Kuo Mei-fen that in Sydney by the late 1880s early 1890s there was a decline in the influence and importance of clan and district associations. However, as will be seen, in the Riverina at least, district and clan loyalties were still important, as were the loyalties to the *hui*. These allegiances would be challenged soon enough by other loyalties, such as the Christian Church, and by the rise of a merchant oligarchy, but they were never entirely dislodged.[150]

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147 John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie. Chinese Australians in White Australia,* UNSWPress, Sydney, 2007, pp. 64-65. See also Smith, 'Hidden Dragons. The archaeology of mid-to late-nineteenth-century Chinese communities in south-eastern New South Wales', pp.1-5, 14-15; Huck, *The Chinese in Australia,* pp.3-4.

148 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain,* pp.3-4, 189-95; Lydon, *Many Inventions,* p.89; Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW,* pp.15-18.

149 *Chinese Australian Herald,* 2 April 1904; *Junee Southern Cross,* 6 March 1904.

150 Mei-fen Kuo, *Making Chinese Australia: urban elites, newspapers and the formation of Chinese-Australian identity ,1892-1912,* Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2013, pp.17-23.

Traditional Chinese influences were very resilient.

In China, the secret societies or *hui* were very much akin to mutual aid organisations, but they were also associated with rebellions and sometimes crime, and secrecy was an imperative. Many members of the Hung Men were strongly opposed to the Manchu Dynasty and its fierce repression of disturbances such as the Taiping rebellion. In Australia, and through much of southeast China and Southeast Asia, the best known *hui* was the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandihui, Yee Hing Company or the Hung Men or Hung League), whose activities were centred on the Pearl River delta, the place already noted as the source of the vast majority of Chinese immigrants to Australia. The historian Cai Shaoqing has commented that in the gold rush years Hung membership was widespread amongst the Chinese in Australia, and that probably at least half of the Chinese population was affiliated. In Australia, as in China at the time, the Hung League's mutual support activities included arranging jobs, mediating disputes, assisting with everyday difficulties, arranging funerals and making representations to government, if necessary. Cai has likened the League to an unofficial Chinese consulate. Many members of the Hung Men were strongly opposed to the Manchu Dynasty and its fierce repression of disturbances such as the Taiping rebellion. After Federation, the League increased its social and political activities, campaigning against the White Australia Policy and supporting Dr Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary programme. The Hung League became the Chinese Masonic Society in Sydney in 1911 and Melbourne in 1914. James Wong Chuey was a founding member of the Chinese Masonic Society (or Lodge), which is located at Surry Hills, Sydney.[151]

James Wong Chuey.
Anna Lee, Chinese Masonic Society, Surry Hills, New South Wales

One of the strongest supporters of the Republican movement in the Riverina was James Wong Chuey. In February 1912 the Chinese community in NSW celebrated the end of Manchu rule and the inauguration of the new republic by a luncheon and picnic at Clontarf, Middle Harbour. The function, which was organised by the China Citizen's Committee, was attended by more than 3000 people, both Chinese and European. James Wong Chuey, as President of the Young Chinese League, chaired the luncheon, which was attended by several members of Parliament and other notables. Alluding to the existence of political and factional discord between

[151] The whole notion of 'secret societies' in the mid- to late-nineteenth century is fraught with cross-cultural misunderstanding. The British in Malaya believed that *kongsis,* a form of mining organisation, were simply secret societies akin to criminal triads, even when they were most probably sworn brotherhoods that organised production and distributed rewards to shareholders. See Dian H. Murray, *The Origins of the Tiandihui. The Chinese Triads in Legend and History,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1994, pp.5-115; J. S. M. Ward and W. G. Stirling, *The Hung Society or the Society of Heaven and Earth,* Vols. I-III, The Baskerville Press, London, 1925; David Ownby, "Chinese Hui and the Early Modern Social Order: Evidence from Eighteenth-Century Southeast China", in *"Secret Societies" Reconsidered. Perspectives on the Social History of Modern South China and South East Asia,* (eds) David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidhues, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 1993, pp.38-44; Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie,* pp.81-82; Cai, "Overseas Chinese Secret Societies", pp.36-45.

the Chinese in Australia, he stated that

> The people in China are now united, and both parties have but one wish, one ambition, and that is to make that peace lasting and devoted to all the arts and advantages of peace. As there is peace now among those who fought desperately in China, there should also be peace among us in Australia. The war is over, and all our strife out here should be also ended, and there should be kindness and friendship among all our people.[152]

The evidence for the Hung Men or *hui* in the Riverina is overwhelming, and indicative of a strong connection between the *hui* and the temple, or as it was commonly called in Australia, the 'Joss House'. In Narrandera, the subscription board for the Hung Men Society was found recently, after having served time as a bookshelf in the late Mervyn Shung's home, following its retrieval from the temple prior to its demolition. The heading at the top of the board reads: 'The subscription for the believers of Narrandera town entering Hong Men as listed below'; the per annum subscription was one guinea (21 shillings).

Subscription board for members of the Hung Men secret society in Narrandera. It was located in the Narrandera Chinese temple or lodge. The heading on the right hand side of the board reads: 'The subscription for the believers of Narrandera town entering Hung Men as listed below'. Under the heading are the names and their annual subscription of one guinea.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

A signboard which reads 'Chinese Masonic Society,' and temple doors with panels inscribed with Chinese characters are located in the Albury Museum. One of the panels reads 'In the peach garden the foundation is laid for the establishment of the Imperial Kingdom', the peach garden being a metaphor for the Hung Men brotherhood. Historian Kok Hu Jin has stated that the name of the temple was Wu Di Miao, and that the name was inscribed on a wooden tablet above the temple doors. The Hung Men had its office within the temple, and when it evolved into the Chinese Masonic Society the tablet was replaced with the signboard which is now in the Museum.[153] Masonic Lodges were also located at Hay and Wagga Wagga. The business partnership between James Wong Chuey and William Shai Hee in their Yee Hing Company store in Tumut is further proof of the ubiquity of these fraternal associations in the Riverina and the close relationship between these two men. Their store would have served as a meeting place for adherents of the Hung Men.

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[152] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 1 March 1912.

[153] Kok Ju Hin, *Chinese Lodges in Australia,* Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo, 2005, pp.28-45; *Chinese Temples in Australia,* Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo, 2005, pp.2-7.

A rare account of a Lodge in the Riverina, in this instance the Albury Lodge, was provided by a correspondent for the Burrowa News on 17 September 1937. It is quoted here for the insights it provides on the operation of the lodges in the 20th century. The Lodge was described as a small building with its doors always open, and 'Chinese characters and signs ornamenting the portals, and an interesting assortment of Chinese pictures, carvings and regalia within, around the walls and dias'. It displayed an 'imposing' entrance sign, in English characters: 'Chinese Masonic Society'. The reporter claimed that the Society was the first and oldest in Australia, pre-dating the Sydney building in Surry Hills. The Albury Masonic Society was opened by Mr Moy Sing, who also opened the Sydney Society building, and most of the other lodges in NSW. According to the writer the Society had 'long since seen its most prosperous and shining days', as far as Albury was concerned. The handful of Chinese men that were left were old; the younger men had left the town and the temple had become 'cold and cheerless'.

> 'There is no fun here', said Mr. Thomas Chong, the proprietor of the Canton Cafe in Albury. The older men have lost interest; They have no incentive to hold meetings and organise festivals. There is no one to take an interest and there are not enough Chinese left to make a lively gathering. Although the once important temple of the Chinese Masonic Order in Albury still stands, the Society is moribund, though by no means dead. It has its present member ship amongst the few existing Chinese residents, and carries on its principles in the same spirit as ever. Fundamentally, the aims and ideals are much the same as those of the British Masonic Order.

The writer continued that the 'same care and concern for the interests and welfare of "brothers" of the order was manifested, and no Masonic brother in the Chinese community was permitted to become destitute or 'down and out', while a Mason was on hand to give practical help. Many of the older men were helped, through the Masonic funds, to return to their homeland to spend their last days.

> The call of old China, the land of their forefathers, grows ever stronger as the wanderer in strange lands grows older, and every Chinese Mason is ready to respond to the claims of this appeal on behalf of the elders in their midst. Of the original membership roll of some 400 Chinese Masons in the Albury district, but a handful remain, to the number of perhaps two score, all told. No new officers now come up for appointment in the Albury lodge - and the temple that once knew such frequent and crowded scenes of joyous harmony, solemn and magnificent ritual, and boisterously, hearty brotherhood in banquet, song and oratory, now stands for the most part aloof and silent, alone with its memories. The good work of fellowship still goes on, but the early glories of the temple have departed, and the lights are dimmed around the still cherished shrine of Brotherhood and all that is best in Chinese sentiment.[154]

As alluded to by James Wong Chuey, factional discord occasionally disrupted the seeming homogeneity of the Riverina Chinese, and the overarching oversight of the fraternal and district organisations. Some of the conflict was almost certainly related to the traditional antipathy between the Han Chinese and organisations such as the Hung Men to the ruling Manchu Dynasty and its supporters, and some of it was based on clan or district allegiances. For instance, in 1874 a riot broke out in the Wagga Wagga Chinese quarter between members of two rival factions over a gambling dispute in Jimmy Gee's house. According to the local correspondent, the shops of Choo Cooey and Jimmy Gee were the centres of two rival factions, the wounded men belonging to the Choo Cooey faction. Both groups 'met on the street, where a short but decidedly sharp encounter was waged'. Armed with axe-handles, sticks, and palings, the encounter began with a 'liberal flight of bricks and bottles'. Between 30 and 40 men were involved in the fighting, the attendant police officer splitting his

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[154] *Burrowa News,* 17 September 1937; Kate Bagnall, 'The Tiger's Mouth. Thoughs the history and heritage of Chinese Australia. A Trove Travelogue.' www.chineseaustralia.org/Archives.

Stone incense grinder from Hay
Hay Goal Museum

baton from top to bottom.[155]

In 1869 factional discord also arose in Gundagai, the Police Magistrate noting that the plaintiff and his witness, who was also an interpreter, were from Amoy, the accused from Macao and some other witnesses from Canton.[156] In another case shortly after, Ah Shue asserted that he was a Chinaman born within the great walls, and that his opponents, of whom the principal one was Luim Pack He, were Tartars. The reporter remarked that 'the ancient animosities between the Celestials and their stronger and fiercer foes may add some colouring to the legal proceedings we speak of'.[157] In a case at Narrandera in 1892 the local correspondent commented that the local Chinese appeared split into cliques; some 'real Chinamen', and some 'Tartars'.[158]

For white Australians the most visible signs of Chinese traditional life were the New Years Eve festivals in either February or March each year, the focal point of which was the temple. Most of the large camps had a temple, which usually had a central room with adjoining rooms, and nearby in the open a pig oven for ceremonial use. The pig oven was built of brick, about one metre in diameter, and a little more in height, with an opening or fire door at the bottom, and an opening at the top where the pigs were inserted.[159] The temple interiors were richly coloured and elaborately decorated and furnished, and included altars, fabrics, incense burners, stone incense makers, incense sticks ceremonial plates, gongs, bells and statues of the deities.[160]

Moon cakes were important in the mid-autumn festivals. The dough was placed in the rounded end of a wooden handled cookie maker, which had an engraving of an animal on the end. Chinese New Year was celebrated very openly. The noise from the fireworks was often complained about, but these grumbles aside the festivals attracted large crowds of European onlookers, the lanterns, coloured paper, incense smoke, noise and the aroma of cooked pork and other delicacies adding an exotic touch to the otherwise staid surrounds of most towns.

In 1879 Chinese New Year was celebrated in Hay with a display of fireworks in the afternoon and evening, and in 1887 it was again heralded in by 'a lot of noise with crackers', which attracted the attention of the local band and a number of larrikins. The police persuaded the band to leave, and removed the larrikins at the same time, the editor of the *Riverine Grazier* stating that 'The Chinamen had

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[155] *Wagga Express,* 18 November 1874.

[156] *Gundagai Times,* 6 March, 10 July 1869.

[157] *Gundagai Times,* 17 July 1869.

[158] *Narrandera Ensign,* 2, 9 December 1892.

[159] *Pastoral Times,* 29 October 1898.

[160] Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.85-89.

Incense burner used in temple rituals.
Private collection

Incense sticks made of plant tubers
Hay Gaol Museum

Wooden moon cake moulds. Mooncakes were made to eat at the mid autumn (Zongqiu) festival, traditionally one of the four most important Chinese festivals. The filling inside pastry is usually made from lotus seed paste.
Private collection

The motifs from the moulds are imprinted on the top of the mooncakes.
Private collection

better be left to their own devices'.[161] In a 1945 edition of the *Riverine Grazier* a local resident recalled that at Hay

Chinese New Year was a big hit at the camp, and their band would perform for hours on end, its weird music penetrating the length and breadth of the town. The instruments consisted of a couple of drums, large and small cymbals, and a couple of wood winds that made a piercing, screechy sound…

He remembered that the chap with the two-stick drum would start off, then the man with the small drum, next the men with the cymbals, then the others would follow. To the onlooker 'it was more like a competition between the players to see who could 'make the greatest noise'.[162]

In the Pastoral Times of 20 May 1882 a correspondent stated that there was no temple at the Deniliquin camp, 'though at every house at different times the perfumed taper and the sacred oil is kept burning in an obscure corner so that the householder's luck may be preserved and the road made easy for his final exit. The absence of a temple in 1882 suggests a later influx of Chinese into Deniliquin compared with most other Riverina towns. A new temple was opened at Hay on Christmas Day 1886, it being conveniently located near a gambling shop. Shortly after, a number of closets (toilets) belonging to individual Chinese and located outside the temple were removed and placed in a row some distance away. In the court proceedings concerning the removals, the Chinese chemist, Wong Pat (Pack?), stated that if members of the temple gambled elsewhere they were fined £3, implying that part of the proceeds from gambling went to the temple.[163]

Lodge or *hui* functions were much more secretive. In September 1881 a function took place in a new building at the rear of the Squatter's hotel on the south eastern corner of Fitzmaurice & Kincaid Streets, Wagga. At first it appeared to be a religious ceremony, but upon the correspondent making an inquiry from one of the Chinese men robed in white, and who it was assumed was a priest, he was informed that it was no church rite, but a ceremony similar to that of the Freemasons. The Chinese participants strictly forbad any person to approach the building during the service, and the police provided a plain-clothes constable to see that they were not molested. A lodge function concerning the installation of office bearers in a society of which 'nearly all the Chinese of Wagga are members' was held in 1892. The two sects in the society disagreed strongly on the proposed appointments, and rumours of an imminent fight between some of the Chinese galvanised the town and its police force. Some 200 to 300 persons assembled in the evening near the temple, along with almost all of the local police force. The dispute was, however, settled amicably. Many of the Chinese had come from neighbouring towns to take part in the installation ceremonies. [164]

A new Chinese Freemason's Lodge was built in Hay in 1902, and the celebrations reported on by a correspondent from the Riverine Grazier. He described the building as 'the most elaborate in the locality'. It was a two storey structure, and was officially opened by the Grand Master of the Chinese Freemasons in New South Wales, Mr Moy Sing, who was assisted by Wong Pack, the Grand Master of the Hay body. Accounts of Lodge ceremonies and their interiors are rare, and the report on the proceedings is quoted in full

> The hall was fantastically decorated, continuous fusillades of that necessary adjunct to a Chinese

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[161] *Riverine Grazier,* 25 January 1887.

[162] *Riverine Grazier,* 26 March 1945.

[163] *Narrandera Ensign,* 21 January 1887.

[164] *Daily Advertiser,* 20 September 1881, 5 March 1892.

> demonstration-crackers-were fired of [sic], and the members laid themselves out to do the opening in style. Feasting was the order of the day, and the proceedings opened with a sumptuous dinner tendered by the members to non-members. On the same evening a number of candidates were initiated into the order, the initiation ceremony, it is claimed lasting twelve hours. The walls of the building are adorned with mottos and emblems, some of the former, which are, of course, in Chinese characters, are said to be: 'Be just to everyone", Justice predominates", "Treat others as you wish to be treated", etc. The lodge rooms are luxuriously furnished after the Eastern fashion, a silk covering on one of the tables, on which is worked figures representing a peacock and a dragon, being said to be worth three hundred dollars in China. The festivities in connection with the opening are to be continued for a week.[165]

Another major Chinese festival was the Qingming or Ch'ing Ming, held in the first week of April and in September each year to honour the deceased. It involved a graveside ceremony, with a festival or commemorative function held afterwards in the camps. The earliest account of such a ceremony took place on Mid'en Station (possibly Lake Midgeon Station, which was originally Narrandera Station), near Narrandera in September 1875 to honour a Chinese man buried there several years before. The writer commented that the ceremony showed a reverence for the dead, from which some Europeans 'might learn a lesson'.

> About twenty Chinamen were present, and others, who, like myself, were spectators, After arriving at the grave, a board with Chinese characters was placed at the foot of the body. A paper sprinkled with the blood of a pig killed on the night before was thrown on the grave. The pig itself was adorned with pink paper, flowers, & c., and placed on a board on the ground. There were also a fowl, a fish, a bird, some boiled rice, and some small cakes-imported direct from China; plates with knife and fork, and some brandy. Standing before the festive display, one of the number...began to utter what appeared a prayer, for at certain intervals all bowed reverentially, almost touching the earth. At the same time an attendant poured bandy into three pannikins. This lasted a few minutes after which some papers of different colours that had been previously unrolled, and a new shirt were burnt and some crackers let off. Some of the brandy was then thrown over the grave, and another grave (of a European) being hard by they did the same good office...to that. The eatables were now carried away, and with brandy were disposed of that evening.[166]

At Deniliquin, a religious festival was reported in the ***Pastoral Times*** on 29 October 1898. The statement that it was only held two or three times a year suggests strongly that it was a Ch'ing Ming ceremony, and the report is quoted in full below.

> 'Pig day' was celebrated at the Chinese camp on Thursday, many happy people from the flowery land being present. The Chinese would speak about any subject, except the festival, when his answer would always be "no sabee". The festivals appear to be held two or three times a year.
>
> Preparations commenced the previous night when the oven was heated for the cooking of the various pigs which had been previously slaughtered. The oven is built on the surface of the ground, of brick, 3 ft. in diameter, about 4 ft. high, plastered on the outside with an opening or fire door at the bottom, similar to that of an ordinary copper boiler. When being prepared for use a cartload of wood was consumed. The cylinder holds the three pigs comfortably, and after the fire and ashes are withdrawn that number of carcasses is slung in from the top, head downwards, the top put on, the edges "plugged up" and the cooking is completed in due course. When cooked, the top is taken off and the crowd inspects the morsels therein. After approval the carcasses are removed for distribution.
>
> In the meantime all are in holiday attire, and fFan tTan and coot-pie are in full swing, especially the former. The latter appears to be a kind of Band of Hope pastime. If the oriental desires to pass away his time without losing much money, he plays coot-pie; but if he is a "plunger" he goes bald-headed for tan

[165] *Riverine Grazier,* 11 July 1902.

[166] *Town and Country Journal,* 18 September 1875.

tan [sic] and comes out a broker or millionaire at the end of the day's play.

At last there was a move from the dwellings into the little street or lane which divides the residences at the local camp. Tables were brought out, then three chairs were placed at the east end of the tables. These chairs remained empty during the whole of the proceedings and it appears they are provided for the Great, but Invisible, Host of the occasion.

There was a solemnity and reverence in the placing of the chairs in contrast to the proceedings to now. Opposite these chairs was an arm in which perfumed tapers of various colours and sizes were lighted, and alongside these were utensils containing Chinese prunes, preserved almonds, ginger and oranges.

With much ceremony at a later period a red band of ribbon crowded with Chinese characters was placed on the table. This contained all the prayers of the service and were supposed to be read by the invisible occupants of the three chairs.

On the second table, adjoining the first, were carcases [sic] of roasted pigs, and in between them were placed the "small goods" of the cuisine, consisting of roasted trips, livers, hearts and intestines.

Then the ceremony par excellence commenced. Two Chinamen grabbed two tom-toms and commenced to bang away at them with a satisfaction and a beaming joy, which is only equaled by a juvenile who is celebrating his seventh birthday. Simultaneously myriads of crackers commenced to explode – there were about £10 worth exploded in less than ten minutes – and while the din was proceeding and amid the smoke engendered by the crackers, the surrounding Chinese marched up singly and in pairs to a fibre matting which had been placed on the ground on the opposite side to the chairs, and made their graceful obeisance.

As each Chinaman approached the matting he bowed reverently to the food and the empty chairs in front. Then he clapped his hands to his breast and again inclined his head. Next he took one step forward and fell on his knees, allowing his head to drop almost to the matting.

In this position he remained almost a minute, all the time waving his head up and down slowly and silently. After this he rose, again clapped his hands to his breast and retired backwards, the final act being a genuflexion as he rejoined the crowd alongside.

About 20 or 30 followed in rotation, and all the while the tom-toms were vigorously beaten and thousands upon thousands of crackers were being fired. As the last obeisance was made the tom-toms and the crackers ceased, the sudden silence being almost painful to the witness.

Of course all these things cost money. There is a general subscription amongst all the denizens of the camp. In this case it was a shilling or two each for the feeding part, and another shilling for the fireworks. A book was entered up containing the names of the promised contributors. Each man had from a pound to a pound-and-a-half of pork, and an orange. The weighing-out was conducted in a businesslike manner, and every man came up and went away smiling with his "dollop" of the comestibles. As each man received his share he planked down the cash.

The attendance was good. There was a Chinese medical gentleman amongst them while others had the appearance of mandarins of the first button, and there were also various sirens without whom an Oriental gathering would be incomplete. The next performance will take place at the local camp in about six months.

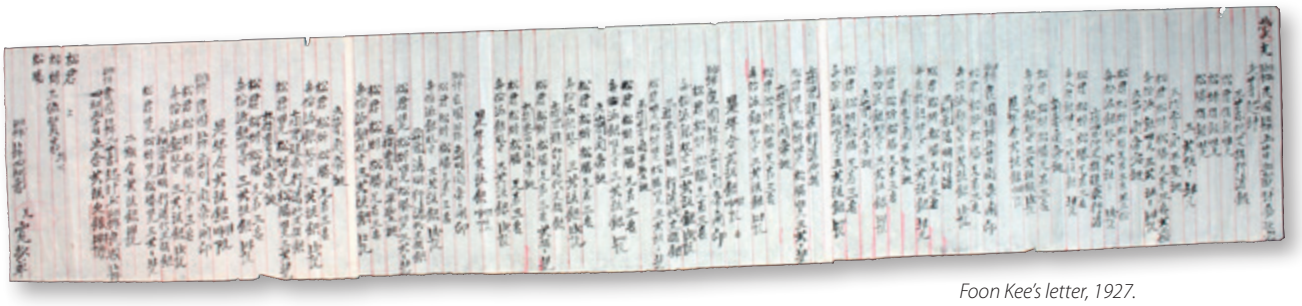
In his reminiscences Bushby has remarked that 'until the 1930s a number of Chinese visited the Deniliquin cemetery at regular intervals to place food and candles on the graves and burn tapers in the brick building (burning tower)'.

Three plates containing rice, pork and ginger respectively were placed on the grass, together with up to six candles, according to the rank of the occupant. The ceremony was carried out twice a year and occupied about two hours. When it concluded the food was thrown out and cleaned up by prowling animals and birds. Local taximen – George Renwick and Jim Fitzmaurice – were hired to transport the

Chinese to the cemetery and to help in the distribution of the foodstuffs and the lighting of tapers.[167]

But it was not all fun and games. There were obligations as well, as evidenced in a letter written in April 1927 by Foon Kee, a Wagga herbalist, to three brothers, Song Jun, Song Yi and Song Sheng. It reminded the three men that they were in arrears over a period of five years in their donations to the temple diety Guangdi, his sons Guan Ping and Jan Guandi, and in their donations to the clothes shop and the Qingming festival. The total value of the brothers' contributions was cited as 1216 dollars; but the currency mentioned is curious for if it referred to Australian pounds, this would have been an extraordinarily high amount; more likely it was Hong Kong dollars. The letter shows the Chinese temple rites in a different light; one that permits of exploitation through various anniversaries. It also gives the hint as to why positions in the temple and lodge were so highly sought after.[168]

An analysis of Foon Kee's letter was undertaken by the author and Dr Tana Li in 2013. The annual



Foon Kee's letter, 1927.
Private collection

wage of a labourer was between 30 and 50 pounds, and that of a market gardener between 50 and 100 pounds. If the denomination of the donations was in pounds, the donations of the three Chinese were around one-fifth to one-third of their annual income. If in shillings, as suggested by Dr Kuo Mei-fen, then the donations, as a percentage of salary, are much less. As the document indicates, these donations were made under various names. These include the day that the deity Guandi opened his seals, his birthday, his son's birthday and, as Guandi had as many as two birthdays, the three brothers were to pay $3–4 for each birthday. To this list was added donations to the Qingming festival and clothes shop (unidentified)

If we compare the final amount for donations of $50 per year with the actual arrears appearing on the account, a huge discrepancy emerges, of between four and six times. This means that the shop owner was charging interest of 400 to 600 percent on the arrears, which were in the nature of a private loan. On average this means that interest rates of about 100 percent per year existed within the Chinese community. The interest rates of the Australian banks at the time could not have been higher than 10 percent, but to obtain a loan required a mortgage of property or a financial guarantor. Both were beyond the capability of the three brothers. Thus to borrow within the Chinese community became the only option. Interest accumulated on interest, so within the four years the arrears was $1,216. The evidence for what we believe was usury can be found at the end of the document, the account of the last year, 1927. The donations towards the Day of Guandi Opening His Seal and to the Qingming Festival were consistent with that of the earlier years, but because these two donations were made

[167] Bushby, *Saltbush Country,* p. 269.

[168] Letter from Foon Kee, 3 April 1937, in the possession of Betty Menzies (née Choy), Wagga Wagga.

before the final account, there was no discrepancy between the donations and final arrears, meaning no loan was made. The three brothers were probably about to leave the district, but we have no way of finding out where they were going.[169]

Many Chinese were Christian converts. In the 1890s a number of Chinese churches (or missions) and Sunday schools, were established in the larger towns such as Narrandera, Albury, Wagga, Tumut and Hay. At the Church of England Synod in 1891 it was resolved that the church should make some special effort towards the evangelization of the Chinese in the Narrandera Diocese and with this end in mind a Chinese catechist, Samuel Le Ung Bong (or Leong Bong) was engaged. Leong Bong transferred to Hay after a year in Narrandera, coming back to Narrandera on occasions.[170] Obviously this good work bore fruit, for in November 1894 the Anglican Church of St Thomas opened a 'very plain and unpretentious' building in the Narrandera Chinese camp. The Rev. Charles Eldrid performed the opening ceremony, assisted by Leong Bong.

A large and eager congregation attended, most of whom were Chinese, with the building crowded to the doors, and a large number unable to enter.[171] At a service conducted by the Rev. Eldrid in 1896, nine Chinese were baptised, amongst whom were several of the best known and most respected Chinese residents. A night school for the Chinese converts was opened in 1900.[172] The Presbyterians were also active in Narrandera. In August 1899 the Rev John Young Wai of the Presbyterian Chinese Church, Sydney, visited various offshoots in the country. Arriving from Albury, where several successful meetings had been held, he addressed meetings in the Presbyterian Church on the Sunday, one of which was held for his countrymen, and in the evening service baptised a convert. The church was crowded with an 'interested and interesting congregation'.[173]

Church, Narrandera Chinese camp, probably with Leong Bong out the front.

Walter J. Fenn, The Anglican Church of St Thomas, Narrandera

At Tumut or Tumut Plains in 1898, the Rev S.E. Owens-Mell established a Chinese mission. Along with other members of the congregation he personally taught the Chinese. A cottage was rented out and about 70 men came under the influence

[169] Barry McGowan and Tana Li: 'An Example of Usury Within the Chinese Community', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies,* Volume Six, 2013, pp.172-177.

[170] Walter J. Fenn, *The Anglican Church of St Thomas Church, Narrandera 1880-1890,* Anglican Church of St Thomas, Narrandera, 1980; pp.12-13.

[171] *Narrandera Ensign,* 23 November 1994.

[172] *Narrandera Ensign,* 26 June 1896; *Narrandera Argus,* 23 February 1900.

[173] *Narrandera Argus,* 1, 15 August 1899.

of Andrew Young, a devout catechist who had for five years prayed that he might be sent to Tumut. The Christian Missionary Service (CMS) agreed to send him to a training school in China to prepare for Holy Orders. Tragically, while crossing from Hong Kong to the mainland, and in company with his wife, three students and the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong, the boat was caught in a typhoon and all were drowned. The CMS later removed the headquarters of the mission to Wagga and the work in Tumut languished and finally expired. [174]

A Church of England Mission was opened at Hay in June 1893 in a special service at the Chinese camp. The Catechist Leong Bong had established himself in a 'neat looking cottage', in which, by the removal of one of the partitions, a room was enlarged for holding services. After these preparations and a thorough house to house visit, the Rev J.B. Armstrong, Rev. Hetherington, and a considerable number of the town congregation proceeded to the camp for the opening service. The evening service was conducted by Leong Bong for over 40 of his countrymen, and it was proposed that a night school for the Chinese be established the following week. In January 1895, the Rev Armstrong, assisted by Leong Bong and Charlie Why, conducted the opening service for a new mission room. The evening before, a tea had been given to a number of Chinese 'by whom it was much appreciated', the writer stating that the 'sympathy felt in the work was shown by the large number of helpers present'. An entertainment followed with songs and short speeches, including a Chinese song and some Chinese instrumental music.[175] At Albury in the 1890s, the Presbyterian minister, the Rev. David Smith, assisted by several teachers, established a Chinese Sunday School at St David's Presbyterian Church. Kathleen Price recalled that, when her father was in Albury

> There was quite a group of them [Chinese] there and he did a one to one teaching of them. At night they had classes in connection with the church and so he was always, you know, very sympathetic.[176]

In her work on the Chinese Presbyterian Church in NSW, Wendy Lu Mar has stated that the night schools were seen as an important part of the Church's work of mission. The intention was to use education as a vehicle for evangelism to reach those who otherwise would 'not be attracted by the Gospel'.[177]

Where separate Chinese churches or missions did not exist, the converts attended the local church of their choice. Perhaps the strongest expression of this was in Junee, where almost all converts were adherents of the Wesleyan (Methodist) church, and attended church with the regular congregation. Visiting Chinese missionaries sometimes addressed them. On one such occasion in August 1900, the Rev. Moy Ling conducted a special mission service. In the evening about nine or ten Chinese were present, the proceedings being partly in Chinese. The reporter commented with some disdain on the disrespect of some of the white congregation who seemed 'to think that the service was a pantomime and indulged in unseemly laughter'. He remarked that 'The Heathen Chinee, when he goes to our places of worship, appears to know better how to conduct himself than some of those who pride themselves on being his superior'.[178]

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[174] Florence Stacey, *History of the Anglican Church in Tumut, 1830-1926,* publisher and place of publication unknown, 1926, pp.51, 63.

[175] *Riverine Grazier,* 16 June 1893, 18 January 1895.

[176] Letter to author from Albury and District Historical Society, 14 January 2008; Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.100-101.

[177] Wendy Lu Mar, *So great a cloud of witnesses: A history of the Chinese Presbyterian Church , Sydney 1893-1993,* Chinese Presbyterian Church, Sydney, 1993, p.6.

[178] *Junee Democrat,* 21, 23, August, 26 October 1900.

Chinese graves at the Hay cemetery.
Barry McGowan

Foremost amongst the Junee converts was James Wong Chuey. At the Wesleyan Church anniversary at the Alhambra Hall in November 1901 he played several selections on the gramophone, and in January 1902 arranged for a banquet at his house on Regent Street on behalf of his fellow countrymen in honour of the Rev. E. J. Piper, who had given a lecture in the Wesleyan Church on China. At the banquet he expressed his deep gratitude for the work done by the Rev. Brown and his predecessor, the Rev. H. Pennington, with his fellow countrymen in Junee. He remarked that the local Chinese had often told him of the great patience and trouble Mr Brown had taken in teaching them the English language, but most of all he appreciated their conversion to Christianity. [179]

Chinese cemeteries were another visible sign of traditional life, and observers sometimes commented upon the burial ceremonies. The Chinese cemeteries, as opposed to solitary scattered tombs, are important evidence of a paternal framework, for they required communal agreement and organisation to set up, particularly if the land was to be purchased or leased from European landowners or local government authorities. In China and among diasporic Chinese in South East Asia, funerals, and sometimes weddings, were undertaken by the *hui* and district associations. The largest Chinese cemeteries in the Riverina were located within the boundaries of the European cemeteries, and at Wagga, Albury, Tumut and Deniliquin, the burning towers are still in existence. Offertory tables remain at Wagga and Albury. The importance of traditional Chinese burial customs, including the practice of feng shui, is evident at some cemeteries, in particular at Upper and Middle Adelong, in the location and orientation of the graves. There is also very strong evidence of ritual exhumation.[180]

An example of an early traditional burial ceremony in the Riverina is provided by a report in the *Daily*

[179] *Junee Democrat,* 1 November 1901, 31 January 1902.

[180] Smith, Hidden Dragons. The archaeology of mid-to late-nineteenth-century Chinese communities in south-eastern New South Wales, pp.146-151.

The Chinese burning tower, Deniliquin cemetery.
Barry McGowan

Advertiser in 1874. The deceased was Ah Long, a hawker who sold vegetables to Wagga residents.

Shortly after one o'clock, the hearse passed through the town followed by several buggies containing Chinese, together with a long train of them on horseback. A relative of the deceased occupied a seat on the box on the hearse and scattered papers along the route. Each of these papers was pierced in two places, but there were no Chinese charges upon it. Upon arrival at the cemetery each Chinaman who entered the gate was presented with a shilling, a cigar and some lollies. In the coffin with the remains were placed a complete suit of new clothes, a pair of blankets, a billy of boiled rice, some tea, sugar, matches, and a candle, together with several China coins. On the coffin was placed a boiled chicken. Around the grave were a heap of paper-ashes, and an immense number of lighted candles, which were thrown in to the grave immediately the coffin was lowered.[181]

The funeral of Sam Yett, the Narrandera merchant and 'King of Chinatown', was also elaborate, and conducted with 'all the pomp and ceremony accorded to a Mandarin'.

> The body was dressed in full Chinese costume and encased in a cedar casket, into which were dropped coins etc., to pay his passage to the Flowery Land. Barefooted mourners clad in white walked before the hearse weeping and wringing their hands. Others wore sheaves of wheat and ribbons. Sustenance was lowered into the grave with the body, and confuscian ceremonies performed. A large crowd of spectators watched the interesting rites.[182]

Where the deceased Chinese were Christian converts, both Christian and Chinese rites were performed. The Chinese were buried in the denominational sections of the local cemetery, usually with European style headstones. Some Europeans viewed this blending of Christian and Chinese burial rites with contempt, and others were at best disrespectful. At Junee in March 1903, Ah Yen, a member of the Presbyterian Church in Corowa, was interred in the Wesleyan section of the local cemetery. A large number of Chinese attended from Albury, Wagga, Corowa and other places. In addition to the Presbyterian service, Sink Quong of Albury, a Mandarin and Chinese Freemason, conducted the Freemason service, the deceased having been a member of that body.[183] Comments from a

[181] *Wagga Express,* 15 July 1874
[182] *Narrandera Argus,* 26 June 1903.
[183] *Junee Southern Cross,* 20 March 1903.

correspondent for the Junee Democrat, however, were strongly prejudicial. He stated that

> The deceased was an adherent of the Christian faith, but a number of heathen countrymen attended the burial and the corpse was made the subject of heathenish customs prior to being placed in the coffin. At the cemetery the Rev. J. D. Landels...conducted the Christian service, after which the heathens went through their procedures, the Christian converts meanwhile holding aloof. However the religion of their early days was too strongly instilled into their hearts to allow the Christian faith to which they had lately been converted to predominate, and when the last heathen had finished his part of the ceremony, a general secession in the Christian ranks set in, and they reverted to the heathen custom.[184]

Rather more edifying was the report on the burial of Ah Nam, a well-known Adelong merchant. His funeral cortege was described as 'one of largest witnessed in Adelong for some years past', with about 600 people at the grave.

> The Rev. G Soares, having read the Church of England service, delivered a short address... Subsequently the Chinese went through their funeral rites; depositing upon the ground near the grave three roast pigs, one goat and a quantity of other eatables. Chinese candles and paper were burnt, the Chinamen the while uttering prayers. Afterwards brandy was served out to visitors, and lollies distributed to the children – who seemed to think that a Chinese funeral was rather a good thing. Some of the Celestials appeared deeply affected by the death of their countryman, and their grief contrasted strongly with the levity indulged in by certain Europeans.[185]

After a time the bones of Chinese buried in Australia according to traditional rites were exhumed and transported to China for reburial. The exhumations were elaborate and painstaking undertakings, and could only be carried out through the *hui* or district associations, in conjunction with local Chinese residents, particularly the more wealthy ones. The first shipment of bones back to China from NSW in 1864 was occasioned with much ceremony, a boat with Chinese musicians, firecrackers, food, fellow Chinese and a great deal of noise accompanying the ship out through Sydney Heads.[186] In 1882 Dang Ah Chee received permission to remove the remains of his countrymen from the burial grounds of Kiandra, Upper Adelong, Gundagai and Tumut, the cost of the exhumations and removals being borne by the local Chinese.[187] The following year George Warden, a well known carrier, passed through Gundagai en route for the rail head at Bowning with two and a half tons of Chinese bones. The removal of the bones was accompanied by funeral ceremonies organised by the Chinese residents, the remains carefully cleaned, and, after soaking in gin, placed in boxes.[188] Similar ceremonies took place in 1904 when the remains of 26 Chinese men were exhumed from cemeteries at Cootamundra, Gundagai, Tumut, Adelong, Adelong Crossing, and Hillas Creek.[189] In 1917, a permit was issued to the Tumut merchant, Dang Loon, to allow him to exhume the remains of 12 Chinese men interred in the Chinese cemetery at Tumut. Thomas Chew Ching from Braidwood conducted the exhumations, which took two days. The bones were placed in separate metal cases and securely soldered before they were taken from the burial ground.[190]

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[184] *Junee Democrat,* 20 March 1903.

[185] *Gundagai Times,* 6 July 1888.

[186] Ownby, 'Chinese Hui and the Early Modern Social Order', pp.39-41; Hedhuies, 'Chinese Organizations in West Borneo and Bangka: Kongis and *Hui',* pp.80-82; Smith, *Hidden Dragons.* The archaeology of mid- to late-nineteenth-century Chinese communities in south-eastern New South Wales', pp.67-69; Lydon, *Many Inventions,* p.89.

[187] *Gundagai Times,* 7 July 1882.

[188] *Gundagai Times*, 15 August 1883.

[189] ***Tumut and Adelong Times***, 1 July 1904.

[190] *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 4, 10 May 1917.

Sometimes the exhumation process met with disapproval, a correspondent for the Border Post complaining on 16 January 1891 that

> Altogether the procedure is repugnant to the European sense of cleanliness, as well as opposed to the first law of sanitation, but a very much strong feeling will be engendered when it is known that the Chinamen who have been engaged in the work have outraged their privilege by washing and scraping the disinterred bones in Bungambrawatha Creek, which runs quite close to the cemetery.

King Moon, who oversaw the activities, brought a libel action against the newspaper, claiming that the bones had been washed and smoked in a hut near the cemetery, and that he had obtained the appropriate permission.

At Deniliquin an application by Chinese residents to disinter the bones of a Chinese man was granted in November 1891. The body had been buried in 1878.

> On it being raised the coffin was little affected. On being opened it was found that all the flesh had disappeared and the skeleton was bone dry. On being touched the skeleton fell to pieces. The bones were then placed in a carpet bag. The Chinaman with the bones left Deniliquin during the week for China.[191]

With the eventual disappearance of much of the Chinese population and the decline of the camps, the traditional places of worship and burial fell into neglect and were vandalised. At Albury, the burning tower and offertory table and many of the headstones and graves are still intact. However, this has not been the case elsewhere. In the early 1980s Wendy Hucker, a Wagga resident, wrote to the Council, pointing out the state of disrepair of the Chinese cemetery at Wagga and the need for restoration. The Leader correspondent visited the cemetery, and confirmed Wendy's observations. Of the 37 graves in the Chinese section, only a few had their headstones intact. At least 18 graves had no markings except for the concrete blocks that once held the headstones. Several headstones were scattered through the area and many were shattered into jigsaw puzzle pieces, and the burning tower and offertory table, although intact, had been vandalised. The Council cleared the area of litter and weeds, and gathered the headstones together and grouped them around the graves, pending identification.[192] The cemetery was further tidied up, the burning tower and offertory tables restored, and the border lined with the headstones behind a fence. Further damage occurred in October 1994 when the remaining 23 headstones were damaged in a frenzied and 'unexplainable' act of vandalism.[193] The headstones were later restored as a community service project.[194] More recently, Wagga Wagga Council has reconstructed the lettering on the headstone belonging to Charlie Wong Hing, to help maintain a significant site belonging to one of Wagga Wagga's last remaining Chinese market gardeners.[195]

A similar process of degradation and restoration has taken place at Narrandera. The Chinese cemetery was located within the main cemetery grounds and would have had a burning tower and offertory table, though those had long since been destroyed, and many of the remaining graves fallen into a state of disrepair or otherwise vandalised. Between 1879 and 1905 there were 67 burials in the Chinese cemetery. In recognition of the importance of the Chinese to the life of Narrandera and district, a joint effort by the Tidy Towns Committee and the Lions Club removed the remaining intact headstones and

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191 Bushby, *Saltbush Country,* p.269.

192 *The Leader,* 2 November 1883.

193 *Daily Advertiser,* 4 October 1994.

194 *Daily Advertiser,* 27 August 1998.

195 Information, Genevieve Mott, Museum of the Riverina, October 2014.

A broken headstone at the Chinese section of the Hay Cemetery.
Barry McGowan

placed them in a special garden area.[196] At the Hay Chinese cemetery very few headstones and graves are left, and there are no remains of either the burning tower or the offertory table. At Deniliquin the burning tower has been restored and fenced in, but no graves are left, although 67 Chinese men were buried there. The first Chinese man buried at Deniliquin was Chong Gow, who was executed at the Deniliquin gaol in June 1871 for the murder of another Chinese man, and the last was Chin Soo, who was buried in November 1957. At both Hay and Deniliquin most of the bodies would have been exhumed and the remains transported to China.

Chinese graves at the Jerilderie cemetery.
Barry McGowan

[196] *Narrandera Argus,* 24 August, 7 September 2006.

Camp Life; Food and Leisure

Much of the predominantly male Chinese population in the Riverina lived in self-contained camps, located on the fringe of the main towns and close to the main waterways. In his 1884 report sub-Inspector Brennan provided an important snapshot of the five largest camps in the Riverina, and many aspects of daily life. He remarked that the camps were indispensable necessities where large numbers of Chinese were located, many of whom could not speak English, for they provided houses of accommodation for unemployed Chinese, and those who were helpless or paupers and who would otherwise be a burden on the State. They were what historian Pauline Rule has described as 'contact zones', a source of labour for European pastoralists, a refuge for European women, and a place of entertainment and recreation for others.[197] Smaller camps were located at Hillston, Booligal, Gundagai and Tumut. Other Chinese lived in the town proper near their businesses or places of employment, and large numbers resided on the pastoral stations. Some camps lingered on into the 1950s by which time few residents were left, and the camps eventually dismantled.

A pen and ink drawing of the Narrandera Chinese camp from the Town and Country Journal, *March 19, 1881.*

The largest camp was at Narrandera, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. In 1883 it had 340 residents, of whom 303 were Chinese, nine European married women, ten children and 17 prostitutes. Of the Chinese men, 14 worked in stores, 20 in opium shops, 10 in cook shops, 20 in gaming houses and 12 were gardeners; most of the others were labourers. When the Chinese employed on the pastoral stations returned from their work assignments, the population was much larger. The village had streets and lanes, stores, a temple, a very large cook shop, two lottery houses and several Fan Tan

[197] Pauline Rule, 'The Chinese Camps in Colonial Victoria: Their Role as Contact Zones', in Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald and Paul Macgregor (eds) *After the Rush. Regulation, Participation and Chinese Communities in Australia, 1850-1949,* Otherland Literary Journal No.9, Kingsbury, 2004, pp.119-131; Brennan, "Chinese Camps', p.1.

rooms. The Wagga Wagga camp was located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River on either side of Fitzmaurice St. It had 223 residents, of whom 194 were Chinese, six European married women, one Chinese married woman, 16 children and seven prostitutes. Of the men, 12 worked in stores, 13 in opium shops; 30 were gardeners, six were fruit dealers, 124 ticket sellers and labourers, and six were proprietors of lottery rooms. It also had a temple and lodge.[198]

Deniliquin had the third largest camp. It was located on the banks of the Edwards River, and part of the ground belonged to two naturalised Chinese. It had stores, opium and cook shops and sleeping accommodation for three times the number found there on inspection. In the Pastoral Times of 20 May 1882 a correspondent stated that the camp had four or five stores and about a dozen or more other buildings, which, together with the stores, were used as gambling dens. The writer commented that generally the houses were 'low tumble-down structures, with cramped, poky rooms, utterly unfit for habitation'. He stated that every hovel is a gambling shop and every Chinaman a gambler.' At the time of Brennan's report the camp had a population of 134, including 113 Chinese, eleven married European women, 17 children and four prostitutes. Six Chinese worked in the stores, 20 in the cook-shop, one was a watchmaker, and 65 were labourers. At Albury the camp was located near the banks of the Murray River and had a total population of 110, of whom there were 90 Chinese men, five European married women, 11 children and four prostitutes.[199]

The Hay camp was located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, and in 1883 it had a total population of 124, including 100 Chinese, five European married women, 14 children, and five prostitutes. Five Chinese worked as storekeepers, 12 as gardeners, 10 as fruiterers, 66 as labourers, one as a doctor, and six in the cook shop.[200] According to John Houston's reminiscences, the huts in the camp each had an underground room for opium smoking and gambling, and were inter-connected by boarded-up passages. A local informant at the time, Alex Macleay, recalled that it was the custom of the 'young bloods' of the day to wander through the passages to watch the Chinese playing Fan Tan and smoking opium, and that it was possible to travel several hundred metres underground without surfacing. Whether or not there were underground tunnels is difficult to determine, but it is logical for there to have been underground rooms to escape the heat, if nothing else. One such room still exists at the former Freemason's Lodge.[201] Commenting mainly on the Chinese expertise in cabbage growing, a Pastoral Times reporter provided some interesting insights into the small Chinese community at Hay in 1867, remarking that

> John mixes but little with Europeans or whites of any kind, and we have half- a dozen of them all gathered together in one hut, perhaps of one room, laying about in bunks in a half dreamy condition, many of them from the effects of opium, but rarely from the effects of intoxicating drinks.[202]

The camp survived for many years, though by 1911 a correspondent stated that 'there would not appear to be more than half-a dozen Chinese in the now very much reduced Chinese quarter of Hay'.[203] Not all the Chinese people in Hay lived in the main camp or in the main town precincts. A heritage assessment of the levee areas at Hay in 2010 has disclosed that at one of them, Lang's Crossing, a

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198 Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', pp.1-2.

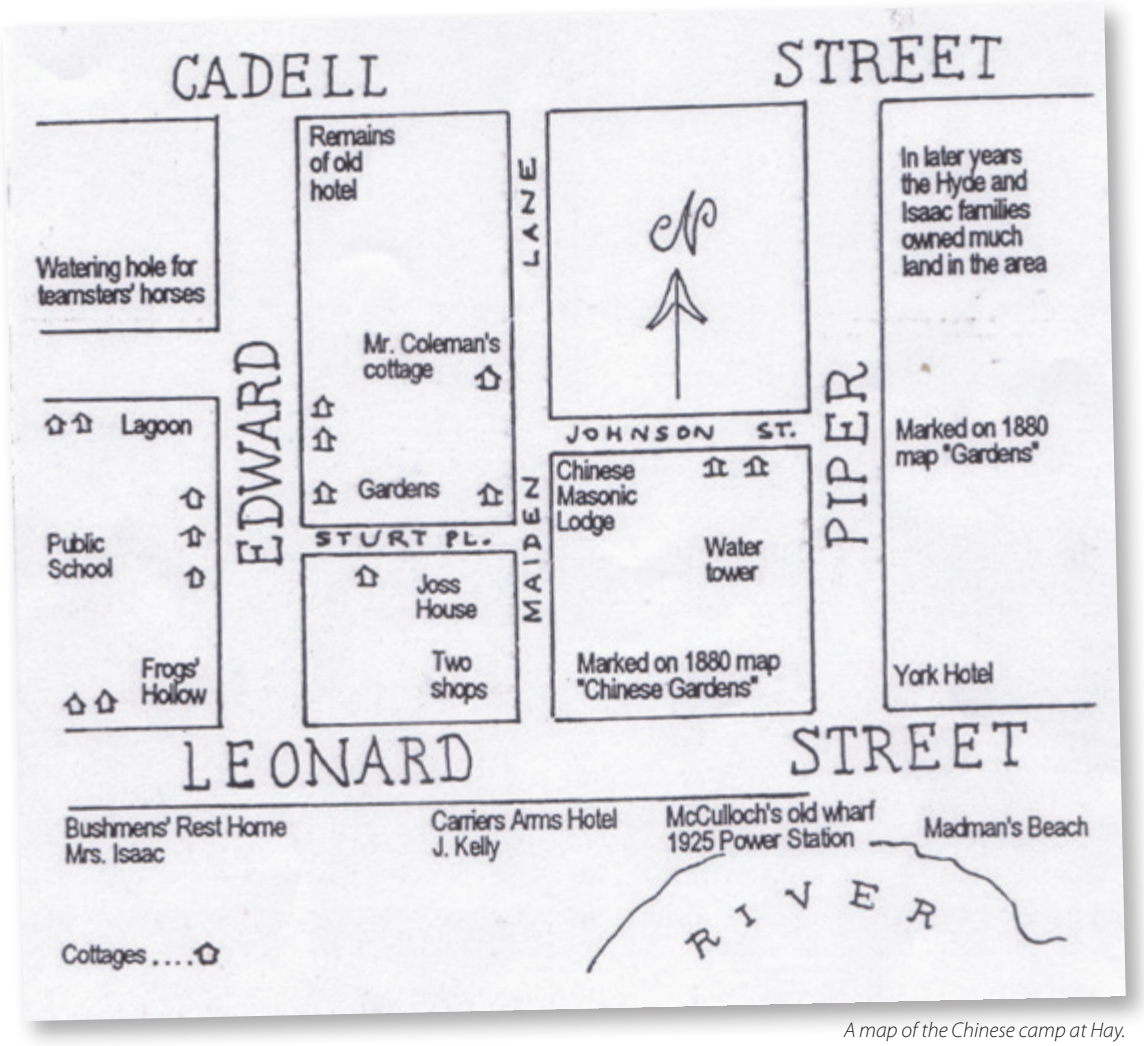
199 Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', pp.1-2.

200 Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', pp.1-2.

201 John Houston, 'Meandering with the Murrumbidgee', *Back to Hay Week, 75th Anniversary Celebrations, 4th to 9th November 1947,* Matthews Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1947.

202 *Pastoral Times,* 6 April 1867.

203 *Riverine Grazier,* 10 March 1911.



A map of the Chinese camp at Hay.
O. Japp

large historic artefact cluster assessed as of high local heritage significance contained remains of early European and Chinese settlement dating from the 1860s to 1920s. Aboriginal artefacts were also found in the same area. An Aboriginal spokesperson, Gubba Woods, remarked that he had a strong personal memory of some Chinese and Aboriginal people living in close proximity along the Murrumbidgee River, southeast of Hay, and perhaps near Tupra Station to the west. The recent heritage study lends some support to this assertion, and the claim makes sense, for both were marginalised people, and would have had common interests, perhaps inter-marrying as well.[204]

Built mainly of wood, with linings and ceilings of hessian and paper, and mostly shingle roofs, the Chinese houses in the camps were very susceptible to fire. In these situations all thoughts of ethnicity were cast firmly aside, with people of all classes, creeds and races assisting the local fire brigade. At Hay in March 1891, houses belonging to Willie Hing, Lim Kin, and Sin Sam were destroyed by a fire, and another was almost entirely pulled to pieces and removed to prevent the fire's progress. None of the buildings or contents were insured, the companies being reluctant to accept the risks of Chinese camps. Lim Kin, a wool scourer and contractor, valued his losses at £80, including £40 in notes. Willie Hing managed to save a piano, a few chairs, a table and some clothes but lost all else. The house was worth about £20, and the contents including £20 in notes, were valued at £80. In October the Council decided to lay water to the camp to help with fire fighting, conditional on the Chinese residents

[204] Black Mountain Projects, *Archaeological Heritage Assessment. Stage 1 Levee Upgrade,* 2010, p.2, 24; discussions with Gubba Woods, December 2008.

paying for it. One resident, Long Jim, agreed to pay for half.[205]

Much worse was a fire in March 1893, which destroyed six houses. The housesbelonged to Georgina Smith, Hong Wo (occupied by George Chuck Kee), Gan Tip, Loy Goon and Wong Pack (unoccupied). Also destroyed were a lodging house owned by Peter Sing and the clubhouse, which adjoined the temple. The temple was partly destroyed. A reporter said the camp was divided into two parts by a lane about five metres wide, running north and south, and the houses were built mainly of wood, with linings and ceilings of hessian and paper and mostly shingle roofs. The buildings were huddled together as closely as possible, which was 'very conductive to the rapid spread of fire'. In the front of the camp, Chinese men and women were removing their household goods and chattels as fast as they could, with many Europeans helping the firemen and the Chinese. Special efforts were made to save the temple and its contents and a number of leading citizens 'earned the grateful thanks of the Chinese for the very timely assistance they rendered in the removal of the ornaments and furniture from the building'. A number of destitute Chinese, who were provided lodging free of charge by the Chinese Freemason's Lodge, occupied the clubhouse. None of the buildings or their contents were insured. At the time the fire broke out a number of male and female residents of the camp were enjoying a dance in Chuck Kee's house to the accompaniment of an accordion. The fire began in Georgina Smith's house. She had lived at the camp for 10 years and had only recently bought the house from Sarah Jackson. She estimated her losses at £200. On the night in question she had gone to Mrs Chuck Kee's house for the dance. An inquest found that the fire had been deliberately lit. Smith said that she had noticed a sulphurous smell and another witnesss, Ah Yee, said he heard a fizzing sound and saw two balls of fire ascending from Smith's yard like sky rockets. Afterwards small packets of phosphorous used for rabbit poisoning were found on Smith's roof. It was an easy product to obtain and the Chinese residents offered a reward for any information on the arsonist.[206]

In October 1897 it was the turn of the Narrandera camp. House after house was devoured by fire until the fifth from the western end was reached. The flames were finally arrested by chopping down one of the buildings. All that was left of the camp were the first five buildings on the right side at the entrance. Sam Yett was an 'exceptionally heavy loser'.[207] The Sydney Empire correspondent was less than sympathetic, referring to the

> great impromptu display of Chinese fireworks, that in the end left the second largest Chinese camp in the colony nothing much more than a lot of white ashes...if all the Chinese camps of the colony deserved an evil reputation as well as this Narrandera one, I would have much pleasure in photographing their ashes as I have in this case.'

According to the writer the camp had about 40 buildings and at New Years Eve when festivals were on as many as 600 people would be there. 'And ever there was gambling and ever there was vice', bewailed the correspondent, 'Why are such places allowed to foul our fair land? But fire is a great purifier, and the Narandera [sic] camp is now quite clean'. By the following year the camp had been largely rebuilt.[208]

The Deniliquin camp met a similar fate in January 1900, when an elderly Chinese storekeeper, Lee Him, fell asleep while reading a Chinese book, and knocked over a lamp. Within half an hour almost the entire camp was destroyed. The fire brigade attended, but with little effect as the water pressure was

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[205] *Riverine Grazier,* 24, 26 March, 27 October 1891, 28, 30 March 1893.

[206] *Riverine Grazier,* 28, 30 March 1893.

[207] *Narrandera Ensign,* 8 October 1897.

[208] *Narrandera Ensign,* 8, 22 April 1898.

The remains of the Narrandera Chinese camp after a cataclysmic fire in 1897.
Sydney Mail, October 23, 1897. National Archives of Australia

very poor at that end of the town, and only three buildings were saved. About £1000 in property and merchandise was lost and about 20 buildings were completely destroyed. None of the buildings or stock were insured. Wee Due, a storekeeper, lost £200 of stock, and the main storekeeper in the camp, Sun Hi Loy, who had only just received goods worth £200 for the Chinese New Year, lost all his stock. There were also serious losses of cash, Wong Hee, another storekeeper, losing £150 and Ah Chan losing £150. Lee Him later died from his injuries. Not everyone was sympathetic to the victims, a local resident expressing the wish that the camp, which he called 'Rats Castle' would not be reconstructed.[209]

The camps were predominantly male domains, which meant that most men's social and family lives were pursued largely outside a family environment. Engaging in sexual relations involved crossing the racial and cultural divide, with partners and prostitutes sought from the local non-Chinese population.[210] Most social activity took place in the temples, lodges, gambling houses and opium rooms, although home visits and entertainments were frequent, especially when women were involved. These activities and liaisons drew constant criticism in the press, with the issue of morality always to the fore. With few people to champion their interests, the Chinese men and their womenfolk, married or otherwise, were portrayed in an overwhelming negative light.

A Wagga Wagga correspondent, visiting the Narrandera camp in 1880, was scathing, and suggested

[209] *Pastoral Times,* 27 January, 3 February 1900.

[210] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW.* p.10; Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.55-56.

that the Chinese be 'summarily ejected or transported to Timbuctoo or some other place'. He remarked that the camp was inhabited, 'as in all other places, by the vilest of the vile', and that

> By some means or other he has managed to decoy a number of European girls, who prefer the society of the heathen Chinee to those of their own nationality, and have imbibed that noxious habit of opium-smoking, which they seem to relish with feelings of angelic delight'...one witness testified to the fact that he saw in a room at the Chinese camp two young girls, who were suffering from the effects of the fumes of opium, lying on a bunk in one of those wretched hovels.[211]

In March 1888 a Narrandera correspondent known as 'Whaler', described the Narrandera camp as 'a perfect inferno, indescribable by any writer who possesses not the power of Dante himself'. Passing through the camp late at night he found Mrs Elizabeth Ah Fee engaged in a dispute with a Mrs Smith; the language from which must have 'ruffled the placid waters of the Murrumbidgee, as well as the fishes beneath'. Smith's Chinese husband came to her assistance, Smith in the meantime threatening to tear Ah Fee's 'drunken liver' out. The combatants were later joined by a large woman known as 'Big Maggie', Ah Fee retiring inside and 'keeping up a barrage of foul language' until the others retreated.[212] Whaler's observations raise an important question often at the heart of much of the anti-Chinese feeling of the day. Lizzie Ah Fee, or 'Tiger Lil', as she had been formerly known at the Beechworth Chinese camp, was often before the Narrandera court. Her exploits filled many an issue of the local press and helped bring the camp into instant disrepute. She was not alone, but rather one of the better known camp women of disrepute.[213]

The Hay camp had its problem women as well, the local correspondent referring in June 1888 to 'a fleshy molecular aggregation - known as Annie Singleton' (Annie Ah Leong). She was described as a 'female Lucifer', with 'almost undisputed sway amongst her fellow inhabitants, her rule being one of might and intimidation'. He continued that 'In any case that comes from the Chinese quarter Singleton is always the central figure'. Her latest exploit was with a man named Clifton from whom she allegedly stole a pound note, with even stronger evidence that she violently assaulted him with a tumbler, Clifton appearing in court with 'plastered nose and a bloodstained head'. However, prior to the hearing she was seen in a 'sheltered nook at the end of the courthouse' plying Clifton with a liquid looking suspiciously like whiskey, the unsatisfactory nature of his evidence suggesting that the two had made their 'mutual apologies'. The reporter commented that the police had their eyes on Singleton and in this case had worked hard to rid her from the town, but without success. She was again before the court in October 1891 when she was fined £1 for using insulting words to another woman.[214]

Another serial offender at the Hay camp was Annie Ah Pew, possibly the same Annie Ah Pew that had frequented the Narrandera camp. She appeared in court in May 1891 on a charge of obscene language, having been under the influence at the time, and was fined 40s.[215] Another Hay camp lady to appear frequently in court was Sarah Jackson. In September 1892 she was fined £2 for using obscene language during a Salvation Army service at the camp.[216] In another instance, in October 1896, Sarah Smith was fined £5 plus sundry other costs for common assault on Annie Ah Pew. Ah Pew was on her way to and from the hotel when she was sworn at by Jackson. Angered by these

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[211] *Daily Advertiser,* 24 August 1880.

[212] *Narrandera Ensign,* 29 March 1888.

[213] *Narrandera Ensign*, 29 September 1891, 10 March, 15 September 1893.

[214] *Riverine Grazier,* 5 June 1888, 16 October 1891.

[215] *Riverine Grazier,* 12 May 1891.

[216] *Riverine Grazier,* 16 September 1892.

utterings she slapped Jackson with her hand, Jackson retaliating by emerging from her house with a knife and chasing Ah Pew through the camp, striking her several times with the knife. Ah Pew claimed that Jackson had attacked her before, once at Beechworth and again at Albury. Jackson admitted to drinking heavily at the time of the attack.[217]

The comments of Annie Singleton, otherwise known as Annie Ah Leong, and Annie Ah Pew in a camp disturbance at Hay in January 1898 are revealing. Described as a well known camp habitué Singleton entered the box with a black eye, a bruised cheek, a bouquet of flowers, 'a gaily coloured parachute, and manifestly the worse for liquor'. She prefaced her observations by saying that she had been drinking for a week, and readily admitted that she had served a sentence of 12 months in Goulburn gaol for stealing. When asked a question as to the character of the accused, Rose Allen, she remarked to the bench 'none of us are any good in the Chinese Camp. We wouldn't be there if we were, would we, sir?' She said that May Gardiner had blackened her eye and Rose Allen had bit her arm and bruised her shoulder. When asked if she were drunk Annie Ah Pew replied 'I drink all day, you don't think I can keep count of 'em do you?' Allen was given 14 days gaol and fined 10s.[218] In May 1899 a major fracas occurred amongst some of the women at the Hay camp. The main incident involved an assault charge by Agnes Thompson against Nellie Booth. At the time the women were with Annie Ah Pew, Nellie Egan and Mrs Chuck Kee at Mary Wilson's house. Thompson was struck in the eye and had her hair pulled by Nellie Booth. According to other evidence, Thompson was drunk at the time and did her fair share of hair pulling as well. She was charged on a cross summons with assaulting Nellie Booth. Both women were fined £1 each.[219]

Many camp habitués were charged with vagrancy and having no lawful means of support. One such woman was Ellen Driscoll. In early December 1893 she was fined £2 for using obscene language at the camp. She was under the influence of drink and very disorderly and had been cautioned by the police and given a chance to leave town, which she said she could not afford to do. Not long after she was charged with being a common prostitute and behaving in a riotous manner in a public place. She had broken some furniture belonging to Ah Poy and on the same night had been found wandering around the camp in an 'excited and agitated state'. She was sentenced to three months in the Hay gaol. In October 1894 she was again sentenced to three months gaol for having no visible means of support, the magistrate stating that there appeared no prospect of reform in her character. When arrested at the Chinese camp she had brought £5 from under a bed, and run away. The police stated that she had been seen soliciting men and was connected with the worst of the females. Following her last release from gaol she had not been known to do any work, and had five previous convictions, three for being a common prostitute and two for using bad language. Several complaints had been made about her, one being for robbing a man of £3.[220] Another fallen woman, Kate Johnson. was sent to Hay gaol in August 1894 for one month on a charge of vagrancy. She had been arrested the previous day in Leonard St for being drunk and using insulting language. A month previously she had been locked up for her protection, and the day after her discharge had been arrested for using obscene language. She had been seen soliciting men and frequenting the Chinese camp, and had previously been convicted under different names for various offences.[221]

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[217] *Riverine Grazier,* 2 October 1896.

[218] *Riverine Grazier*, 4 February 1899.

[219] *Riverine Grazier,* 30 May 1899.

[220] *Riverine Grazier,* 12, 29 December 1893, 23 October 1894.

[221] *Riverine Grazier,* 28 August 1894.

In May 1895 Sarah Burton was charged with having no lawful means of support, one police officer saying that he had never known her to do any work and had seen her wandering about the streets soliciting men. Another policeman said she was the 'associate of thieves and women of ill-fame, and was an habitué of the Chinese Camp'. She was gaoled for three months.[222] More fortunate was Annie Ah Ping, who was arraigned on a similar charge in July 1895. The police stated that she had never been known to do any work and that although she lived with Ah Ping, he too did not work, and she supported him. Ah Ping stated that he was a wool-scourer and general labourer and earned as much as £75 a year. He picked up zinc in the dull period of the year and sold it for £16 a ton in Sydney, having picked up five tons in one year. The case was dismissed.[223]

More heart wrenching were the cases involving children such as eight year old Henrietta Sing in April 1892 and 11 year old Annie Smith in November 1893. Henrietta had lived in the house of Mrs Ah Leong (Annie Singleton), who lived with her Chinese husband and was known to the police as a common prostitute, and was almost always drunk. Other prostitutes lived in the house and men were seen coming and going frequently. Her mother lived at Wilcannia and had given the child to Maggie Hill, a prostitute, who in turn passed Henrietta to her sister, also a prostitute. There had been complaints about the child's treatment. She had been made to buy drinks from an adjacent hotel, and had been beaten viciously for any misdemeanour. Annie Smith was found to be living with a prostitute at the camp, Sarah Ah Pat, the police having previously seen prostitutes, convicted thieves and vagrants mixing with the child, who was often asked to go to hotels to buy drink. Both girls were removed from the camp and sent to an Industrial School, the parting of Annie and her foster-mother being' very affecting'.[224]

Deniliquin had its share of problem women as well, the Pastoral Times reporter stating on 20 May 1882 that

> When we reach the relationship between male and female decency ends and debauchery begins. It is only in rare instances that the Chinamen is married – he prefers keeping a mistress who is invariably a ribald outcast. In the houses some rooms are leased to the abandoned females who frequent the local camp to the number of at least a dozen. Exorbitant rates are charged – as much as 7s for a room per week. No man can walk into the camp without being openly solicited.

Brennan had quite a bit to say on the European women at the camps.[225] He remarked that some of the European women who were married to Chinese men appeared respectable and kept aloof altogether from the bad characters. Their homes too were clean and comfortable and displayed the combined taste of both the Chinese and the Europeans. He also noted that the Chinese, and presumably their wives as well, showed great interest in the education of their children, and at the camps visited all of suitable age were attending school. Of the less respectable wives he was scathing

> Others of them made the lives of their unfortunate Chinese husbands miserable; they conduct themselves regardless of consequence...When not at war with their husbands they fight with one another, seek redress in the police courts, and the Chinese husbands have to pay the penalties incurred by their European wives, and consider themselves fortunate that they too have not been included in the litigation; most of those women have been prostitutes for years before they get married to the Chinese, and an alliance under such unfavourable auspices seldom produces any reformation in the moral character of the women.

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[222] *Riverine Grazier,* 7 May 1895.

[223] *Riverine Grazier,* 30 July 1895.

[224] *Riverine Grazier,* 1 April 1892, 3 November 1893.

[225] Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', pp.2-5.

He was even more critical of the prostitutes and their clientele. There were 37 prostitutes in the camps, all between 18 and 30 years, but occasionally the camps contained twice that number.

> The police have on some occasions hunted many as ten young men from off a Chinese bed, where the central figure would be one of the females already mentioned, and as soon as the police left the camps those fellow returned again...In the shearing season the camps, particularly those at Wagga Wagga and Narrandera , are thronged with shearers and others; they indulge in drink and contribute largely to the disquieting elements observable at that period. The women too find their harvest set in, assume a recklessness previously unnoticeable-to get money, when 'sly grog' selling, prostitution, gambling and robbery are resorted to for that purpose.

Brennan stated that it was those females and most of the disreputable married women who were the 'principal cause of all the disturbance, robberies and crimes, which have transformed the Chinese camps into dens of immorality'. The European women had committed more than three offences to every Chinese one and had been instrumental in most of the cases for which the Chinese had been prosecuted. About two thirds of the camp women were confirmed opium smokers, however, he had not been aware of even one case where a female living in the camps was there other than by her own free will. The Chinese allowed them full liberty of action, and in most cases made them the repositories of all their belongings and treated them with great kindness.

His views were echoed some years later by Sir Frederick Darley, the Chief Justice, in a letter he wrote to Sir Henry Parkes. The letter was cited by a member of the legislative Council in May 1888 in the debate on the Influx of Chinese Restriction Bill. Sir Frederick stated that when on circuit in April of that year he was

> Much struck with the crime traceable to the existence of the Chinese camps at the different towns, particularly Deniliquin, Narrandera, and Wagga Wagga. I found that these camps are frequented not only by the Chinese, but by the low criminal class of the white population; these latter encouraged there by a number of white women (prostitutes) who have their abode in the camps.
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> These women...claim some Chinamen as a husband, or actually go through the ceremony of marriage with a Chinaman, so as by this means to obtain as it were a letter of license to live and pursue her avocation in the camp. I need not say that these women are nearly all opium smokers, and the most wretched and abandoned of their sex...I tried one case of bigamy, a woman having married two Chinamen, in order to be allowed to live in the camp.[226]

Two principal comments can be made about the European women in the camps. Firstly, there were not that many of them, 74 all up according to Brennan, of whom perhaps two thirds fell into a rowdy and disreputable category by varying degrees, and of these not all of them found their way into the courts, at least not on a regular basis. Women such as Lizzie Ah Fee and Annie Singleton may have been the exception rather than the rule, but their high profile meant that they were rarely out of the public gaze, confirming for many people that the camps were dens of iniquity. And along with that opprobrium went the reputation of the Chinese men, who were seen as harbourers and abetters. Secondly, as historian Dinah Hales has so convincingly argued in her study of Chinese–European families in central western NSW, it is a distorted picture. She referred to the 'ubiquitous derogatory description of the women in these relationships' and observed that 'Chinese–European relationships and marriages were more common than previously perceived'. The majority of the women in her sample contended with 'tragedy, shame, prejudice, hard work and sometimes terrible poverty', and in the process 'successfully raised families, large or small, thus demonstrating stability and competence'.[227]

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[226] *New South Wales Parliamentary Debates,* NSW Legislative Council, Vol.33, 1887-1888, p.5188.

[227] Dinah Hales,'Lost Histories: Chinese-European Families of Central Western New South Wales, 1850-1880', *Journal of Australian Colonial History,* Vol. 6, 2004: pp.93-112.

In the Riverina many of the European women married to Chinese men lived in the camps, but a large number, perhaps even more, lived elsewhere and were not part of the camp scene.

Another aspect of the camps to cause much anguish was the perceived lack of sanitation. At Wagga Wagga in 1881 a local correspondent bemoaned that 'it was not necessary to go to Sydney to evidence the filth and dirt in which the Chinese residents live'. Similar residences could be seen at any time in the lower end of Fitzmaurice St, where 'numbers of Chinamen are huddled together in rooms not sufficiently ventilated or large enough for dog kennels, while the stench arising therefrom is disgusting in the extreme'. He claimed that heaps of putrid matter had been left at several of the back entrances.[228] His views were to a degree corroborated by sub-Inspector Brennan, who in his 1884 report stated that the sanitary condition of the Wagga camp was extremely bad, as in addition to the absence of drainage the water-closets had become neglected, and the smell in the hot weather was 'sickening'. However, for the most part the houses were good and the sleeping accommodation 'fairly decent and sufficient', although when an influx of Chinese men takes place from the country they were crowded'.[229]

The reports on the camps could be contradictory. For example, in 1881 it was reported that although the Albury camp stood on low lying and poorly drained ground and that the dwellings were cramped and of a 'rickety, rough, slab board construction', it did not, with one important exception, 'afford room for any grave anxiety on sanitary grounds'. The report found that the 'kitchen, eating rooms, shops, sleeping places, and "Fan Tan" apartments were clean, well ordered, and smelt far sweeter than some back slums in European quarters'. The one exception was the arrangement for the disposal of nightsoil, which was exacerbated by the poor drainage of the camp. Although the cesspits were located in a corner of the camp away from the residents, they were normally full and overflowing, draining through the whole flat.[230] In his 1884 report, however, Brennan described the Albury camp buildings as 'decayed and dilapidated' with their interiors displaying the 'least comfort and the worst accommodation' of all the camps inspected. Overall, in each of the camps there were 'a few nicely furnished rooms occupied by some well to do Chinese or some married Chinese', but they were few compared with the 'many tenements which in hot weather must 'breathe pestilence because of the neglect of all hygienic laws'. While Brennan did not provide specific details on sanitary conditions at the Hay and Deniliquin camps, it is clear that he was unimpressed with most of the camps.[231]

The most frequently commented upon leisure activities of the Chinese men in the Riverina in the late 18th century were opium smoking and gambling. While no mention has been found of Chinese attendance at racehorse meetings in the Riverina, it was a popular activity with the Chinese elsewhere in NSW, and it can be assumed that the same must have been the case here: they were not excluded from doing so. By the mid 1900s many Chinese families were involved in horse, harness and greyhound racing, and a myriad of other mainstream sporting and recreational activities, such as football. Many of the camp residents were also literate in their own language and brought books from China or purchased them from the city merchants and importers.

Gambling took place in the Riverina camps all year round. sub-Inspector Brennan and Quong Tart considered gambling to be a major concern, and recommended that Chinese gaming in all its forms should be 'swept away', not only because of its effects upon the Chinese, but on European men and

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[228] *Daily Advertiser,* 21 June 1881.

[229] *Brennan, 'Chinese camps', p.2.*

[230] *Border Post*, 25 June 1881.

[231] Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', p.2.

boys. The principal game was "Pak ah pu" or "my pow Chong", commonly known as the "Chinese lottery"; the other was Fan Tan. According to Wagga based historian Sherry Morris, Fan Tan was played on a table on which rested a square sheet of metal, the sides of the square numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. Players chose a side on which to place their bets. The croupier then took a handful of brass coins and threw them in a heap on the table, covering a part of them with a cup. After sweeping the remainder of the coins away, he lifted the cup and counted the coins beneath it in sets of four. The players who had their money on the side of the square corresponding to the number of coins remaining after the last four had been subtracted trebled their stakes. If there were no coins remaining, then four became the winning number. Chinese coins were used as tokens.[232]

Chinese coins, excavated from Fitzmaurice Street, Wagga Wagga.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

A fulsome account of the lotteries appeared in the *Riverina Grazier* of 5 August 1890. At Hay five or six of the wealthier Chinese had formed a bank and appointed Chinese agents on commission to sell the tickets. Each ticket was numbered from 1 to 80 in Chinese characters, and sold for prices of between 6d to 15s each, the one shilling being most in demand. The purchaser marked off 10 of the 80 numbers, the agent retaining a duplicate, which he handed back to the bankers. Drawings were conducted in a partly partitioned room known as the bank. The eighty papers were posted on a board, taken down one at a time, rolled into pellets and put in a jar. The jar was shaken up, and the tickets taken out one at a time and put, 20 in each, in four basins numbered 1.2.3.4. A clerk drew one of the four numbers to decide which basin to draw from. That done, the other basins were set aside and the 20 papers from

[232] Sherry Morris, 'Chinese Quarter Gambling', *Daily Advertiser,* 17 May 1927.

the selected basin drawn out, opened and affixed to the board. The clerk then marked off the numbers on the bank and result slips. Once this was done the slips were handed to Chinese emissaries and distributed throughout the camp and the next day around town. The minimum correct numbers was five. No matter what the profits of the bank were the original capital stood, the profits being divided by the syndicate as they were made. Hence, there was a possibility, albeit remote, that the banks could go bust, and the prospect of fraudulent dealing. However, the correspondent conceded that 'to all appearances the lottery is conducted fairly'.

In 1883 an observer commented that there were no less than two Chinese 'banks' in Wagga Wagga with a 'roaring business'. One Chinese resident had said that one banker had netted £600 since arriving in Wagga Wagga about 12 months ago. As far as the game was concerned it appeared to be carried on honestly enough, and drew a large crowd of onlookers and gamblers

> Numbers of Chinese residents are so fairly successful that they follow the occupation 'professionally', others who are induced into its enticing mesh spend their all, and then go begging. Apprentice boys and others have been known to invest monies that have puzzled many to know where they got it from. A young man employed in the town was so successful as to invest a few shillings and won £15. Others have made various sums, averaging from 10s to £10. All this is very well so far as showing the honesty with which the bank is conducted, but is it not demoralising to those children of our own race who rush off daily to buy tickets? If Chinamen were to confine these banking operations to themselves Europeans would not complain, but when it attracts children of tender years, and these become so infatuated with the game (if it may be called so), then it is time for the law to step in and stay any further proceedings of the kind.[233]

At Hay the storekeepers at the camp did a large trade in lottery tickets, but most of them were sold on the streets by agents appointed by the banks. Agents also operated in the bush at Oxley, Maude, Booligal and other rural centres. In its report of 5 August 1890 the *Riverine Grazier* remarked that provided the Chinese lived strictly by themselves they [the paper] would be much less interested in their practices. The newspaper regarded the Chinese camp as a sort of 'social plague spot', not because of any inherent objections to the practices therein, but to the extent they impacted on the morals of the Europeans outside. At one time the sellers of lottery tickets were confined to the camp, and the existence of the lotteries was known only to relatively few. But over the last three or four months itinerant agents had been appointed, and they had 'carried on a most active canvass of the town'. The writer contended that some residents could probably afford to throw their money away, but the greater number of those affected, 'shop boys and girls, youths of all kinds, servants male and female, hotel servants especially', could not afford to lose their money in this way. Worse still was the age of some of the participants, some of whom were children.

Gambling was a popular past-time at Deniliquin as well, and not just with the Chinese. In the Pastoral Times report of 20 May 1882 the correspondent said

> Let us go into one of the shops and see Fan Tan played on a Saturday night. The room is packed with Chinamen like sardines in a tin, and the atmosphere like that of a charnel house. The "yellow agony" is relieved here and there by the presence of European men who ought to know better, and lads who ought to be whipped, and now and then one of those flaunting jades, so apparently indispensable to the composition of a Chinese camp. She thrusts herself forward to the betting table and renders the den more hideous by the foulness of her language... The table on which the gambling is carried on is a rickety structure not more than eight feet by four feet. Near one end of it the croupier or boss seats himself, and on his right hand is the banker, who rakes in the winnings.

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[233] *Daily Advertiser,* 31 May 1883.

According to the correspondent, Fan Tan was a fair game. It was 'equal betting all round, except that the banker keeps one penny out of every shilling the gambler wins - thus the odds against a man winning are shortened from 12 to 11'. The Fan Tan tables only operated at specified hours during the evening and night; but the games of "che pie" and "coot pie" were carried on at all hours during the day and night. Coot pie was a type of card game, and "che pie" had some similarity to the game of dominoes. Apparently, Europeans had never acquired an insight into either, so they were only played by the Chinese. Of the lottery, the reporter stated that the odds were heavily stacked against the gambler, with the odds against winning first prize at 362,880 to 1.

> But the chances of winning £80 for sixpence prove too fascinating for youngsters of unsteady morals and the result is they nibble till their pocket money is exhausted and gradually sink to embezzlement'.[234]

The perceived prevalence of gambling in Sydney led to the establishment of the Royal Commission into Alleged Chinese Gambling and Immorality in 1891. Gambling was a point of contention within the Chinese community, the wealthier Chinese merchants seeing it as a threat to their own interests.[235] The 1891 inquiry concluded that the Chinese were addicted to gambling with about one fifth of Sydney's Chinese population subsisting on the proceeds of the gambling houses. However, they found that their activities were 'trifling in every respect' when compared to the gambling elsewhere in Sydney. They concluded that the Chinese were a

> singularly peaceable and generally law-abiding section of the community. There is a low percentage of criminality amongst them, and it is not without significance that, owing to the exercise of private charity by the well-to-do towards the poor of their own race, they do not depend or rely to any extent upon the benevolent institutions of this country.[236]

In a statement given to the Commission, one witness, Robert Kee Lam, stated that very few Europeans gambled, it was mainly Chinese. The shearers went amongst the girls – the prostitutes of the Chinese camp – but they did not do much gambling. This statement was to some extent supported by another witness, Mr G.L. Black, a Member of Parliament, who stated that he had visited gambling dens at Hay and Deniliquin, and that Europeans often visited the gambling houses. However, from his statement it is clear that the Europeans he saw had other objectives in mind, rather than gambling. On his visit to Hay he entered a building about 30 to 40 metres long, with an alley way up the centre and three tiers of bunks on either side. Perhaps 100 all up. He saw half a dozen women half dressed lying about drunk, and smoking opium, and in the middle of the floor a prominent solicitor dancing about with no clothes on.[237]

Opium smoking was another popular activity, and to a large degree substituted for the drinking of alcohol, which was largely the preserve of Europeans. The use of opium in China dates back to at least the 1700s, and attempts by Chinese authorities to limit the trade resulted in the Opium Wars, and the Treaties of Nanking (1842) and Tientsin (1858), which ensured that Chinese ports remained open to opium and other trade. Opium smoking followed the Chinese migrants overseas, and was commonplace in the Chinese camps in the Riverina and elsewhere in regional NSW. Implements and containers related to the consumption of opium have been found at a number of places in the Riverina, and include pipes, parts of opium tins, opium scales and tincture of opium vials. Just how widespread the practice,

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[234] Bushby, *Saltbush Country,* pp.270-271.

[235] Lydon, *Many Inventions,* pp.117-118.

[236] Lydon, *Many Inventions,* pp.121-122.

[237] Report of the Royal Commission into alleged Chinese gambling and immorality and charges of bribery against members of the police force, NSW Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings,* 1891-92, Vol.8, p.143.

or more importantly the level of addiction was, is however unclear. Lydon cites the comments of the Commissioners in 1891 that opium addiction was class based, and was not used by the better class of merchants, hawkers and cabinet makers.[238]

Opium pipe and scales, tincture of opium vials and parts of opium tins. Opium use was imposed on China by the British, particularly after the Opium Wars and followed Chinese migrants overseas. Its use was commonplace in the Chinese camps in the Riverina.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga and private collections

Opium smoking was not, however, illegal, and obviously many Chinese men and Europeans found it relaxing. In the Pastoral Times report on the Deniliquin camp on 20 May 1882 the correspondent commented on one of the opium shops, stating that

> In all the rooms are beds similar to the ordinary nocturnal resting place, and upon these the embryonic and actual opiomaniac regales himself with the insidious beverage. A large pillow is placed on the centre of the side of the lounge– not at the head– and from this two pairs of legs may be generally seen radiating to the corners. An oil lamp, opium pipes and opium upon a small tray are the indispensable adjuncts; and after the usual preparation of the opium by means of a lamp, the pastime commences... the delicious languor which is said to supervene maybe judged from the idle...aspects presented.

On their tour of the Albury camp in 1881 the official party commented that

> the surroundings in these cases were not calculated to raise any very violent feelings of revulsion. That is to say everything about was clean and decent and, beyond the aroma peculiar to opium, there were no obtrusive smells. The inmates of the camp were found pursuing their avocations, and displayed a good humoured indifference as to the presence or object of their visitors. [239]

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[238] Lydon, *Many Inventions*, p.134.

[239] *Border Post,* 25 June 1881.

sub-Inspector Brennan and Quong Tart made particular reference to the use of opium in the Chinese camps in the Riverina, particularly by the women, stating that an 'infatuation for opium has sunk those females to a "lower depth" of social degradation'. They claimed that about two thirds of the camp women were confirmed opium-smokers, although some were trying to wean themselves from the habit. They noted that here was 'hardly a Chinese house that does not contain all the requisites for opium-smoking. All the Chinese smoke opium, and many of them are poor, owing to the purchase of this expensive drug to satiate their longings'. By the early 1880s a few Chinese clergymen and respectable merchants in the colony began to voice their opposition to opium smoking and agitated for prohibition. Quong Tart was an active campaigner, and in 1883 generated a petition with 4,000 signatures to the Executive Council of NSW. In his submission to the Brennan report he stated that opium smoking was the 'fulcrum on which rests all vice, immorality and corruption within the Chinese'.[240] In the 1890s Chinese newspapers in NSW also began to urge their countrymen to cease opium smoking, but vested interests in the form of income from tariffs and income for suppliers and sellers and the relatively confined nature of the opium trade militated against any action. In Victoria and NSW the Chinese Empire Reform Associations and Chinese Anti-Opium Leagues, began an anti-opium crusade, gaining support from influential Australian organisations such as the Masonic societies and the churches. Federal legislation in December 1905 prohibited the import of opium except for medicinal use, but sent the trade underground into the hands of illegal smuggling and trading networks.[241]

Some local observers were sympathetic to the plight of the Chinese opium users and gamblers. Following the release of Brennan's report the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* remarked that it was not fair to prohibit its consumption based on overuse by a few. He reminded his readers of 'the terrible consequences that would ensue upon suddenly depriving our pigtail neighbours of their only source of consolation'.[242] A letter to the editor from 'Justice' was even more sympathetic, stating that the effects of excessive opium use were far less than for alcohol. He considered it very unfair to increase the duty on opium and deny the Chinese men 'that small luxury which in many cases is necessary'. The same writer noted that Fan Tan was only 'played by those in a position to play – storekeepers, cooks, ringbarkers, etc', and that the Chinese lottery was beneficial, 'for most Chinese give a proportion of money to the local hospital'. He also commented that he had never heard of one case where a Chinese man had tried 'to induce a respectable girl to leave her home and live an immoral life', or had encouraged them to 'smoke, and much less to drink'.[243]

Although the Chinese did not consume alcohol on the same scale as Europeans they purchased large quantities of European beverages such as whisky and brandy, and Chinese beverages such as Tiger wine in their distinctive purple and mauve glazed bottles, for use in their various festivals, in particular Chinese New Year, and for domestic use. Chinese men were rarely ever drunk and even more rarely prosecuted for such. One of the few such cases involved Tommy Chong Why, who, at Hay in September 1896, was fined one shilling for being drunk and five shillings for using objectionable language in the main street of the Hay camp and in front of a policeman. Probably he was sorely provoked, one Sarah Jackson allegedly threatening to split his head open with an axe if she caught him giving cigarettes, or presumably being otherwise over-friendly towards one Florie Anderson.[244] A

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240 Brennan, 'Chinese Camps', pp.7-8.

241 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain,* pp.179-188; Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.65-71.

242 *Daily Advertiser,* 8 January 1884.

243 *Daily Advertiser,* 17 April 1884.

244 *Riverine Grazier,* 11 September 1896.

similar incident occurred at Tumut in July 1879, the local correspondent stating that the residents of Fitzroy St were startled at night by the most unearthly yells from the Chinese store, followed by loud lusty swearing and terrible profanity, gradually subsiding into sobs and moans. Police came and found Ah Ti ('hitherto an exemplary Chinaman') hugging the verandah pole. He went quietly with the police, but then broke away and had to be restrained and put in the lockup. The next day he explained that a young Chinaman had vexed him and he had drunk too much brandy. He was fined five shillings for obscene words and five shillings for drunkenness.[245]

Unfortunately, the mere presence of alcohol on their premises was pretext enough for a police raid, particularly if the defendant was a storekeeper. Thus at Albury in 1879 Ah Wy, the manager and a shareholder of E Gee's store, was found in possession of eight cases of Chinese brandy and numerous other bottles of alcohol. He protested that he had bought the liquor to treat his customers for a week or ten days during the Chinese New Year festivities. He also intended to send each of his customers at the outstations one of two bottles as a New Year's gift.[246] He had over 200 customers in the district to whom he would normally present liquor, and he had never sold any in his store. Fortunately, the explanations were accepted, and the grog returned. A similar case transpired at Deniliquin in 1882, when police confiscated 165 bottles of Chinese brandy from Si Tan's store. Si Tan's lawyer argued that he had not been found selling the liquor and that it had been purchased for other people such as Charlie Ah Foo. It was the practice to consign such goods to one person to save carriage and customs fee. The Bench also had some doubt as to how intoxicating the brandy was, and dismissed the case, ordering that the bottles be restored to the defendant.[247]

Eating together was an important means of cementing bonds and hierarchies within families and friends, and was particularly important in the often lonely confines of the pastoral stations. All the major camps had at least one cook house and sometimes boarding houses. Established practice dictated how to eat, who and what to serve, who should eat first and who should have the best food, though on the pastoral stations the eating arrangements may have been a bit more casual. According to Elizabeth Chong, an award winning writer and exponent of Chinese cooking, dining and ritual were inseparable in China, and 'from the humblest peasant meal to the most elaborate banquet, every mouthful manages to combine nutrition, symbolism and history'. She also commented on the importance of Taoist and Confucian influences in cooking, stating that Confucius could take a large part of the credit for the Chinese obsession with freshness and a 'host of other fundamentals of the cuisine'. [248]

Rice was the staple diet and complemented other foods such as chicken, pork, fish, beans and a variety of green vegetables, of which there were plenty in the Riverina, with its many market gardens. Tea was also an important staple as a drink. It was one of the main goods imported from China and became the key beverage consumed in 19th century Australia. The centrality of tea to colonial life can be seen in the advertisements of James Wong Chuey from Junee and merchants such as Dang Ah Chee and the Mee Ling brothers at their Man Sing store in Temora, and the famous Sydney tea saloons of Quong Tart.

Along with the dietary staples a wide variety of other ingredients peculiar to Chinese cuisine was consumed. Two of the most common were soy sauce and ginger. Other ingredients included chestnuts,

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[245] *Gundagai Times*, 29 July 1879.

[246] *Border Post,* 20 January 1879.

[247] *Daily Advertiser,* 1 June 1882.

[248] Elizabeth Chong, *The Heritage of Chinese Cooking,* Weldon Russell, Sydney, 1993, pp.11-14.

Food and drink containers came in many shapes and sizes. The thick brownware jars were among the most common food containers. Also in frequent use were the wide mouthed or shouldered jars and soy sauce bottles with their distinctive spouts. The most familiar ginger jars to Australians were hexagonal and green glazed with a circular unglazed mouth. Liquor bottles were often referred to as whisky or wine jars and were bulbous at the base. Chinese alcohol also came in green glass bottles very similar in shape to European wine bottles. The containers above were found in various locations around the Riverina.

Private collections

melon seeds, black beans, bean curd, shark fin, canned fish, preserved duck, preserved plums, moon cakes and cooking lard.[249] Jars of ginger were often given as presents to Europeans on Chinese New Year. In her reminiscences, local historian Joan Palmer recalled the Chinese market gardener on Midgeon station approaching her and her siblings as children to present them with a pot of ginger as a New Year's present.[250] Constance Sullivan, in her account of her childhood at upper Adelong, recalled that the Chinese storekeeper Foo Lee sold sugar and flour, liquorice, tinned fish and 'goodness knows what else', and kept a stock of conversation lollies and small, fish-shaped candies, which he handed out freely to the children.[251]

Along with the food came the distinctive Chinese cooking utensils, eating crockery and storage jars. Brownware jars of various shapes and sizes were made from stoneware with brown glaze of different shades and quality. Soy jars had a spout and were usually sealed with a cork. Similar shaped jars also held other liquids such as black vinegar and black molasses. Some jars were of the wide mouthed or shouldered variety, and because of their thickness could hold preserved vegetables, sweet gherkins, sweet bean paste, shrimp paste, salted garlic, salted onion and pickled lemon. Ginger bottles were distinctive, glazed in either greenish blue or mauve colours. The ceramic eating bowls, plates and spoons came in a variety of common designs and styles, such as celadon (or winter green), four seasons, bamboo and double happiness. Celadon glazed bowls had a distinct blue green glaze, with a mark on their base in a cobalt blue glaze. Solid food was eaten with chopsticks made from bamboo and ceramic spoons were used for serving and eating soups and other liquids.[252]

Together with the variety of cooking utensils, storage containers, tableware and ingredients brought from China and used by Chinese residents in the region were many European and locally manufactured

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[249] Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.75-76; Chong, *The Heritage of Chinese Cooking.*

[250] Joan Palmer, *Memories of a Riverina Childhood,* UNSWPress, Sydney, 1993, p.105.

[251] Barnes, *There's Gold,* pp.131-132.

[252] Wilton, *Golden Threads,* pp.75-76.

foods and objects. Traditional items were not always easily or readily available. Evidence of such sharing and mixing is available from work done by archaeologists in Australia and elsewhere. Fragments of pottery and glass suggest efforts by the Chinese to retain traditional rites and eating customs in even the most remote and harsh environments, and their incorporation of local produce and products.[253] Strong evidence of sharing and mixing has been found at the Narrandera Chinese camp. An archaeological survey by Diane Osborne uncovered 309 ceramic fragments, of which 37 per cent were of Chinese origin. The brown stoneware fragments were in about equal distribution with the porcelains, and came largely from storage jars and soy bottles. There were many glass artefacts, most of which were very fragmented. With the exception of a few complete Chinese medicine vials the glass was largely of European origin, probably from alcohol bottles.[254]

[253] Smith, 'Hidden Dragons'; Lydon, *Many Inventions,* pp.95-101.

[254] Diana A. Osborne, The Archaeology of a Riverina Chinatown at Narrandera, a sub thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Archaeology, ANU, November 2008.

Prejudice and Discrimination

By the mid to late 1870s anti-Chinese sentiments in NSW were becoming increasingly prevalent as a result of increased Chinese migration to the Australian colonies such as Queensland and the Northern Territory, the successful entry of the Chinese into the furniture trade, their increasingly distinct community life in Sydney, much of which was concentrated in overcrowded dwellings in the poorer inner areas of the city, and their increasing rate of immigration into NSW. Fears of Chinese immorality were heightened by two enquiries in NSW into the question of crowded dwellings and common lodging houses. But the main point of contention was a decision in 1878 by the Australian Steam Navigation Company (ASN) to replace Australian crews with Chinese crews from Hong Kong at less than half the standard wage, and opposition to these moves by the Seamen's Union, the Sydney Trades and Labour Council (TLC) and the Political Reform League (PRL). Strike action commenced in NSW and Queensland in November 1878. In Sydney in December a demonstration in Hyde Park was attended by 10,000 people. While the demonstration was peaceful enough the aftermath was not, and a near riot occurred, some of the attendees storming into the city streets, threatening to seriously damage Chinese shops and homes and assaulting several Chinese men. The dispute was eventually resolved in a compromise settlement, which allowed for the re-employment of striking union members and a gradual reduction in the number of Chinese employed by ASN.[255]

The Riverina was not immune to the events in Sydney. At Wagga Wagga in December 1878 about 300 people attended a protest meeting in support of the strikers. But it was a pale imitation of its counterparts in Sydney, one correspondent stating that 'the meeting...appeared more disposed for fun than the consideration of the serious objects before it'. There were difficulties in finding a chairman, then when one was found, Alderman Shaw, he disavowed himself of some of the sentiments in the resolutions. More farcical yet, the promoters were not ready with the movers and seconders of the resolutions, and a substitute speaker, a Mr Joseph, had to be found. At the conclusion of the meeting a subscription list was opened in support of the strikers, and a committee formed to canvass for subscriptions. A total of £25 was donated on the night. Historian Ann Curthoys has remarked that 'there had been little anti-Chinese sentiment in country areas prior to the strike, but recent events had awoken the feelings of economic competition and racial inferiority which had been so strong in the gold rush era'. The more serious comments at the Wagga Wagga meeting were in line with these new sentiments, almost all speakers opposing Chinese immigration and expressing solidarity and sympathy with the strikers.[256]

As demonstrated by the events of 1878 racial attitudes in the Riverina differed generally from those in the metropolis, for town and country life allowed for a greater familiarity between Europeans and Chinese, and mob agitations, violence and protest meetings were much more infrequent. Some local writers used the most intemperate language to convey their views, but most were a little more

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[255] Ann Curthoys, 'Conflict and Consensus', in Ann Curthoys and Andrew Markus (eds), *Who are our Enemies?* Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, pp.78-95; Barry McGowan, *Australian Economic Review,* Vol.45, No.2, July 2005, pp.119-138. In 1875-1876 investigations were made into conditions in the Chinese quarter of Sydney by the Sydney City and Suburban Sewage and Health Board and later by a Select Committee on Common Lodging Houses. Markus has remarked that the general picture painted by the witnesses was one of debauchery by the Chinese of young women and children, and the proffering of the opium pipe to their 'victims'. Markus, *Fear and Hatred,* pp.78-84.

[256] Curthoys, 'Conflict and Consensus', p.62, *Sydney Morning Herald,* 17 December 1878; *Daily Advertiser,* 18 December 1878;

ambivalent, sometimes regarding the large numbers of Chinese in the region with disdain and disapproval, but conceding their economic value and insisting on their rights to protection as residents of the colony. Many white Australians in the Riverina knew or were acquaintances of Chinese people as gardeners, labourers or storekeepers, and were familiar with their various festivals and processions. In many instances a local newspaper, not long after a long-winded anti-Chinese diatribe, could express the deepest sympathy for a Chinese man who may have been injured by being thrown from his cart, had his vegetable produce destroyed in floods, or received harsh treatment by the courts or police.

An early example of these views was by the editor of the Pastoral Times on 16 July 1870, when he stated that

> The seeds of a future problem are now being sown here, and this problem must be solved at an early date. Large numbers of Chinese are flocking to these parts. Almost every station has its Chinese cook or gardener – many of them have both; there are numbers of Chinese engaged in other avocations on the squatter's runs. John, too is beginning to aim at a higher position than that of a cook or gardener - he is entering the lists as a shearer or fencer - he is employed also in sinking wells, or, indeed, in any laborious work. The Chinaman, as a rule is not an indolent man – he must be doing something – he is plodding and saving, and although not prone to drunkenness [sic] he is addicted to the great vice of opium smoking – to which we may add – gambling. From the Victorian gold-fields migrate to Riverina posses of Chinamen – some of them have been unfortunate on the gold-fields - they come here footsore, poor, and needy, and accept domestic service with readiness, and generally fulfil its duties satisfactorily... 'We are not prejudiced against the Chinese...Still we look with some apprehension here, where our women are so isolated, and to a great degree, at the advent of so many of these pagans who are without their wives. Many of them, it is true, are models of sobriety and industry. These are the men with pigtails, who hope some day to return to the flowery land to spend their money which they honestly earned from us barbarians.
>
> We cannot help feeling a deep sense of humiliation that our own countrymen (by their general misconduct, their general want of industry, sobriety, and theft) that they should force our employers of labour to accept the services of these objectionable people, the Chinese, rather than put up with laches of persons from the British Isles.

Another, not dissimilar, early perspective was given by a correspondent of the Pastoral Times following the conviction of Chong Gow for the murder of a fellow Chinese man at Hay in 1871. He lamented the fate of such men and questioned whether Chong Gow was legally accountable for the act, and whether his defence had been adequately conducted. The correspondent questioned the assertion by some to banish the Chinese, stating that without the Chinese the rest of the population would be incapable of sustaining its health and would be 'eaten up by with scurvy and other sundry diseases', and reminding his readers that 'We go to their country – we cram opium into them at the sword's point or cannon's mouth, and they regard us as "barbarians", possibly not without good reason'. Pleading nonetheless that if they were to be in Australia then every step should be taken to 'enlighten these dark-minded but industrious heathens'.[257]

These mixed, perhaps more relaxed, attitudes were often a matter of bewilderment to outside observers. In 1879 a Victorian visitor to Wagga commented that

> The Chinese seem to pervade everywhere. It is evident that the yellow agony doesn't annoy the good folks of Wagga Wagga much. Chinese cooks...Chinese labourers, Chinese servants are everywhere... Taking it altogether, very little can be said against the conduct of the heathens settled on the banks of the Murrumbidgee. Their morals call for no remark, for the simple reason that they don't include any such luxuries among their luggage. Most of the 'ringing' on the surrounding runs and selections is

[257] *Pastoral Times,* 10 June 1871.

> in the hands of Chinamen, who, be it noted, have so far advanced in the civilisation of the west as to understand fully the advantage of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Chinese cheap labour is unknown here. The Celestial business establishments seem well patronised by Europeans as well as by their compatriots. The gambling shops are managed well – at least the public eye is averted from them. Fan–tan is the principal pastime. The lottery is unknown...The sleek appearance of the Celestial business firm is most noticeable.[258]

The views of the editor for the Daily Advertiser, writing in 1880 in the aftermath of recent race agitations in the metropolitan cities, are another example of these different views

> Here in an inland town, where there is not that number of Chinamen likely to affect the labour market, there is not that intense feeling against them which is engendered in towns where they are more thickly settled down. Without a certain number of these very useful drudges our tables would lack the supply of esculents which now garnish them. But the question arises, have we not already a sufficient number for this purpose, and, consequently, had not any greater influx be prevented?'

Commenting on a recent violent attack on three Chinese men in Melbourne, he argued that the 'Chinamen living in our midst should be protected by the law, under whose protection they seek their livelihood'. The following week he was very critical of the harsh anti-Chinese legislation in California, stating that the NSW Government was

> acting with more deliberation, and let us hope with more justice. That the great influx of this race is an evil, no one can doubt; but perhaps, in the Celestial mind, not a greater one than they have had to submit to, by our occupation of a position in the Flowery Land, where, with a supreme indifference to the traditions of centuries, we have introduced laws and customs eminently distasteful to this very conservative people.[259]

Perhaps the strongest account of the different racial attitudes between the country and the metropolis was expressed by a correspondent for the Town and Country Journal in September 1881 when he stated that

> John Chinaman in the bush is very much the same as John Chinaman in the city. The chief difference is that he is not quite so much evidence, and therefore he is not quite so disagreeable to his Christian neighbours. He does not enter into such keen competition with Europeans, and therefore does not raise such a howl of indignation as is only too frequently heard in the city. Of course there are not so many artisans to compete with, nor is there a demand for his handicraft. If it were otherwise, John would be found as busy making tables, chairs, and cabinet work, as he is now in the city. He is occasionally found in the shearing shed, but it is usually as "picker-up" or "tar". He does not shine on the "board", though with his imitative faculty so wonderfully developed, in all probability he will in course of time be found there also. It has been the fashion with a good many people, especially with a certain class of politicians, to characterise the Chinese as everything that is horrible and bestial. But a little examination of the truth, and some acquaintance with John in the bush, at all events, soon teaches that, like a certain nameless personage, he is not quite so black as he is painted. On the contrary, he is very useful, very industrious, very frugal and sets an example of sobriety and regular living which a good many of those who revile and curse him would do well for themselves and society to copy. John being human, is of course not perfect, judging, perhaps, from a very high moral standard. Yet in many things, he is as "white as they make 'em". No one, not even the most enthusiastic admirers of the children of the Flowery Land, desires to paint John as an angel without wings. On the contrary, it is very often a little nearer the other thing…
>
> But John is industrious, and seldom lets his opium smoking habits take such a hold upon him as to cause him to neglect his work; he excels in gardening. If it were not for his skill and industry, the midday meal of those who tempt fortune in the interior would very often be of that monotonous character

[258] *Daily Advertiser*, 26 March 1879.

[259] *Daily Advertiser* 10, 17 June 1880.

> which use to prevail in the olden times. But John has changed all that. Thanks to his industry, vegetables can now be obtained in all the towns of the interior, even beyond the Darling, as cheap and as good as can be obtained in Sydney.
>
> John is clever in a variety of ways…John Chinaman does not as a rule get drunk-or at all events go on a "drunk" for, say, three weeks. He has other uses for his "big cheque" than to "knock it down" at some back block shanty. Nevertheless he has some other vices which are not less hurtful physically, nor less debasing in respect to his moral being. After a hard day's work in the sweltering sun hosing cabbages, he likes to seek the seclusion which his very wretched cabin grants and then with his opium pipe to his lips, obtain forgetfulness…Our artist in his rambles, has made a number of sketches from life of the "Heathen Chinee" in the interior. In the first of the series, John is depicted as having attained the realms of bliss…What is John dreaming of ? Perchance of that almond-eyed occasionally a curer of soles [shoe repairer].
>
> The larrikin element is not unknown in the bush. John has discovered this probably at much cost. Hence the precautions taken in the fourth sketch. If that boy escapes with a vestige of pants remaining he will be fortunate. At all events he will be able to tell his brother larrikins that that "chinkey" has a dog around, and that it knows how to bite.
>
> John has his hours of relaxation and amusement apart from opium smoking. He is frequently an inveterate gambler. Fan-tan is not unknown on the Darling, and though the stakes may not be so high, nor the bank so rich, the players are not so subject to the disagreeable visitation of the inquisitive police as is the case in the metropolis. As a rule John can indulge in the seductive pleasure of fan-tan without fear of interruption, and tempt fickle fortune so long as his cash holds out.[260]

Despite the obvious prejudices in this article, it was, for its time, rather more balanced than many others, and to a degree informative. It provided a country metropolis contrast that few other journalists attempted. However, the winds of change were already blowing, and such sentiments, particularly in the metropolis, would soon be rare. A sharp increase in the number of Chinese immigrants into NSW in April 1881 prompted the Mayor of Sydney to convene a well-attended public meeting, which called for the imposition of immigration restrictions, and in May the TLC organised a rally in the Domain, which was attended by 10,000 people. [261] The Riverina press could no longer ignore these sentiments, the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* commenting critically in June 1881 on the statement of the then Governor, Hercules Robinson, who, in Albury a few years previously, had lauded "John" as being of "incomparable value" as a colonist. In response to an address presented to him by the Chinese residents of that town, the Governor had remarked that he 'was glad to see so many of the race located there and would gladly welcome as many more as chose to come', or words to that effect.

The editor gave voice to the popular and unfavourable stereotype of the Chinese male, referring to the

> thousands of instances he has polluted our young growing girls, and that besides having the effect of lowering the amount of wages to the working man, he is gradually but surely lowering the tone of morality in the colony, and introducing nameless abominations to which we dare not allude. Had immigration in this colony been only permitted on the understanding that a certain proportion of the incoming Chinese should bring women with them, a very great part of the harm effected by their advent would have been averted. There is a Chinese camp scarcely more than one hundred miles away from us at this present moment in which more than one hundred European women are residents – or were very lately - some nominally married, some actually married by British clergymen, but all dependent on John's whim of fancy to dissolve the fancied tie when convenient to himself.

He also stated that the European labourers got drunk when they were paid and spent the lot, but the

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[260] *Town and Country Journal,* 24 September 1881.

[261] Markus, *Fear and Hatred,* p.95.

"law-abiding" Chinaman did not. He

> always keeps a pound in his pocket for the advancement of his own immoral purposes, and on worked out diggings and amongst other poor classes of our community, where young girls are suffering the slow tortures of poverty, the Chinese demon is always at hand with money to tempt, and ultimately to destroy...The failings incidental to European humanity are quite sufficient to give work to legislators, and form themes of denunciation for the clergy and the press, without the added horrors of Mongolian beastiality.[262]

Immigration restrictions were introduced by the NSW and Victorian governments in July and August 1881 respectively. In NSW the legislation included a tonnage restriction on ships in the ratio of one Chinese person for every 100 tons of cargo and a poll tax of £20 on Chinese entering or re-entering the colony. Many Chinese had business and kinship ties on either side of the border. Up until 1881 they could move freely between the other colonies and NSW – after that date it was no longer possible, for the poll tax was costly, particularly if frequent visits were envisaged. With a stroke of the pen a new class of criminal was created – Chinese people seeking to avoid payment of the poll tax. The impact of the new provisions can be gauged by the following report in the *Riverine Grazier* on 14 December 1881

> The Chinese in the Albury district are in a state of great excitement, owing to the first steps being taken to enforce the newly passed Chinese Restriction Act, which imposes a poll tax upon Chinese entering the colony. The Act was assented to only a day or two since. Last week six Chinamen, who had crossed from Victoria, were arrested for evading payment of the tax, and they were brought up at the Albury Police Court this morning. The sub-collector of Customs, who appeared for the Crown, said that if the defendants would leave the colony by going back to Victoria, he would not press the charge, as this was the first prosecution under the new law. The defendants agreed to leave the colony, and were discharged. A Chinese market gardener, whose garden is at Wodonga, but who supplied vegetable [sic] in Albury was this morning prevented from crossing the river unless he paid the tax which he would not do.

These immigration restrictions stemmed the flow of new arrivals to some extent, but before long, anti-Chinese feelings rose again. They were fomented by increased Chinese migration to the rich tin fields in northeast NSW, continued concerns about the use of Chinese labour by some shipping companies, and further substantial increases in the Chinese population in the Northern Territory. The mindset of journals such as the Bulletin was critical in encouraging the more racist and inflammatory of these sentiments. In 1886 it published a sensationalist and highly provocative special issue, in which the Chinese were presented in the worst possible light. Many other newspapers and journals expressed similar sentiments, invoking the spectre of a Chinese invasion and using derogatory language such as 'the yellow agony'.[263] It was inevitable that the Riverina newspapers would be swept up in this general wave of hysteria and xenophobia, some of them coming close to Bulletin's tirades and misrepresentations, most, however being rather more ambivalent and tolerant. According to Ann Curthoys, the social and moral arguments put forward in favour of restricting Chinese immigration

> reflected a basic resentment and also dislike at having to mix with a culturally different people; feelings which were reinforced by a profound belief in the superiority of the British way of life and the British race. Racism, the view that non-Europeans such as the Chinese were inevitably and congenitally inferior to Europeans, was an integral part of the argument...[264]

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[262] *Daily Advertiser,* 28 June 1881.

[263] Markus, *Fear and Hatred.*pp.121-127, 136-139. In September 1887 the agitation was further stimulated by the reorganization of the anti-Chinese League, which distributed 20,000 handbills outlining its objectives; Barry McGowan, 'The Economics and Organisation of Chinese Mining in Colonial Australia', *Australian Economic History Review,* Vol.45, No.2, (2005): pp.119-138.

[264] Curthoys, 'Conflict and Consensus', p.56.

These changing sentiments led to protest meetings and the establishment of anti-Chinese Leagues. At Temora a roll-up meeting was called in April 1883 at the prospect of an influx of Chinese miners. The editor of the Temora Star reminded his readers that they needed to proceed with 'the greatest moderation' as the Chinese had the same legal rights as Europeans to be on the field.[265] A large public meeting was held, but floundered when the chairman was asked whether one of his sons was apprenticed to a Chinese man. The editor upbraided the questioner, pointing out that he and others

> would not have the slightest compunction in patronising a Chinese storekeeper, if by so doing he could effect a saving; or having his picks sharpened by a Chinese blacksmith provided the work was done equally well and cheaper than by Europeans.[266]

At Tumut the formation of an anti-Chinese League in December 1887 followed hard on the heels of anti-Chinese agitations elsewhere in the colony. The league had 170 members, a committee of 25 appointed to draw up rules and manage business, and paid officers to canvass for members.[267] In March a circular was sent to European landholders requesting them not to renew leases to Chinese or let fresh land to them, and a petition signed asking Parliament to take action on Chinese emigration.[268] A unanimous vote of thanks was given to Angus Rankin, the owner of Brungle estate, for not letting his land to the Chinese.[269] However, the League's effectiveness was blunted by the unwillingness of many landowners to embrace its central proposition, many of them regarding the Chinese farmers as their bread and butter. Following the imposition of prohibitive immigration restrictions in May 1888 the justification for the League's existence began to waiver, a widely reported meeting of the League in August drawing well-merited scorn from the editor of the Riverine Grazier, prompting him to ask 'what manner of men are these'. One resolution sought to procure another resident doctor in Tumut, because the current doctor, Dr Mason, originally a League supporter, had subsequently let land to the Chinese. But the most noteworthy feature of the proceedings was a statement by a Mr C. Dean, a committee member, who gave notice of his resignation because he had agreed to allow three Chinese men to erect huts on his land for £1 a week, which he 'thought would be better to him than remaining a member of the League'.[270]

Following a visit to the Mt Adrah and Hillas Creek area in 1888, a local (probably Tumut–based) resident, wrote to the *Gundagai Times* complaining about the Chinese 'Bread Robbers' at Hillas Creek. He went on to say that

> The intruders monopolise all the best lands on the creek, growing tobacco, which industry is ruining the European farmer and poor man. The proprietors of these lands 'rent them to the yellow pest...The time is approaching when we must boycott the owners of land let to Chinkies. In Tumut the Chinese number is close on to 2000 [a vast exaggeration] And what will they do when two or three bad seasons come and their tobacco crops fail? They will do this - pilfer, murder, work for low wages, spread leprosy, immorality, and fill all our hospitals.[271]

In 1888 the 'Chinese question' was debated hotly throughout NSW. The debate on and passage of the Influx of Chinese Restriction Act 1888 reflected a deep seated fear of a resurgent China and racial

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265 *Temora Star,* 7 April 1883.

266 *Temora Star*, 14 April 1883.

267 *Town and Country Journal,* 24 December 1887; *Sydney Mail,* 4 February 1888.

268 *Town and Country Journal,* 24 March 1888.

269 *Sydney Mail,* 24 March 1888.

270 *Riverine Grazier,* 14 August 1888.

271 *Gundagai Times,* 25 August 1888.

xenophobia, sentiments fomented by the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes. Earlier, the Riverina press had welcomed the imposition of restrictive measures, many newspapers using emotive and intemperate language to persuade their readers to believe, as did Parkes, in an imminent 'Asiatic invasion'. However, Parkes's hysterical outbursts, his unconstitutional actions against Chinese passengers wishing to disembark from the Afghan, and his harsh and hurried legislation proved too much for many of his supporters, the Riverina press now pleading the case for British justice and criticising the extreme measures contemplated in the legislation.[272]

One instance of these conflicting views was provided by the editor of the Riverine Grazier, who on 18 April 1888 stated that although the Chinese may not be in competition with the Europeans in Hay

> no one can, however, be a witness to the depravity and filth which exist amongst them in the local camp, the records of which are periodically served up in nauseous dishes at the Police Court without feeling that they should not be in our midst...the bulk of those who come under the public eye are objects inspiring disgust and revulsion. That their low civilization and comparative pagan habits render them undesirable fellow-colonists under any circumstances, is palpable, but when there are possibilities of their equalling - and perhaps outnumbering - us, the danger is one that cannot be magnified, and measures which make for the prevention of the increase of the evil cannot be postponed.

A little over a month later, on 22 May, his tone and focus had changed entirely. He stated that

> Perhaps the one thing that would act more adversely to the country than the threatened influx of Chinese is the method laid down by Sir Henry Parkes for dealing with it. The hysterical demonstrations which we are being treated to by the Parkes Government are becoming so frequent that we will soon have to diagnose them as the outcome of chronic insanity rather than that of occasional fits…His utterances in the House on the Chinese Restriction Bill on Wednesday evening last stands unprecedented, and coming from the lips of a Premier, are calculated to breed the most dangerous discord…The introduction of the Bill at all was the prime error and the gravest one, and it was aggravated by the provisions which it contained – a combination of defects which should have made its rejection sure.

These contrary sentiments were expressed by almost every other newspaper editor in the Riverina. Perhaps the most interesting comments were by the editor of the Narrandera Ensign, who concluded his condemnation of the Premier by stating that although the Chinese were 'a menace to our civilisation', the fault rested 'with ourselves', for

> on account of our deficient social system, a Chinaman is better fitted than the ordinary Caucasian to dwell under our laws. The survival of the fittest is the survival of the cheapest according to our present

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[272] The *Afghan* arrived in Sydney in early May with several hundred Chinese passengers, who had earlier been unable to land In Melbourne. On 3 May, before the arrival of the Afghan, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, which was attended by 5000 people, and a second meeting held on the streets for those who could not gain admission. Following the meeting there was a march to Parliament. The very next day Parkes set aside the existing legislation under which Chinese without naturalisation papers could disembark on payment of the then £20 poll tax, and proceeded to rush his new retrospective legislation through Parliament. The Supreme Court invalidated these actions by ruling that Chinese possessing exemption certificates and those willing to pay the £20 poll tax could land. Popular agitation continued for some time, however. In June a Grand National Anti-Chinese demonstration attracted about 50,000 people, and protests soon commenced against the employment of Chinese on the Sydney-San Francisco run, accompanied by serious boycotts of Chinese businesses, including vegetable sellers. However, the anti-Chinese League failed to attract sufficient financial support from the unions and the public and by August it was largely inactive. Markus, *Fear and Hatred,* pp.81-148; *Riverine Grazier,* 13 April, 22 May 1888; *Daily Advertiser*, 8 March, 5 April, 19 May 1888; *Gundagai Times,* 22 May 1888; *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (thereafter *Albury Banner)*, 1, 8 June 1888; *Albury Border Post,* 3 February 1888.

> standards...Before abusing the poor Chinaman, let us alter the conditions of life which render him formidable. For the causes which make this semi-barbarian superior to the civilised European are at work all over the world...the distribution of wealth, the relations between labor and capital, the training and improvement of the masses and above all the tenure of lands. [273]

The most objectionable provisions of the bill were removed by the Legislative Council, but the remaining restrictions were harsh; the tonnage ratio being increased to 500 tons for each Chinese passenger and the poll tax increased to a prohibitive £100. Children and wives of Chinese naturalised in NSW were exempt from the poll tax and could enter freely, but these exemptions aside, Chinese immigration was all but prohibited, other than by people smuggling, both from overseas and other Australian colonies. An increase in the Chinese gaol population was all but assured.[274] The new restrictions soon drew scorn from the Riverina press, the earliest of these objections coming from the editor of the Corowa Free Press, who commented in July 1888 that

> To say that a Chinaman living in Corowa, and possessed of duly authenticated naturalisation papers for the colony of New South Wales, and who has occasion to go to Wahgunyah, cannot return to his home without paying £100 poll tax, or running the risk of two years imprisonment, is to make our legislation the laughing stock of the whole world. [275]

The Chinese question was of enough concern in Hay for it to be the topic of a debate held by the Hay Library, Musical and Debating Society in August 1888, a Mr Frank Byrne affirming 'That the Chinese, in their existing relations, offer no menace to the colonies'.[276]

Wholesale evasion of the poll tax soon became commonplace, as did the large number of police and customs officers and informers needed to enforce it. People smuggling and border evasion was a relatively easy option on the northern border. It was a little more difficult on the southern border, for the Murray River had to be crossed. The main point of evasion was near Wahgunyah, the Chinese first making their way to that town then proceeding along the river on the Victorian side to a place owned by a compatriot, remaining some time as labourers, then crossing in the night by boat.[277] Albury-based historian Bruce Pennay has commented that several police court reports from Moama, Deniliquin, Albury and Corowa indicate quite clear sympathy with long time Chinese residents caught by what seemed to be an 'uncaring bureaucracy'. Customs officers, it was alleged, were going to all kinds of trouble, including infiltrating the Chinese camps with private detectives to catch offenders. By the mid 1890s much of the Riverina press, particularly at Albury, had become impatient with the absurdity of the border restrictions, and the farcical arrangements for enforcing it.[278] In the Albury Banner on 25 August 1893 it was stated

> That Chinese and Hindoos and others of that ilk are an undesirable class scarcely any respectable European will deny, but once in Australia, what does it matter to the people generally whether they reside in one colony or the other. Make the coast's laws against them as strict as possible to make them uniform, but don't perpetrate the absurdity of interfering and punishing harshly these unfortunate beings merely because they cross a defined or an imaginary boundary line between the colonies.

The practical application of the immigration restrictions aroused much anger when prosperous

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[273] *Narrandera Ensign,* 21 May 1888.

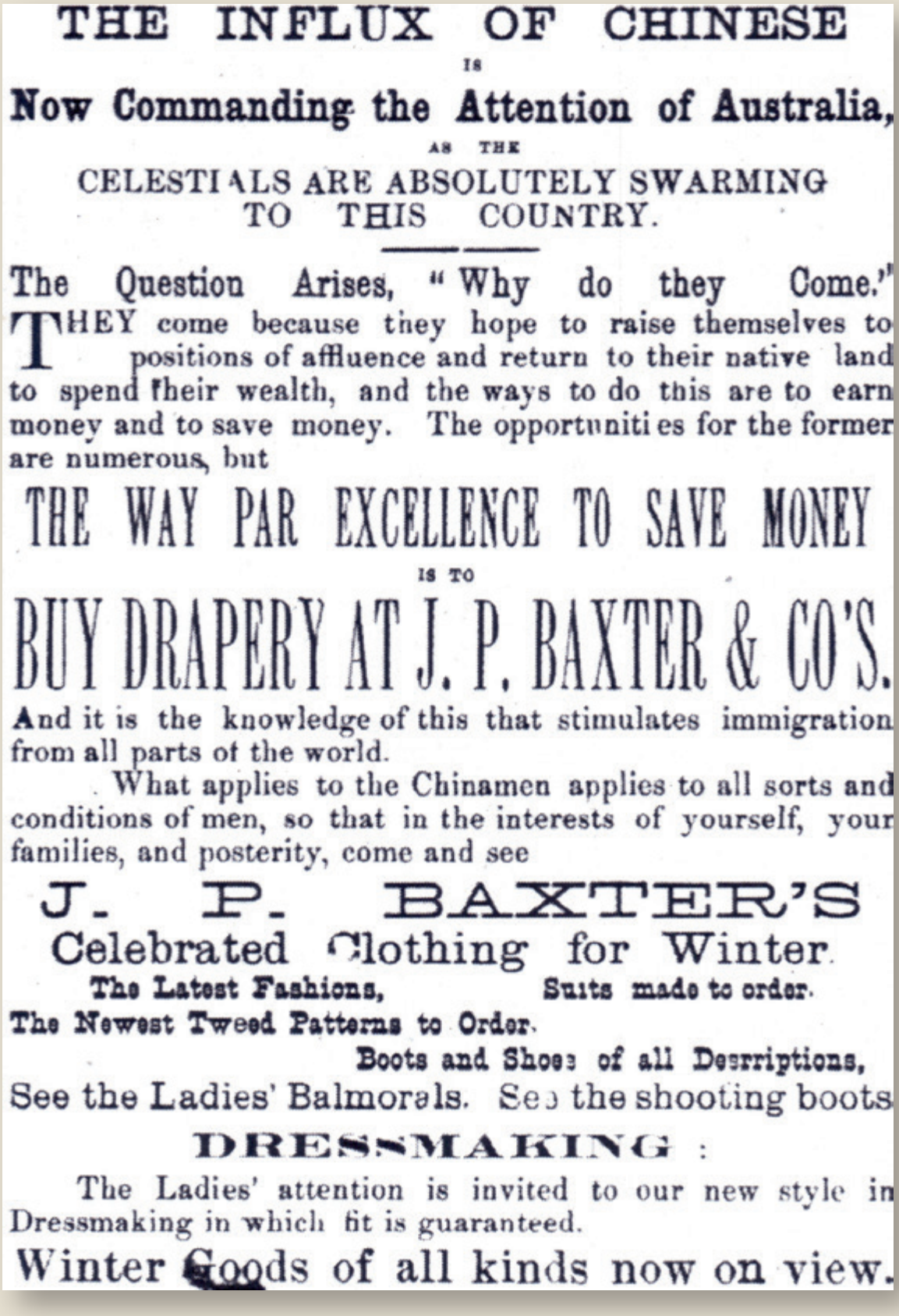
[274] Markus, *Fear and Hatred,* pp.81-144.

[275] *Corowa Free Press,* 20 July 1888.

[276] *Riverine Grazier,* 7 August 1888.

[277] *Daily Advertiser,* 31 August 1893, 18 October 1894; Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW,* p.32.

[278] Bruce Pennay, *From Colonial to State Border,* Charles Sturt University, Albury 2001, pp.37-39.



THE INFLUX OF CHINESE

IS

Now Commanding the Attention of Australia,

AS THE

CELESTIALS ARE ABSOLUTELY SWARMING TO THIS COUNTRY.

The Question Arises, "Why do they Come."

THEY come because they hope to raise themselves to positions of affluence and return to their native land to spend their wealth, and the ways to do this are to earn money and to save money. The opportunities for the former are numerous, but

THE WAY PAR EXCELLENCE TO SAVE MONEY

IS TO

BUY DRAPERY AT J. P. BAXTER & CO'S.

And it is the knowledge of this that stimulates immigration from all parts of the world.

What applies to the Chinamen applies to all sorts and conditions of men, so that in the interests of yourself, your families, and posterity, come and see

J. P. BAXTER'S

Celebrated Clothing for Winter.

The Latest Fashions, Suits made to order.

The Newest Tweed Patterns to Order.

Boots and Shoes of all Descriptions,

See the Ladies' Balmorals. See the shooting boots

DRESSMAKING :

The Ladies' attention is invited to our new style in Dressmaking in which fit is guaranteed.

Winter Goods of all kinds now on view.

A draper, J.P. Baxter, "cashing in" on anti-Chinese sentiment with his store advertisement in the Riverine Grazier, May 1888.

merchants and other well respected Chinese men were caught in its web. One of the more notorious cases involved Way Lee, the 'untitled Chinese mandarin of Adelaide', who in 1889 wished to visit NSW following a fire at Broken Hill, which destroyed one of his businesses. He was only allowed to enter the Colony without incurring the poll tax after numerous representations, and the personal intervention of the South Australian and Victorian Premiers to Sir Henry Parkes, whom Way Lee met in Melbourne, while Parkes was visiting there. Both men later crossed the border on the same train, but in different carriages.279 Even more infamous was a case involving the Rev. Chue, a clergyman from Ballarat, who was described by one correspondent as 'an indefatigible worker in the cause of moral and religion' in Victoria, where he was a naturalised citizen. The editor of the Sydney Morning Herald went on the attack, his remonstrations being also taken up by some newspapers in the Riverina. He remarked indignantly that

> it is not enough for us to impose restrictions on the vessels that bring any more of them, and to compel the incomers to pay a heavy fine at entrance, but we must pursue these "strangers within our gates" with drastic treatment of this sort, harassing them with restrictions on their movements from one colony to another, as if they were criminals that had to report their whereabouts to the police. There is something extremely unmanly in this sort of persecution of colour, and though panic legislation of that sort may take place when people lose their heads and strike out blindly, the continuance of worrying legislation such as this, over a quiet and thoughtful period, is entirely discreditable. Let it be enough to exclude Chinese from the colonies, but let us not dishonour our mood by persecuting them when they are here, and when they have become by naturalisation our fellow-citizens.280

The Rev. Chue was on his way to China via Sydney, where he was entertained royally at a gathering of prominent clergymen and Sydney Chinese merchants, which met at Quong Tart's King Street premises. His visit coincided, ironically with a visit to China by Way Lee who intended to present a petition to the Governor of Hong Kong for transmission to the Chinese authorities on the injustices of the current legislation. In commenting on these events, Quong Tart remarked that a petition was to be presented in due course to the NSW Parliament by the leading Chinese residents of Sydney, who would not just plead the harmful effects of the legislation on their businesses, but the sadder instances where their countrymen had been dying but unable to be visited and consoled by their friends and relatives in other colonies.[281]

The cudgels were well and truly taken up by one of the principal writers of the Albury Banner, Lippon Dairn, and are worth recounting in some detail as an illustration of the difficulties faced by all Chinese living in the Riverina, and also the generally favourable attitudes towards their plight by much of the local press. Following the arrest of three longstanding Chinese residents of the Corowa Wahgunyah area, he stated that

> it could hardly make much difference to anyone, whether they pitched their tents on the north bank of the river or on the south. Even in the case of the Chinese arrested at Albury, the facts disclosed only tend to show the necessity for federal action. The men were already in Australia, and presumably were entitled to be in the country. Under federation they would, being here, be free to go to any colony. Under our present system of provincialism they are forbidden to take the opportunities that offer for gaining an honest livelihood. Worse than this when they do in defiance of the law seek for work… they are "punished" by being fed for two years at the cost of the taxpayers. …The whole trouble shows the difficulty in the working of the Restriction Act…and points to an urgent necessity for joint action among the colonies regarding the admittance of alien races from other countries, without punishing unoffending foreigners, who in any case are bona fide residents in one or the other of the two principal colonies.[282]

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279 *Albury Banner,* 15 February, 10 March 1889.

280 *Sydney Morning Herald,* 28 February 1893.

281 *Albury Banner,* 29 February, 10 March 1893; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 27, 28 February 1893.

282 *Albury Banner,* 18 August 1893.

Later that year, with the arrest of another group of Chinese attempting to cross the border, the Banner correspondent protested vigorously, stating that the cost of maintaining one Chinese man in gaol was £70 per annum, 'and in these hard times of depression it seems…that the game is not worth the candle'. He questioned whether there was any 'desire on the part of any large number of the Celestials to quit Victoria for New South Wales'. In February 1894, the correspondent again went on the attack following the death in gaol of a Chinese man imprisoned for evading the poll tax. He posed the question that regardless of whether in the next century the colonies would get federation or a custom union, 'one thing that in the interests of decency ought to be arranged for with as little delay as possible, and that is-intercolonial free trade in Chinamen'. He argued that once in Australia they should be allowed to roam at free will. 'At the worst they are self-supporting and sober'.[283]

Dairn had another opportunity to question the legislation when a Chinese man, a former servant of a Mr Stuckey for more than 15 years, was denied entry into NSW in 1894 as part of Mr Stuckey's funeral cortege unless he paid the £100 poll tax, despite several people giving their personal guarantee that he would return the same evening into Victoria. He commented that 'surely this is carrying out the provisions of the Chinese Restriction Act to a degree never contemplated by its authors'.[284] No less ridiculous was the inability of the Rev Cheok Hong Cheong to visit Albury from Victoria in 1896 for the purpose of holding a short mission amongst his countrymen unless he paid the poll tax; at least his copies of the Bible were exempt![285] In another instance that year charges were brought against Ah Why, who had been a resident of New South Wales for 35 years, but was arrested on returning to the colony after living in Victoria for five years. The authorities only withdrew the case against him when he agreed to return to Victoria.[286] Another absurd instance occurred in 1898 when Lie Cook, Long Poy, Lie Hung and Lee See were arrested making their way from Broken Hill to Sydney. There was no direct rail route to Broken Hill and the Chinese men were arrested on their return to New South Wales after passing through South Australia and Victoria to get to Sydney.[287]

Lippon Dairn was particularly scathing when a batch of Chinese men were arrested at Deniliquin in 1898. He stated that in Albury there had been numerous incidents of Chinese men being sentenced to imprisonment only to be discharged a few weeks later. In most instances the men had been well known residents of the district who had merely committed a technical breach of the law. He argued that the law was in urgent need of amendment and that the 'rights of Chinese long domiciled in the colony should be properly defined and protected'.[288]

Another Chinese man to be severely affected by the colonial immigration restrictions was John Egge, the riverboat captain. Under the 1881 legislation he had to pay £10 every time he entered NSW from either South Australia or Victoria, which in the latter case was frequent, as he made many trips to and from Echuca to places such as Albury and elsewhere in the Riverina. After 1888 it was a very expensive £100 every time he did so. He was also caught up by the immigration restriction imposed by the South Australian and Victorian Governments. According to historian Morag Loh he was eventually granted an exemption from the poll tax when the governments of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales

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283 *Albury Banner,* 1 December 1893.

284 *Daily Advertiser,* 1 February 1894; *Narrandera Ensign,* 2 February 1894; *Albury Banner,* 1 December 1893, 2 February 1894.

285 *Albury Banner,* 10 January 1896.

286 *Albury Banner,* 3 January 1896.

287 *Albury Daily News,* 3 June 1898.

288 *Albury Banner,* 11 November 1898.

agreed to recognise him as an Australian merchant.[289]

While the 1888 restrictions impacted immediately on Chinese people already in Australia, like its successor legislation in 1901, it also affected Chinese Australian people with family ties in China. An instance of the above is provided by the autobiography of Kwan Hong Kee, who worked as a shop assistant and salesman in various stores in Sydney and regional NSW, including at Narrandera. He arrived in Sydney in the mid 1860s and worked first at a Chinese store in Newcastle and as a hawker, before working in the Sarm Choy store in Sydney. Six years later he was sent to the company's branch store in Narrandera, where he worked for seven years before returning to China, where he married a Miss Joh from Loong Toh Warn village. Helived in the village for two years. However, on his return to Australia in 1894 he could not bring his wife with him, and she died two weeks after his arrival in Sydney, 'heartbroken at our parting', her inability to come with him almost certainly a consequence of his being unable to pay the heavy impost of £100. [290]

[289] Loh, 'John Egge: A Champion of the Rivers',; Geoffrey Egge's papers; *Adelaide Observer,* 21 September 1901.

[290] Kwan Hong Kee, *Autobiography of Mr Kwan Hong Kee,* Hong Kong, January 1938, from Golden Threads website http://amol.org.au/goldenthreads/stories.

Law and Order

The evidence for prejudice and discrimination in the legal system is mixed. Unlike California in the early 1850s, Chinese evidence was admissible in the courts and the use of interpreters was common. The Chinese made full use of the courts to prosecute individuals, including their own countrymen, and were generally treated in an even- handed way. Nevertheless, the sudden increase in court cases involving the Chinese was a challenge for the judiciary. A case at Gundagai in 1869 illustrates some of these issues. It involved a prosecution by Ah Coot against Margaret Feehan, whom he accused of stealing three cabbages and a watermelon from his garden. The case took a long time to resolve owing to the difficulty the court had in understanding the answers as interpreted and making the interpreter understand questions. At a subsequent hearing a Chinese missionary in Gundagai refused to act as interpreter as he had been told that Ah Coot meant to misinform the bench. The services of Ah Young, another interpreter, were sought. When questioned on his religion Ah Young said he was a Christian, and he did not know much about the religion and would return to Buddhism if he went back to China. The Police Magistrate, in some frustration, remarked on the absurdity of administering an oath to a man who took up the Christian religion as a matter of convenience. He then approached the missionary, but he again refused to act as an interpreter as he claimed that all his countrymen would turn against him and he could not work among them. Ah Young was finally used. In his summing up, the Magistrate stated that he 'had considered it his duty to go fully into the charge because he knew that Chinese were sometimes wronged in their dealings with Europeans, and he wished such cases presented fewer difficulties in adjudication'.[291]

Another example of the dilemmas often faced by the courts arose in 1884 at Narrandera when Martin Callahan, Margaret Ling Kim and Elizabeth Robinson were charged with assaulting and robbing Dick Shing, a fruit dealer, at the camp. Acting Judge Backhouse stated that

> The prosecutor in this case was a Chinaman and it was unnecessary that he should ask them (the jury) to consider the case exactly in the same way as if he were a European. Some people might have an objection to Chinamen, but it should not be forgotten that as long as they were in our midst we should extend towards them the same justice as we would to one of our own nation. There was a strong feeling throughout the country with reference to Chinamen. Therefore, at this moment, he thought it his duty to refer to the matter.

The trio were found guilty; Callanan got five years gaol, Robinson four years and Kim three years.[292]

Working in the Chinese men's favour was the perception by some judges and magistrates that the Chinese were inoffensive or defenceless. For instance, in early 1873 John Toole was fined £2 for assaulting Ah Wing, a market gardener at Wagga Wagga who was hawking vegetables at Currawarna. The Magistrate commented that striking a Chinese man was 'like striking a woman'. [293]A similar less than flattering comment was made by the Police Magistrate in a case of assault brought by Tu Hock against Alexander Neil for assault at Adelong, the incident involving four Europeans and two Chinese. The evidence was very conflicting, the Police Magistrate concluding that 'four Europeans who were all powerful men, were more than a match for two celestials', fining Neil £1 with costs. [294]

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[291] *Gundagai Times*, 13 February 1869.

[292] *Daily Advertiser*, 15 March 1884.

[293] *Wagga Express*, 5 February 1873.

[294] *Gundagai Times,* 24 February 1882.

> At times, however, the administration of justice by the police appeared to be heavily weighted against the Chinese, who were seen as easy targets. The prosecutions for gambling are a good instance of this apparent discrimination. In 1888 the Wagga police secured their first gambling conviction against Chinese. On that occasion they found two large tables in a back room on which were placed mats and square pieces of lead, a number of Chinese coins and cards, two pointed sticks, two fan-tan cups, a number of Chinese dominoes, together with paper and Chinese brushes and ink, and £3 1s 3d. in cash. The defendant, Sim on Lee, banker and keeper of the house, was fined £25. Three other Chinese men were fined £15 each.[295] A local correspondent, under the pseudonym of 'Justice', commented that gambling was carried on every night at some clubs and hotels, and that many people, including the police, were aware of it. A well known citizen had lost over £200 in one night not so very long ago.
>
> But here is the poor Chinaman (whose life is almost worse than that of a dog, from the way he is hounded down) who plays a game in which Europeans seldom join. It is...his only national amusement. He is rarely, if ever, before our courts for being drunk, and apparently is a quiet and harmless citizen, and you never hear of himself as being ruined through gambling. He had his club where he meets his countrymen. They conduct themselves with sobriety, and each man goes to his home in an orderly manner. Not so with some of our other citizens when returning late at nights. [296]

Concerns about gambling did not emerge at Hay until the 1890s. In August of that year ten Chinese men, Wong Pack, Sin Sang, Ah Yin, Ah He, Wong Pang, Chuck Kee, Long Jim, Sammy, and Tow Gee were charged with running a lottery. Constables Thorncroft and Barnes, both of whom bought two tickets each for six pence a ticket, apprehended the men. They attended the drawing of the lottery two hours later, Constable Barnes winning nine shillings for his little flutter.[297] At the trial for the accused their Counsel stated that the object of the lottery was to establish a benevolent fund. One of the accused (Sin Sang) was the head of the Chinese Freemason's Lodge, which benefitted considerably by the winnings. A percentage was also given to the Hay hospital. All the defendants were respectable men of wealth, and several Europeans came forward as character witnesses. George Mair of Groongal station attested to the respectability and industry of Long Jim, who had worked for him for several years, and Herman Levy verified the character of Wong Pack, Sin Sang, Long Jim, Chuck Kee and Sammy, whom he had known for ten years. Tom Wood also attested to Long Jim's character. The judge acknowledged that the men had been engaged in a charitable occupation and gave 'a light sentence' of a month's gaol each.[298]

In February 1892 it was the turn of the Fan Tan devotees to draw the attention of the police. The *Riverine Grazier* reporter highlighted the prejudicial way in which the police sometimes approached their duties when he said

> presumably because the gambling law is one which is practically suspended or inoperative against certain of the more respectable sections of the community, and because in the view of this, the singling out of the "heathen Chinee" for punishment would verge on the arbitrary, considerable care was taken to inquire into the merits of the complaints before taking any action.[299]

With the merits of the impending action verified, a number of police took up different vantage points on the outskirts of the Hay camp, and at a given signal closed in on the house. When their advance was discovered, a scene of 'wild confusion' ensued, and a rush for the doors and a 'real rough and tumble fight' followed. Out of between 20 and 30 in the room a few minutes before, only ten men were

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[295] *Daily Advertiser,* 14 February 1888.

[296] *Daily Advertiser,* 16 February 1888.

[297] *Riverine Grazier,* 8 August, 2 September 1890.

[298] *Riverine Grazier,* 21 November 1890.

[299] *Riverine Grazier,* 12 February 1892.

captured, one of whom was the croupier, Ah Hing. Counsel for the men, Mr Crang, asked for a light sentence, stating that the game was a national one in China, and that one third of the profits of the table went to the Hay hospital, one third to the Chinese Freemason's Lodge and the rest to the banker. Ah Hing was fined £20 and costs and the money and gambling tools confiscated, and other men, deemed spectators, were fined £1 each with costs. Because of the poverty of several of the defendants Crang bore the court and professional fees and instituted a subscription list to pay the fines. [300]

In another gambling case a few weeks later Crang pointed out that more gambling was done at the club in one night than the camp in a week, and that gambling took place in the hotels every night, but no action was ever taken against the perpetrators. Further, through their gambling the Chinese had donated more money to the local hospital than any private house or club had given. The men were given a 'light sentence' of £5 each. Mr Crang advised that as neither of the men could pay the fine, he had taken up their case without payment and would arrange a collection to pay the fines.[301]

Later that month Ah Leong was fined £10 for being the banker at a 'common gaming house'. There were about 15 Chinese men present at the time of the raid, and Ah Leong had money about him and the 'tools of trade'. His lawyer asserted that the game was recreational only and carried on for fruit and fowl, two Chinese witnesses admitting that they had seen neither.[302]

An entirely different type of confrontation between the Hay police and Fan Tan devotees took place in January 1894, when several Chinese men were prosecuted for assault after a riot in a gambling saloon owned by Ah Daw (Door?), who was also the banker. In the first case Ah Hon and Ah Hop were charged with assaulting Ah Quong, a cabinet maker and occupant of the house. By the time the police arrived about 60 to 70 men were present, all of whom were 'very excited'. There were several confusing versions of the conflict. In one account Ah Hon had put counters on the table which Ah Quong refused to accept. Ah Hon then upset the table and started a row. Ah Quong then shut the door, one man catching him by the pigtail and another grabbing his feet, while Ah Hon and Ah Hop struck him. Ah Hop struck Ah Quong with an iron bar and stabbed him, resulting in stab wounds and bruises. All the men in the room had iron bars on them for protection in the event of a raid by Chinese men affiliated with a rival saloon. That saloon had engaged a man at 10s a week to divert business away from Ah Daw's (Door) place. About 100 men came in when the row began. In another version by Ah Fook, the row began when Ah Daw withdrew an incorrect number of coins and Ah Hop tried to get his money back, accusing Ah Daw of cheating. Ah Quong hit Ah Hop with an iron bar which Ah Hop removed and in turn hit Ah Quong. Ah Quong also produced a type of knuckle duster called a Sam Sing, and hit himself in the face with the device when grappling with Ah Hop. Ah Wing, a witness, thought he saw Ah Hop and Ah Hon strike Ah Quong with knives, and thought the attack arose because Ah Quong belonged to a different clan.[303]

The Magistrate imposed a fine of five shillings on the two men, plus fees for the doctor and interpreter. In the second case Ah Daw and Ah Wing were charged with wounding Ah Fang. The Police Magistrate stated that there was no doubt an assault took place, but had difficulty in determining which side was telling the truth, as 20 or 30 men with iron bars had entered the room when the row started. The Magistrate fined Ah Daw and Ah Wing £1 2s plus £2 17s 6d costs each, telling the defendants that he was determined to put down rioting at the camp. The men refused to pay the fine, choosing instead

[300] *Riverine Grazier,* 12 February 1892.

[301] *Riverine Grazier,* 12 February 1892.

[302] *Riverine Grazier,* 16 February 1892.

[303] *Riverine Grazier,* 10 March 1911.

to go to gaol for one month.[304] Fan Tan was popular with its devotees for many years yet, however. In early 1911 the police were informed that Fan Tan was booming in the much reduced Chinese camp at Hay. A raid was subsequently made on the Chinese Masonic Lodge and ten Chinese men were arrested and an assortment of gaming appliances taken away.[305]

In the case of sly grog selling, it is doubtful if the police would have anywhere near as much success in making arrests, leave alone securing successful convictions without willing informants, both European and Chinese, who were rewarded for their 'Judas' acts with half the fine monies. In almost all instances it was the informant who approached the police and provided the information. Once the information had been laid the police were obliged to seek a warrant for the arrest of the alleged wrongdoers. In the case of suspected sly grog sellers the usual ploy was for the informant to proceed to the house in question, almost always located in the camp, with a marked coin and empty bottle provided by the police. After buying the alcohol, the informant would depart and hand the evidence to the local constable, who had observed the proceedings from some vantage point.[306] In August 1891, Constable Thorncroft, while disguised in other men's clothes and false bushy whiskers, arrested Annie McCarthy (Annie Chung Soo), a resident of the Hay Chinese Camp, for selling sly grog. An informer, Ryan, who had figured in similar cases the previous week at Carrathool, accompanied him. Having paid for a drink Ryan suddenly feigned sickness and left the room temporarily to pour the liquor into a bottle, which he handed to Thorncroft. Following this incident the two men went to a house owned by Ah Seong with the constable, still disguised, planted behind a door, while Ryan was served. The tactics were a little different, Ryan shouting out 'here's luck', on which cue Thorncroft dashed into the room and seized the offending glass, plus one held by another customer, Elizabeth Neet. A fine of £30 was imposed in each case, with Ryan getting half. The reporter commented that as Ryan's share of the Carrathool fines was £40, informing was a lucrative, 'if not particularly honourable employment'. [307]

In September 1892 the police used the services of John Weale as an informer. Weale described himself as a journalist living at Hay and is almost certainly the same journalist who wrote for the Narrandera Ensign under the pseudonym of 'Whaler'. He met Constables Thorncroft and Brougham and was given an empty bottle with a label on which was written the word 'Blanche'. When he entered the house in question, Agnes Craig, who was with another woman, Blanche Kane, asked him 'Are you going to shout?' He bought a drink and pretended to swallow it, then went out the back pretending to be sick, pouring the whiskey out of the glass into the bottle. He stated that he had never been an informer before, but had mixed a lot with Chinese and knew a lot about them. For some alleged slight, probably by one of the girls, he had threatened revenge on the Hay camp. He had always been 'against Chinamen', and had 'tried to put camps down'. Sarah Jackson was also charged in a separate offence. Both she and Kane were each fined £30 with costs.[308]

Sometimes the Chinese were informers, revealing a breakdown in traditional loyalties, or perhaps reflecting clan differences or economic hardship. One such informer was Thomas Lee. At Gundagai in 1869 he assisted the police in the arrest of a Chinese sly grog seller. Lee was a Christian convert and a regular if not professional informer, having informed in Victoria, Tumbarumba and Tumut on

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[304] *Riverine Grazier,* 5, 9 January 1894.

[305] *Riverine Grazier,* 10 March 1911.

[306] *Riverine Grazier,* 28 August, 6 November 1891.

[307] *Riverine Grazier,* 25, 28 August 1891.

[308] *Riverine Grazier,* 9 September 1892.

sly grog cases.[309] At Adelong in 1885 a sly grog selling case was heard against the Chinese wife of the storekeeper Ah Yan. She attended court in full Chinese costume, and claimed through an interpreter that she had received no money from the informer, Ah Kan, and that the grog was part of a quantity purchased by some other Chinese in connection with a ceremonial service. The case against her was dismissed, but her husband was fined £30 plus costs.[310]

In Hay the presence of Chinese informers in the early 1890s appears to have been particularly prevalent. In November 1891. Ah Non, a labourer, acted as informant for Constable Thorncroft in two cases. In one case the accused was Mary Hung Him, whose husband was a wool scourer. Ah Non said that he had been in the town a fortnight and previously been at Benerembah and Tumut. He had left Tumut in search of work and had not yet found it. Following the apprehension of Hung Him the two men went to a house owned by Joey Sar Sing, where Ah Non was served by his wife, Johanna. Both women were fined £30 each, the Police Magistrate remarking in the case of Hung Him that 'the evidence of an informer should be received with caution, but on this occasion they were satisfied with the corroboration'.[311]

In April 1892, a well known Chinese man, Wong Pack, was charged with sly grog selling. The police had been accompanied by a Chinese informer, Han Won, who was given a shilling to purchase liquor, and returned from the house with some brandy in a flask. In evidence before the court it was elicited that Han Won had only been out of gaol about a fortnight before the incident, and had tried to borrow money from Wong Pack but been denied. He admitted that he was hard up for money. The police found a large quantity of alcohol concealed in different rooms. Wong Pack said that he had obtained the liquor for Chinese New Year, when he gave a dinner for 40 of his countrymen, and the alcohol in the house was left over from that event. He was not fined, but the alcohol was confiscated, Han Won departing the court a monument to avarice unrewarded. Wong Pack later appealed the verdict. The police admitted that they had not searched the informer for the money on his return from the house, but the court ruled that the alcohol was kept under the bench, which proved that it was intended for sale.[312] He was before the court again in September, courtesy of another Chinese man, Tommy Ah Foon, a cook in the camp, who freely admitted that he had turned informer for the money. Wong Pack stated that he had left the store before the alleged offence was committed to attend the Chinese Freemason's Lodge, and did not return until the next morning. A witness, Ah Cheong, stated that Ah Foon had paid for some opium and Chinese medicine, and had been given the brandy for free. The case was dismissed.[313]

In a case the following week the magistrate showed a 'lenient disposition' by suggesting that the inspector withdraw that part of the information referring to a previous conviction. He considered that the minimum fine of £100 for a second offence was disproportionate.[314]

Another case involving a Chinese informer, Ah Seong, a cook and rabbiter, was heard by the court in May 1894. The usual ploy of using an empty bottle and coin was employed. The accused, Un Chun, sold Chinese herbs and opium for a living and had been imprisoned previously for keeping a disorderly house and sly grog selling. He was fined £30. Ah Seong was described as a 'respectable Chinaman,

[309] *Gundagai Times,* 29 May, 12 June 1869.

[310] *Gundagai Times,* 1, 4 September 1885.

[311] *Riverine Grazier,* 6 November 1891.

[312] *Riverine Grazier,* 1 April, 1 July 1892.

[313] *Riverine Grazier,* 20 September 1892.

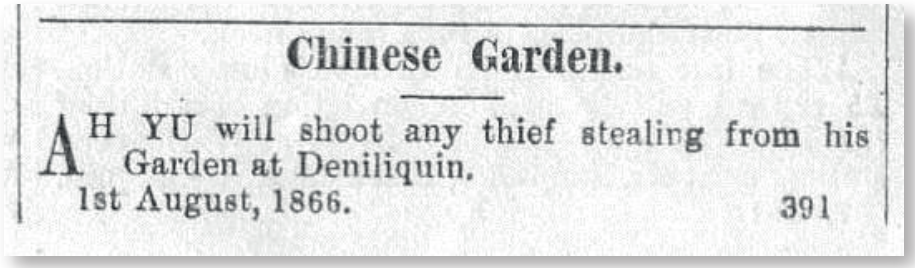
[314] *Riverine Grazier,* 27 September 1892.

who had saved some money; it was the first time he had informed.[315] In September 1895 Ah Hee was fined £30 for sly grog selling. The police used the services of the disreputable Annie Ah Pew, giving her a bottle and a marked coin, which she then passed onto a Mrs Sullivan, who later denied buying grog from Ah Hee. The police later found the marked coin in Ah Hee's house, along with four empty whisky cases, some glasses and empty bottles. [316]

It is clear that the police often overstepped the mark. For instance, at Hay in 1894 they entered Ah Sonny's house in the Chinese Camp on several occasions, suspecting that prostitution was taking place, but did so without a warrant. On several occasions men were found in bed with women, and on another the house was populated by between 20 and 30 men, all 'pretty drunk', and some of them convicted thieves and brothel keepers. Ah Sonny later complained formally to the police about their visits. As he was not in the house at the same time the police were, the court had no alternative but to dismiss the case. In so doing, however, the magistrate stated that 'the house was a very bad one according to the evidence, and if he were brought up again he would be severely dealt with.'[317]

> The court reports provide many examples of the types of offences committed against the Chinese, and the attitudes of the courts, the press and some local citizens. Throughout the Riverina fruit and vegetable stealing was a common offence against the Chinese, possibly attaining the status of a rite of passage amongst the local youth. One of the earliest reported cases was at Deniliquin in 1865, when some thieves climbed over the fence of the Chinese garden at the Wanderer Inn, North Deniliquin and stole a large quantity of cabbages. The paper's readers were warned that the gardener slept in a room opening on the garden, and had a watch dog and a loaded gun, and as a Chinaman can shoot straight enough, it is probable that the petty thieves on their next attempt may carry away something that will make them remember their visit.[318]

In August 1866 a local newspaper carried a notice that Ah You would 'shoot any thief stealing from his Deniliquin garden'.[319] Whether he was the same Chinese gardener referred to in 1865 is unknown. At Hay in September 1878 David Bourke was fined £5 for assaulting Ah Woon, striking him with his


Chinese Garden.

AH YU will shoot any thief stealing from his Garden at Deniliquin.
1st August, 1866. 391

An advertisement from the Deniliquin newspaper, 1866.
Deniliquin and District Historical Society

fist and kicking over his basket of oranges. Several Europeans witnessed the incident, the Magistrate describing it as 'a most unjustifiable assault'.[320] A similar incident occurred at Narrandera in 1899, when John Swan was charged with assaulting Tip Nooey, a popular vegetable hawker, after he asked payment for a vegetable marrow that Swan had taken from his cart. The incident was corroborated by several European witnesses, the Police Magistrate stating that Swan had a number of previous

[315] *Riverine Grazier*, 8 May 1894.
[316] *Riverine Grazier,* 17, 20, 27 September 1895.
[317] *Riverine Grazier,* 20 November 1894.
[318] *Pastoral Times.* 6 May 1865; Bushby, *Saltbush Country*, p.106.
[319] Newspaper extract provided by the Deniliquin and District Historical Society
[320] *Riverine Grazier,* 18 September 1878.

convictions and that the assault 'was a most cowardly and unprovoked one'. Swan received three months hard labour.[321] In July 1900 nine boys aged between 9 and 16 were charged with stealing vegetables from a Chinese market garden at Narrandera. Five of them pleaded guilty and were fined six pence each plus four shillings compensation and eight shillings costs. Four others pleaded not guilty, and the case against them was dismissed as it was uncertain as to whether they were in the garden.[322]

Ken Lean, a Narrandera resident, recalled his own youthful endeavours in this area of crime when he and a few other young boys ventured into King Fan's garden to sample some of his nectarines. Their exploits were interrupted by the sight of an irate King Fan charging across the garden with a meat cleaver in his hand. One boy in a tree took fright and fell down, winding himself. He had to be carried away in a hurry by the others.

Throughout the Riverina the press and the courts were scathing of the larrikins, who sometimes assaulted the Chinese men by throwing stones. At Wagga Wagga in March 1876 a young boy was charged with assaulting Ah Cow, hitting him on the head with a stone and causing serious injury, the correspondent complaining of 'ruffianism running riot during the band promenades', and expressing his relief to see the magistrates prepared to 'deal severely with such cases. [323] In another incident at Wagga Wagga in January 1881, the correspondent remarked that assaults upon the Chinese by larrikins were very common, notwithstanding the severe sentences and fines. In one incident a European youth was fined £2 6s 4d for throwing a stone and striking a Chinese storekeeper. The correspondent commented that perhaps the fine would 'teach other boys that Chinamen live under the same protection as other colonists and must not be ill treated'.[324]

Similar incidents took place elsewhere. At Gundagai in 1878 a correspondent bewailed the tricks played by the larrikin element on the Chinese and other vulnerable citizens, suggesting that the Chinese may be seen by the larrikins as 'fair game for sport, on the principle "hit him again, he has no friends"'. He pleaded that the sooner that 'larrikinism is stamped out the better'.[325] In September 1881 a correspondent for the *Gundagai Times* lamented the fate of a Chinese man at Adelong, 'a quiet, harmless old man', who was cut just above the eye by a stone thrown by a youth. He remarked that:

> no doubt justices will deal with the case in such a manner as will act as a caution to the larrikin tribe. The Celestials here have much to complain of, as it is almost impossible for them to move about without being assaulted. [326]

Many cases of assault also took place at the Hay camp. In 1893 John Watson was fined £1 for being drunk and disorderly at the Chinese camp, kicking in doors and dancing in the street, and being turned out of one house after another.[327] Another incident at the Hay camp took place at one of the cookhouses in January 1894, when Frederick Butcher was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm on Ly Hoon, the owner of the shop. Ly Hoon said that Butcher was a regular customer and often at his

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[321] *Narrandera Ensign*, 13 January 1899.

[322] *Narrandera Ensign*, 13 July 1900.

[323] *Daily Advertiser,* 29 March 1876.

[324] *Daily Advertiser,* 13 January 1881. A similar incident took place in Gundagai in 1882, *Gundagai Times,* 21 March 1882.

[325] *Gundagai Times,* 25 October 1878.

[326] *Gundagai Times,* 6 September 1881.

[327] *Riverine Grazier*, 15 August 1893.

shop. On the night in question Butcher was one of three Europeans who had soup. When he refused to pay Ly Hoon caught hold of him by his coat to prevent him from leaving. Butcher then elbowed him in the eye and went outside, where he threw a piece of brick at Ly Hoon, hitting him on the temple and causing bleeding. The Magistrate described it as a 'cowardly assault' and fined Butcher 10s, in default three months in gaol. Butcher chose not to pay.[328]

Another incident at the Hay camp occurred in October 1895, when four men and two women were charged with riotous behaviour. When the police arrived the group were all 'fighting and shouting indiscriminately' outside Harp Lee's store, the melee being likened to a football match. Two of the men, Fitzmaurice and Donohoe, were each fined £1.[329] In October 1896 two men by the name of Linwood and Meddings were given two months hard labour for being armed with an offensive weapon, (namely, several pieces of brick and a sling shot) with intent to commit a felonious act, the intended victim being a Chinese cook, Willie Kee Poo. Both men and another named Riley were also sentenced to gaol for seven days for behaving in a riotous manner at the camp. Kee Poo said that all three were outside Mary Dawson's house kicking at the door and asking to see Mary and 'kill her dead', and killing him as well if he did not tell of her whereabouts. When arrested, Linwood tried to escape by running away and swimming across the Murrumbidgee River, but all three were caught.[330]

In March 1898 Patrick Regan was fined £2 for being an accessory to an assault on Ah Go. The ringleader, John Darling, was fined £1 10s for the offence, and an equal amount for assaulting a European at the same time. Regan was fined £1 for the former offence. Ah Go testified that he had been knocked down, kicked and had a lamp glass thrown at him, and appeared in court with his head heavily bandaged. Darling said he was looking for the ever-popular Mary Dawson, and the assault commenced when Ah Go denied knowing her whereabouts, Regan holding Ah Go down during the assault.[331] In September 1898 John Pealdo was imprisoned for one week in the Hay Gaol with hard labour for being armed with an offensive weapon and intent to commit a felonious act. The incident occurred outside Margaret Hatton's (Ah Foo's) house. Leong Bong, the catchetist, was passing by when she asked him to get Pealdo and his partner out of the house. Pealdo made threatening gestures to Leong Bong with a piece of iron, returning later and nearly kicking the door down.[332]

Many cases of assault and abuse were never reported to the police, and did not make it into the courts or the press, especially if there were few witnesses, and the offenders and victims were children and teenagers. Some cases were not criminal offenses, but more in the nature of personal slights and bad mouthing. They did, however, cause much distress.

A local Hay resident recalled that at the wool scours the more 'daring type of schoolboy' would cross the river by boat with a good supply of stones, and then from behind the large gum trees opposite the scour he would throw the stones, causing an uproar and a threat to call the police. Eventually a policeman was sent to the scour and the Chinese workers were left in peace.[333] He also recalled that another Chinese man, Tin Can (a nickname at best), was the victim of many practical jokes by the juvenile fraternity and that if all the rocks that were thrown on his house were gathered together 'there would have been sufficient to provide a monument to his memory'. He also told of another prankster,

[328] *Riverine Grazier,* 9 January 1894.

[329] *Riverine Grazier,* 11 October 1895.

[330] *Riverine Grazier,* 30 October 1896.

[331] *Riverine Grazier,* 22, 25 March 1898.

[332] *Riverine Grazier,* 23 September 1898.

[333] *Riverine Grazier*, 26 March 1945.

Bill Pearse, who placed himself on top of the temple roof while a service was in progress, throwing a young rooster through an opening on the roof, the subsequent reaction likened to a 'damaged hornet's nest'. On another occasion, while the Chinese men were at the temple, he fixed the pigeon loft so that the loft andl its pigeons would fall into one of the gambling rooms on the men's return.[334]

Elsewhere in the Riverina, the legendary Sydney jockey Ted Doon, a descendant of Dang Charles Doon of Tumut, recalled that while walking to the Anglican Church on Sunday, he and his brothers were accosted by young boys on horses, who chased the terrified boys all the way to church. Their father retaliated in a very practical way, buying each of the boys a pair of boxing gloves and a punching bag. The next time they were ready. Bob, the oldest boy, pulled the ringleader off his horse and belted him. Ted grabbed the other boy and did likewise, the third boy riding away in a hurry. In Sydney as a young apprentice jockey he lived at the stables with the other apprentices and strappers, and was teased relentlessly and called names such as 'little fried rice' or 'little Chinkie'. He didn't like this and realised that unless he did something life would become intolerable. One day he called his six tormentors together and challenged them to a fight after work, with the foreman as the referee. At the appointed time the six boys were lined up and Ted called them out one at a time, knocking each one down. Afterwards he had friends everywhere. The owner, Dan Lewis, appointed Ted as a type of enforcer, and if one of the boys misbehaved he had to answer to Ted.

Descendants of other Riverina-based Chinese-Australian families have similar stories. Lindsay Poy senior from Albury recalled that 'it was bloody awful at school, we used to get called chinky and darkie... we had a few fights'.[335] That tended to be the worst of it and he met with very little discrimination afterwards. His sister Kay had a harder time of it; she had darker skin and was teased endlessly. For some the experience was much worse. Members of a Wagga Wagga-based family recalled that while the boys may have received some taunting at school because of their race, they could hold their own. Not so the girls, particularly if they had darker skin. These girls were teased, taunted and bullied - called chinks and half-castes, and one girl from another Chinese-Australian family in the same town committed suicide as result. The family did not socialise very much with other families in town. Some Chinese males used to visit on Saturday evening where there was a swap of fish for pork and a shared dinner followed by Euchre (cards), nor did the children go to other children's places for birthdays or holidays. The family was so ashamed of its Chinese heritage that they removed the Chinese inscriptions from their father's headstone in the local cemetery. All the children found it hard to talk about their Chinese heritage, often trying to change the subject or even becoming very angry when asked, or if the talk persisted about it. One of the aunts even tried to lighten the colour of her skin by rubbing lemon juice on it. Years later, their own children have a different attitude, one that permits some pride in accepting their Chinese heritage. It has, however, been a long haul and amongst the older members of the family the scars still remain.[336] While no stories have come to hand of ill treatment of children in the Hay area, it is very likely that they occurred there as well.

The Chinese were certainly not innocent in the area of crime, particularly on the goldfields, where the police were often absent. At Upper Adelong Mr Watson's store appeared a favourite target. In February 1862 a Chinese man robbed him of £59 and in July the same year two Chinese men stole goods valued at £14 from his store.[337] Chinese men also robbed the premises of John Wheatley at Upper

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[334] *Riverine Grazier,* 26 March 1945.

[335] Neil Wilson, 'The dinky-di Poy Boys', *Herald Sun,* 29 July 2000.

[336] Information from Allison Nye, Castlemaine, 2009.

[337] *Wynyard Times,* 25 February, 15 July 1862.

Adelong, the correspondent lamenting that it had been the third burglary in the last three weeks committed by the Chinese. He remarked that Adelong was one of the most important goldfields in the Southern District, yet 'left entirely without that protection which is daily becoming more and more necessary'.[338] In September Watson's store was robbed again of £14 while several Chinese were making a purchase.[339]

Some of the Chinese crimes were very Australian, such as sheep, horse and saddle stealing, many of them occurring in the bush and on the pastoral stations in the Hay district, and a number of the offenses were committed against their own countrymen.

In June 1879 Ah Howe, a worker on Illillawa station near Hay, was fined for possessing dogs accused of killing several rams, and in February 1888 James Ah Lick, a rabbiter, was sentenced to three month's gaol for stealing a saddle from James Hawker, a groom residing at Slatter's hotel at Oxley, west of Hay.[340] More newsworthy was the conviction of Ah Foon, Ah You and Ah See with sheep stealing on James Tyson's Tupra station, west of Hay.[341] The three men were rabbiters on the station. Richard Mahoney, a horse breaker at Tupra, and one other man, saw the three men cutting up a sheep near the Chinese camp at Eaglehawk Paddock on Oxley Creek. The jury concluded that although dogs had killed the sheep, the Chinese men were guilty of taking the mutton and each was sentenced to a year in gaol.[342] Later that year Dah War, who had been working as a cook for the Mungadal Station shearers, was charged with stealing tinned meat from the storeroom and hiding the cans in a nearby creek bed. He was sentenced to six months gaol.[343] Following the theft of a horse and an assault on a Chinese man, Ah Ping, at Wagga Wagga in May 1890, Ah Ging (Ah Shang?) was found by the police in his gaol cell dying from strychnine poisoning, He had been gaoled following the two incidents. He said that he had stabbed Ah Ping in a fit of passion and asked to see his countrymen before he died. The policeman on duty went to Clare station to get the Chinese gardener, the Chinese at the station admitting that they had helped hide Ah Ging before his attempted escape to Queensland, which had gone amiss when his horse escaped.[344] In April 1891 Ah Nam was sentenced to three years gaol for stealing a horse from Louis Chow at Oxley.[345]

In another 'pastoral case' Ah Sing was charged in 1888 with stealing a watch and chain from Ah Wah and similar articles from Ah Chung. All three men worked at Corrigan's wool scouring works near Hay and slept in a hut near the wash. After a trial by jury he was gaoled for 18 months.[346] Corrigan's wool scour was in the news again the following year when Wee Toy was fined for assaulting Look Tang. At breakfast time Wee Toy had thrown some tea over Look Tang, then hit him twice about the head with a ladle, the two then coming to grips in close combat. Evidence from a witness, Quong Way, suggests that the origins of the fight may have been partly factional or ethnic. He stated that Wee Toy had been

338 *Wynyard Times,* 18 July 1862.

339 *Wynyard Times,* 26 July 1862.

340 *Riverine Grazier,* 7 February 1888, 28 June 1879.

341 *Riverine Grazier,* 21 February 1888.

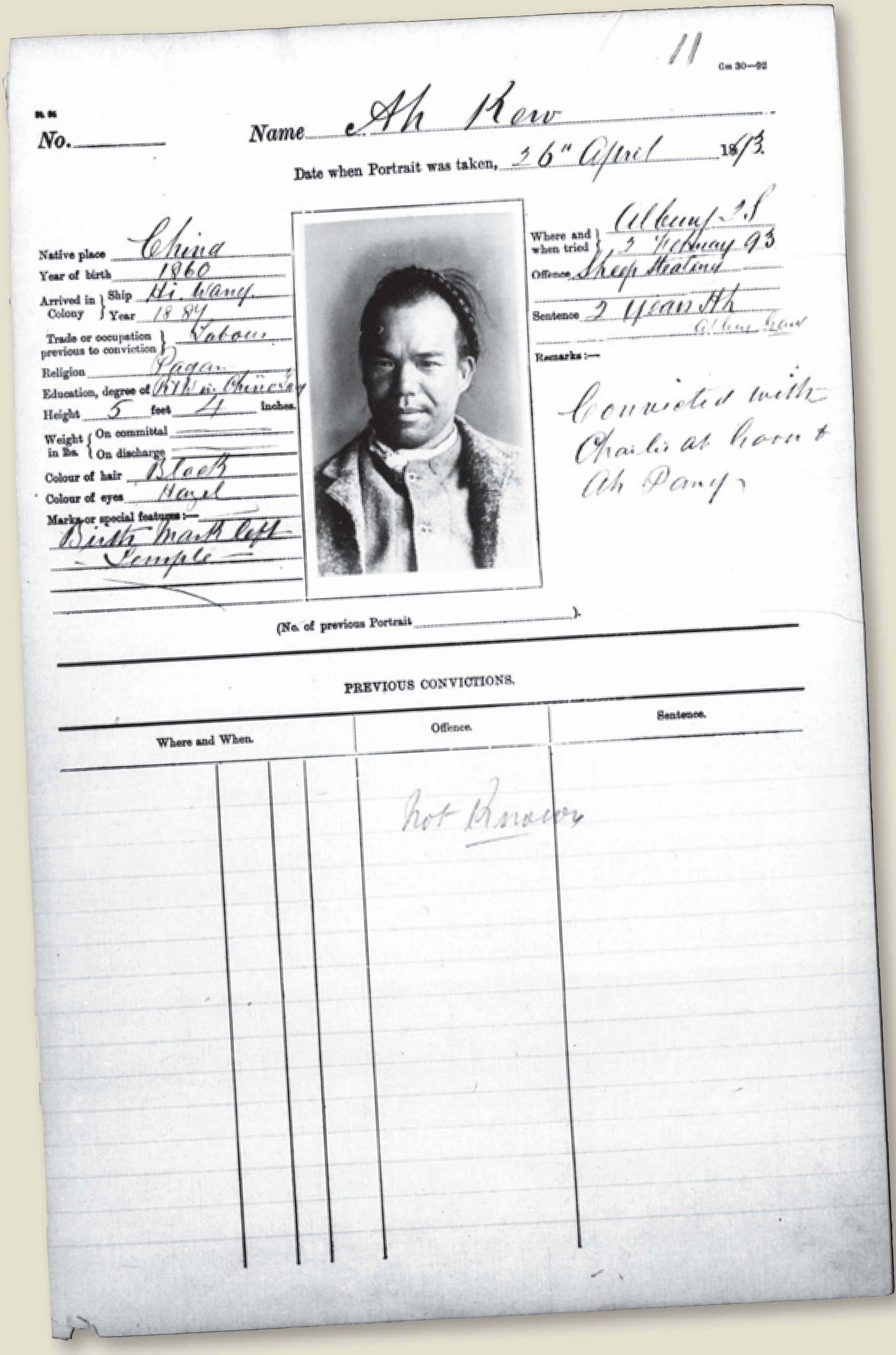
342 *Riverine Grazier,* 9 March 1888.

343 *Riverine Grazier*, 2 October 1888.

344 *Riverine Grazier,* 23 May 1890

345 *Riverine Grazier*, 10 April 1891.

346 *Riverine Grazier,* 27 November, 7 December 1888.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Gn 30—92

No.

Name Ah Kew

Date when Portrait was taken, 26" April 1893.

Native place China

Year of birth 1860

Arrived in Colony — Ship Hi Wang; Year 1884

Trade or occupation previous to conviction Labour

Religion Pagan

Education, degree of R/W in Chinese

Height 5 feet 4 inches.

Weight in lbs. — On committal; On discharge

Colour of hair Black

Colour of eyes Hazel

Marks or special features:— Birth mark left temple

Where and when tried: Albury Q.S. 3 February 93

Offence Sheep stealing

Sentence 2 years H.L.

Remarks:— Convicted with Charlie Ah Coon & Ah Pang

(No. of previous Portrait).

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS.

Where and When.	Offence.	Sentence.
	Not Known	

Ah Kew's record from Albury court; he was accused of sheep stealing.

New South Wales State Records Centre

a slave in China, and such persons were looked down upon by other Chinese. Look Tang had said to Wee Toy, 'You're a slave and no good'.[347]

One of the more dramatic sheep stealing cases occurred at Temora station in 1894, where the manager found a Chinese man killing a sheep. He despatched a man to Temora to fetch the police, and dismounted to keep watch over the man, who rushed at him and cut his neck with a butcher's knife, inflicting a nasty but not fatal wound. The Chinese man was not captured until late in the evening when he was found concealed under some bushes. His hut was nearby. He resisted at first, but surrendered when faced with the policeman's revolver.[348]
At Hay in January 1895 Ah Yen was sentenced to 12 months in Hay gaol for two misdemeanours, the first of being unlawfully on the premises of Ah Mow, who had a fruit store near the camp, and the second for stealing an opium box, the property of Ah Hoy.[349] In August 1895 Tin Can was sentenced to two months in Hay gaol with hard labour for stealing fence railings. The witness claimed that stealing of firewood and other timber was a common offence in the locality. When arriving at Tin Can's house he saw a piece of timber identical to that taken from his fence buming on a fire.[350]

The most grievous crime committed by a Chinese man in the Riverina was in November 1870 when, after a heated argument, Chong How killed a fellow Chinese gardener Tommy Ah Gong at Hay, by a blow with a spade, splitting his head in two as if it had been struck with a 'butcher's cleaver'. Another Chinese man, who had come up at the time and attempted to interfere was also badly wounded.[351]
At his trial Chong Gow 'seemed to glory in the deed', and his confession "me kill Tommy" all but sealed his fate. The correspondent lamented the fate of such men and questioned whether he was legally accountable for the act, and whether his defence had been conducted adequately. Nevertheless, he asserted that Chong Gow was very violent and dangerous and 'unfit to be at large'. According to the correspondent, Chong Gow was at ease with his fate, taking the view that in some form or another he would soon be back in China to be with his friends and relatives. He even demanded a new set of clothes from the gaol authorities, and was very mindful of his watch. In the circumstances the writer wondered that there were not more such crimes.[352] Not long after Ah Gong's murder Ah Fat was charged with stabbing Ah Cowey after accusing him of stealing a pipe case. The crime was witnessed by another Chinese man, Ah Chew, and the jury returned a verdict of unlawful wounding.[353]

Overall the level of physical provocation and abuse of the Chinese people in the Riverina, bad as it was, never rose to anything like that seen occasionally on some Australian goldfields, these melees in turn paling into insignificance compared with the murder and systemic violence characteristic of Chinese and European race relations in the USA. Nevertheless, there were several incidents of mass assault or even murder. An attack in the late 1870s by Thomas Booth and other rouseabouts and shearers from Corrong station south of Booligal on 20 unarmed Chinese was particularly cowardly. It had been rumoured that the Chinese were considering working for James Tyson on Tupra Station for 15 shillings a week rather than the usual £1. Armed with shear blades, waddies and some kerosene tins to use as drums to drown out the shouts from the victims, the assailants tore down the tents of the Chinese

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[347] *Riverine Grazier,* 29 November 1889.

[348] *Narrandera Ensign,* 5 June 1894.

[349] *Riverine Grazier,* 18 January 1895.

[350] *Riverine Grazier,* 9 August 1895.

[351] *Pastoral Times,* 12 November 1870.

[352] *Pastoral Times,* 10 June 1871.

[353] *Pastoral Times,* 17 December 1870.

while they were asleep and scattered their belongings everywhere, later collecting everything that remained unbroken and retreating back to their quarters. The Chinese spent the night hiding in the scrub and the next morning left en masse for Hay. Several days later the police arrived to investigate the assault, but 'everybody who had been involved was suddenly struck dumb'.[354]

The most infamous incident was the 'Battle of Hillston Bridge' in 1895, in which one Chinese man, Yeong Kue, was killed, three severely injured and taken to hospital and between eight and eighteen variously wounded. The fracas occurred on Chinese New Year and involved about 30 Chinese men and about 20 Europeans. The Europeans had gone to Chong Lee's garden, but some of them were inebriated and had abused the hospitality of the Chinese by pulling unripe fruit from the trees. When one of the owners complained he was struck, and other Chinese men soon came to his aid. In the meantime one of the Europeans went to the nearby Albion hotel and successfully recruited a mob armed with lemonade bottles and other missiles, who confronted the Chinese on the bridge. Police reinforcements were brought in from various other local areas and the alleged perpetrators were brought to trial, but the lack of reliable witnesses meant that all were acquitted of manslaughter.[355] Another incident resulting in the death of a Chinese man occurred at Grahamstown near Adelong in 1880, when Michael McNamara fatally assaulted Sin Lee Yong, whom he accused of stealing part of his fence. The local reporter commented that the judge, in his directions to the jury was 'somewhat favourable to the prisoner, being evidently of opinion that he was guilty of manslaughter if guilty at all'. The jury found McNamara guilty of manslaughter and he was sentenced to 12 months gaol, the sentence giving 'great satisfaction here and at Grahamstown, as it is thought the Chinaman gave McNamara great provocation'.[356]

[354] Hay Historical Society Web-Site Newsletter, February 2006, No IV.

[355] *Hillston Spectator,* 2 February 1895; *Riverine Grazier,* 29 January, 5, 8, 19 February, 26 March, 5 April 1895.

[356] *Gundagai Times,* 7, 23 September, 5 October 1880.

Families, Friendship and Influence

The historian A.T. Yarwood has remarked that the Chinese eventually became a people of long standing who were respected and useful citizens, contributing to charities and corporate life, but that this was a 'status won as individuals rather than as members of a race'.[357] Fraternisation between Europeans and Chinese in the camps, particularly in some of the less salubrious activities such as prostitution, gambling and sly grog selling was just one aspect of their lives. More edifying was the mixing of the two races in the more happy circumstances such as Chinese New Year, for while white Australians were largely observers in these celebrations, occasionally they were invited to the feasts. One such function happened at Hillston in 1876, when some Europeans attended a banquet at the gardens. According to the Riverine Grazier, invitations had been sent to Europeans and

> "John" was there with his pig and his fowl with the concomittant appendages and dessert dry fruit prepared by themselves, and splendid grapes which hung in clusters about the house.

At the function Mr Markey proposed the health of the Chinese market gardeners of whom there were 20 working in partnership and wished them 'many happy New Years'. Mr Mackenzie responded on their behalf, giving details of their business enterprise', following which the gathered throng enjoyed 'the pleasure of a quadrille'.[358]

Similar functions took place elsewhere in the Riverina. At Gundagai in 1880 Dang Ah Chee and Sun Yun Yek, the two main merchants, invited some European residents to dine with them on Chinese New Year. Not all the invitees attended, but those that did gave 'ample justice' to the 'good things provided, the peculiar flavour of certain dishes...being particularly admired by the visitors'. One of the guests proposed the health of the hosts and gave an 'eloquent discourse' on the many benefits the Chinese had conferred on the colonies.[359] A similar function took place at Adelong in 1887 when the townsfolk were woken at an early hour by a

> great explosion of fireworks which our Celestial friends were discharging in honour of the advent of their new year...celebrated with usual feasting and entertaining of their friends, amongst whom were a good many European acquaintances, some of whom were rather puzzled what to make of some of the strange delicacies to which they were treated'.[360]

The Chinese New Year celebrations at Junee in 1903 differed from those held elsewhere in the region, and were characterised by a heavy emphasis on the benefits of the Christian religion. James Wong Chuey and the Chinese members of the Junee Wesleyan Church (ten in number including Mr and Mrs Chuey) entertained over 60 friends, mainly Europeans, to a banquet at their home. It was reported that the

> table was laden with all the good things imaginable in the way of eatables, and soft drinks in abundance were provided; the surroundings, too, were most picturesque, Chinese lanterns being dotted here and there in the midst of a galaxy of decorations.

After supper, Mr Wheatley moved a resolution of appreciation thanking individually the Chinese

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[357] A.T. Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia. The Background to Exclusion 1896-1923,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p.117.

[358] *Riverine Grazier,* 2 February 1876.

[359] *Gundagai Times,* 13 February 1880.

[360] *Gundagai Times,* 28 January 1887.

hosts 'for their unstinted hospitality in providing for us this evening's entertainment and sumptuous repast'.[361]

Whatever else they may have said or felt, few white Australians disputed the generosity of the Chinese. Of particular significance was their readiness to donate money to the local hospitals and help in other fund raising efforts. The *Riverine Grazier* carried regular lists of contributors to the Hay hospital, Europeans and Chinese alike. In February 1879 the list contained the names of 52 Chinese residents of and visitors to Hay, and the names of 30 Chinese at the small town of Booligal, plus the contributions of those residing on iconic stations such as Burrabogie.[362] In 1887 the list contained 54 names of contributors from the Chinese camp, the collection being organised by Hi On and Chuck Kee, each of whom contributed £3 3s each, which at that time was a lot of money, equivalent to at least a week's wage for a tradesman[363]. In 1892 the subscription list included 18 Chinese contributors on Tupra Station and 25 on Ulonga Station, to name but two.[364] The Deniliquin Chinese were equally generous to their local hospital; with 52 contributors from the town in 1875 and 66 in 1899. At Hillston in 1886-1887, Joseph Too collected £23 12s 6d from 20 of his fellow countrymen towards the local hospital. There was, in addition, one Chinese contributor from Cowl Cowl Station and four from Wooyeo Station.[365] In September 1890 Long Jim and Ching Lee from the Hay camp donated £23 14s, the proceeds coming from a pro rata deduction by Chinese participants in the Chinese lotteries. The correspondent remarking that the Chinese hoped that such contributions would 'justify the continuance of the lotteries'.[366]

The Chinese people also took part in local concerts, fetes and processions, particularly where fund raising was involved, and they were ready contributors to other worthy causes. For instance, in April 1891 several Chinese were listed as contributors to a fund set up in aid of those affected by a serious fire at Booligal. The most generous was King Goon and Co, who donated £1 10s.[367] In August 1892 a Chinese orchestra and singers performed to a mixed audience at the Athenaeum Hall in Hay. The orchestra consisted of Ah Cow and Do Chin on fiddles, Ah Moon on banjo and Yar War on the "dack dhu", a type of side drum made of copper. The singers were Kim Tuck and Ming On. In 1894 a number of Chinese people took part in the Hillston hospital fete procession, including a Chinese band with instruments and a Chinese cook shop four-in-hand. Eight Chinese men participated in two Chinese races at the games afterwards. The winner of the first race, Ah Chin, presented his prize (donated by Way, Sing & Co) of a bag of rice to the hospital. The Chinese also donated fireworks to the Hay hospital fetes. In 1897 the three main storekeepers at the camp, Hi On, Harp Lee and Looy Goon, donated 5,000 packets of crackers each, and in 1899 the Chinese storekeepers donated 10,000 crackers towards the torchlight procession. Hop Cheong, another storekeeper, donated 4,000 crackers.[368] Chinese gardeners also entered and won prizes in horticultural shows. For instance, in October 1894 Ye Yen and Wong Park both won prizes at the Hay show in the garden produce and fruit sections.[369]

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361 *Junee Southern Cross,* 6 February 1903.

362 *Riverine Grazier,* 8 February 1879.

363 *Riverine Grazier,* 25 January 1887.

364 *Riverine Grazier,* 16 February 1892.

365 *Riverine Grazier,* 25 January 1887.

366 *Riverine Grazier,* 2 September 1890.

367 *Riverine Grazier,* 7 April 1891.

368 *Riverine Grazier,* 12 August 1892, 3 April 1894; 23 April 1897, 2, 12, 16 May 1899.

369 *Riverine Grazier,* 19 October 1894.

A different type of participation took place at Albury in 1876 and 1897. In 1876 a holiday and public parade of almost all town bodies and associations was held to celebrate the visit of the Governor of NSW, Sir Hercules Robinson. The Chinese procession was

> novel and striking, consisting…of a number of our Celestial fellow colonists garbed in the habiliments of first-class mandarins of the Flowery Land. The dresses worn were most handsome and costly. Made entirely of silk they reached almost to the ground, and the gorgeous beings thus apparelled in blue, red, yellow and pink, with long tails sweeping the earth…[370]

In 1897 a parade was held in aid of a fund to erect a Queen's memorial wing to the Albury hospital, and on the occasion of the Queen's jubilee celebrations. Albury's Chinese residents were an important part of this event, and wore 'strikingly picturesque' costumes and were accompanied by a Chinese band. The reporter commented that the 'Chinese in the kindest and most self-sacrificing manner threw themselves into the enterprise enthusiastically, and were very largely instrumental in making its unqualified success'. Eighty men 'all dressed in gorgeous attire' carried a monster dragon, about 50 metres long, and in the evening they held a fireworks display at the showground at their own expense.[371]

Although both races in the 19th century led largely separate lives, there were many instances of affection at the departure of a long-term Chinese resident for China, or at his funeral. Two such instances of the former occurred in the Junee area in 1903. In one case Tommy Ah Nan, a well-known Junee vegetable dealer, and a member of the Methodist church, entertained 60 of his friends in the church at a banquet prior to his departure for China to see his elderly parents. Present were the Rev. A. Brown, who was the chair for the evening and James Wong Chuey. Originally, the church members had planned to give him a send off, but Tommy declined and said he would entertain his friends instead. The Rev. Brown said that Tommy had been a resident of Junee for ten years and he had known him for five or six years. He remarked that his

> characteristics were such as to attract respect from anyone. He was a good citizen and a loyal subject, and in fact was a most exemplary man in every sense of the word....and when he returned to Junee he hoped he would get as hearty a welcome as any man that ever landed in Australia.

James Chuey was also very effusive in his praise. Tommy was presented with a gold medal, on which was inscribed 'Presented to Tommy Ah Nan by his Junee friends'.[372]

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370 *Albury Banner,* 4 November 1876.

371 *Ovens & Murray Advertiser,* 19 June 1897; *Albury Daily News & Wodonga Chronicle*, 23, 24, 28 June 1897.

372 *Junee Democrat,* 10, 12 August 1903.

Miss Lentell's music class in Junee, 1907. Rose Chuey is participating in the back row, fifth from the right.
Private collection

In another instance at Junee the Junee Southern Cross correspondent spoke very highly of Ah Chock, a Bethungra market gardener on his imminent departure for China, describing him as 'one of the most popular and liberal minded residents of the district'. He remarked that Ah Chock was

> of a most charitable nature, and besides helping on ever [sic] good cause in and around Bethungra has been a constant contributor to the Cootamundra hospital for very many years past. It is not too much to say that his absence will be felt by many, and should he ever return there is no doubt as to his receiving a warm welcome. Were all Chinamen possessed of the same disposition as Mr Ah Chock it is safe to say that the Chinese Restriction Act would never have been enacted, inasmuch as there would have been no necessity.[373]

Similar tributes and regards to well known Chinese men were paid in the Hay and Deniliquin district. According to John Bushby, Pelly Ah None was a favourite with young and old – a jovial generous man, who was ready to contribute toward any fund in the public interest. In 1946 he decided to return to China to spend his final days and in July was given a public send-off at the Town Hall. The Mayor, James Hynes, presented Pelly with a gold watch, leather travelling case and a wallet of notes from his Deniliquin friends. Pelly's son, Charlie, was educated at Deniliquin and later became a doctor. Another highly regarded Chinese man was Chin Soo, a member of the Methodist church and a member of the Masonic Lodge in Sydney, where he had once worked as a cabinet maker. His wife lived at Lok Bo in Guangdong Province, and he had two sons. Bushby described the Deniliquin storekeeper Ah Louey as a popular man, who had many friends in the town. [374]

Perhaps less edifying, but still very respectful, was an obituary for Fang Hi, who died in 1930 at 76 years of age. He was described as the best known Chinese man in the Hay district. He had been a gardener in Hay and the surrounding district for about 50 years, and was

> Possessed of a ready wit and a remarkably developed suavity he was better enabled to get a good price for a very indifferent cabbage and leave his customer in a good humour than any other vegetable hawker that ever peddled his wares in this locality.[375]

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[373] *Junee Southern Cross,* 6 March 1903.

[374] Bushby, *Saltbush Country,* pp. 276-277.

[375] *Riverine Grazier,* 22 July 1930.

Another well respected Chinese man in the local area was Low Dick, a market gardener at Carrathool. On his death in 1923 his brother, Lo Yin, stated that he had about £200, so he was not destitute, although he had no will or any life assurance. Low Dick was married, with two wives and three children in China (two boys and a girl). A local resident said that Low Dick and his partner Fan Chuck always seemed to be on very friendly terms. On his arrival at the scene of Low Dick's death Fan Chuck appeared to be 'very much upset' and was crying.[376]

Perhaps the best example of local esteem is provided by the funeral of the Adelong storekeeper Ah Nam. His funeral cortege was one of largest witnessed in Adelong for some time and all the leading business people attended, there being no less than 600 at the grave. The Reverend Soares read the Church of England service, and in a short address alluded to the 'honest manliness of his character, for he was always ready to assist charities and each religious denomination received a share of his liberality'.[377] According to the *Gundagai Times* correspondent

> many a poor family would miss him for, Chinaman or not, he was a kind charitable man. He was known to have given long credit to his customers and must have a deal of bad debts in his books. [378]

A short time before his death a firm in the same line of business was burnt out, and he supplied goods to the owners at cost price. 'As a business man he could hold his own against any European, he was very benevolent in his ways, gentle and civil to everyone.' He had been known personally to the *Gundagai Times* for nearly 20 years, and was regarded as 'a man of strict integrity, polite and courteous to all, and a genuine good townsman'.[379]

Two other examples concern Harry King Fan and Tip Nooey from Narrandera. On Harry King Fan's death in 1954 the *Narrandera Argus* remarked that he

> was a good resident and during his long residence here helped in many ways to raise funds for various appeals. King generally made his appeal to the Chinese residents, who readily responded...He also gave generously to the Lat Narrandera hospital in the days when appeals were made to the public for support.[380]

Harry King Fan's headstone, Narrandera cemetery.
Barry McGowan

[376] *Riverine Grazier,* 15 June 1923.
[377] *Gundagai Times,* 6 July 1888.
[378] *Gundagai Times,* 3 July 1888.
[379] *Gundagai Times,* 3 July 1888.
[380] *Narrandera Argus,* 19 August 1954.

Tip Nooey was a Narrandera based market gardener. He was remembered fondly by Joan Palmer, whose father bought cabbage and cauliflower seedlings from him. She described him as a well-known citizen and member of the Church of England who gave generously to local charities. In 1925 he sold his garden and retired to Sydney. The *Narrandera Argus* stated that he had 'always been ready to do his bit for patriotic or charitable matters', and was 'especially good in his interest in the public hospital, which for many years had benefited by his generosity'.[381] Tip died in 1939 and was buried in the Narrandera cemetery beside Joan's parents and the Aboriginal stockman Archie.[382]

The river boat captain John Egge was another very highly regarded Chinese man. According to Morag Loh he was hugely popular and highly respected along all the rivers. Contemporary newspapers described him as 'highly reputable', 'Wentworth's most popular resident', 'without a single enemy' and 'an old friend'. When he left Wentworth in 1888 to live for a period in Adelaide, the town citizens, led by the Council, presented him with a valedictory address signed by the mayor and aldermen, and other town notables such as justices of the peace, solicitors, the doctor, postmaster and customs officer. The testimonial was accompanied by a gold ring in which was set a large diamond surrounded by twelve smaller ones. Morag Loh has commented that, unlike many of his countrymen, Egge was not a sojourner but settled very early in Australia and put his Chinese background aside in order to succeed. His early acquisition of land, change and choice of name and total adoption of European clothes were evidence of this. As an apparent plus point he was also reported to have known little or nothing of his own language. However, many Chinese men retained their names, or at least modified them only slightly, and did not forget their language or customs, with no detriment to their regard in the European community.[383]

More importantly, perhaps, Egge fitted well into the tradition of the rivers, where skippers often worked as hard as their men and turned their hands to many tasks. His generosity was legendary. All religious denominations, sporting clubs and social groups used his boats for fun and fund raising, with dances on board, evening cruises, picnics and weekend outings. His reputation for giving free rides to stranded or penniless bush workers earned him a gratitude that was repaid during the shearers' strike in 1894. Strikers camped on the river banks attacked boats suspected of aiding station owners or carrying scab labour, and one boat was burnt. Egge's boats passed unchecked and were cheered from the time they came into view until they disappeared from sight around the next bend. His obituary in the Federal Standard stated that he 'earned...and retained the utmost respect and goodwill on all sides and the working men, in particular, thought much of their old friend'.[384]

In the Riverina, Chinese alliances and associations began to change over time, along with the slowly dwindling Chinese population, particularly after the 1888 immigration restrictions. Mixed marriages were seen as one way of bridging the racial divide; church was another, and later still, membership of European sporting, social and cultural institutions and the armed forces. Many Chinese men were Christian converts and members of a Christian church, and were married, mostly to European women, although some married Chinese women. An early instance of the latter took place in 1880, with the arrival of the Chinese wife of the Adelong storekeeper, Kum Hang Long, in Gundagai en route to Adelong. At Gundagai the couple stayed at Fry's hotel where they dined with some of their countrymen. The *Gundagai Times* reporter remarked that 'She was attired after the Chinese fashion,

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[381] *Narrandera Argus,* 16 May 1925.

[382] Palmer, *Memories of a Riverina* Childhood, pp.102-103.

[383] Loh, 'John Egge: A Champion of the Rivers; *Adelaide Observer,* 21 September 1901.

[384] Loh, 'John Egge: A Champion of the Rivers; *Adelaide Observer,* 21 September 1901.

her dress being of richly embroidered satin. She wore no hat or bonnet, but had a quantity of choice flowers in her hair'.[385] At Adelong she was the subject of continued interest, but the rudeness of children anxious to get a glimpse of her must have been very annoying; and the adults were not much better.[386] After 12 months her Chinese maid was sold to a Chinese storekeeper in Wagga Wagga for £90. Originally the price had been £80, but Chinese women were in high demand, 'hence the advance in price'. The purchaser conveyed her away in a buggy accompanied by a half dozen Chinese men.[387]

One of the telling characteristics of the Chinese people during these transitional years was the strength of their family ties and their links with other Chinese families throughout the Riverina and elsewhere in Australia. These men did not abandon their fellow, often less fortunate, countrymen, although for many their traditional beliefs and allegiances became progressively weaker. As historians Kate Bagnall and Paul Macgregor have commented, many Chinese men in Australia upheld the family lineage by supporting wives in China and overseas, the Chinese wives either having had children before the husband left for Australia, or conceiving again on the husband's periodic return. Taking a younger wife or adopting sons was part of this strategy.[388] For these men, tradition and family ties in China were still very important.

A family connection straddling the length and breadth of the Riverina district involves the Pack family from Hay and the Choy family from Grong Grong, and later Narrandera and Wagga Wagga. Alex Pack was one of 18 children born to Margaret Pack and Ah Pack. Margaret was of Scottish and Chinese parentage; her mother, Maria Yew, passing away in Hay in September 1895. Together with his brother George, Ah Pack was brought to Australia at the age of 15 by his father, Law Pack, who had returned to China after working at the gold diggings in Victoria. Ah Pack was a market gardener on Til Til Station and often sold vegetables in Hay when he returned to see his family. Margaret remained in Hay where she raised the children. Alex's parents died before he turned six, and he was raised by other members of the family. George married Margaret's sister, Rosie.

Alex spent most of his working life as a shearer.[389] Harold, one of Alex's brothers, worked as an apprentice in a local bakery, leaving at the age of 14 or 15 to go tank (dam) sinking in the Oxley district. He enlisted in the army in the early weeks of the Second World War and was serving with the Second Pioneer Battalion when he was taken prisoner in Libya. Interned in Italy he escaped from the camp and spend several months wandering in Northern Italy before making his way to Switzerland. He was repatriated to Australia at the end of the war in Europe and for a time served in coastal defences and in the Hay garrison. After the war he returned to his former work of tank sinking and earth moving, until a foot ailment, probably related to his war experiences, saw him turn to less arduous work at the Hampton Cafe in Hay for several years. He later worked in the building industry. Harold was known as a good horseman and assisted with the work of the Hay Rodeo Club. He was a member of the Hay Services Club, and did a 'lot of charitable work in an unobtrusive manner'.[390]

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385 *Gundagai Times,* 16 April 1880.

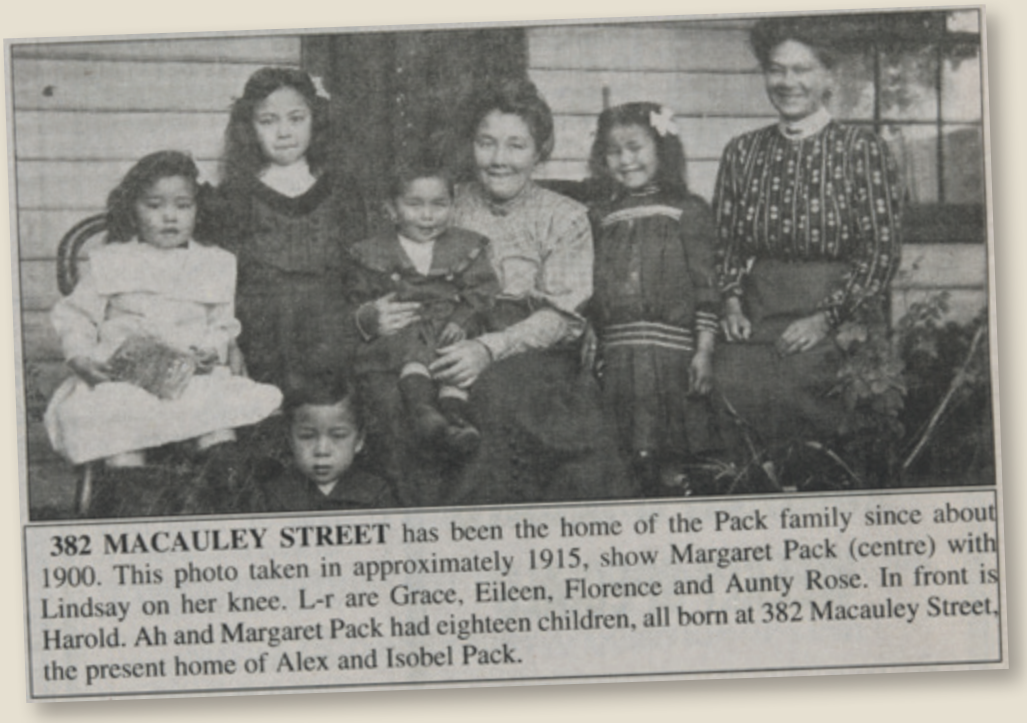
386 *Gundagai Times,* 20 April 1880.

387 *Gundagai Times,* 26 April 1881.

388 Kate Bagnall, 'A journey of love: Agnes Bruer's sojourn in 1930s China', *Transnational Ties. Australian Lives in the World,* Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott (eds), ANU Press, 2008, pp.115-134; Paul Macgregor, 'Dreams of Jade and Gold. Chinese families in Australia's history', *The Australian family. Images and Essays,* (ed) Anna Epstein, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, pp.25-28.

389 *Riverine Grazier*, 6 November 2002.

390 *Riverine Grazier,* 1 July 1969.

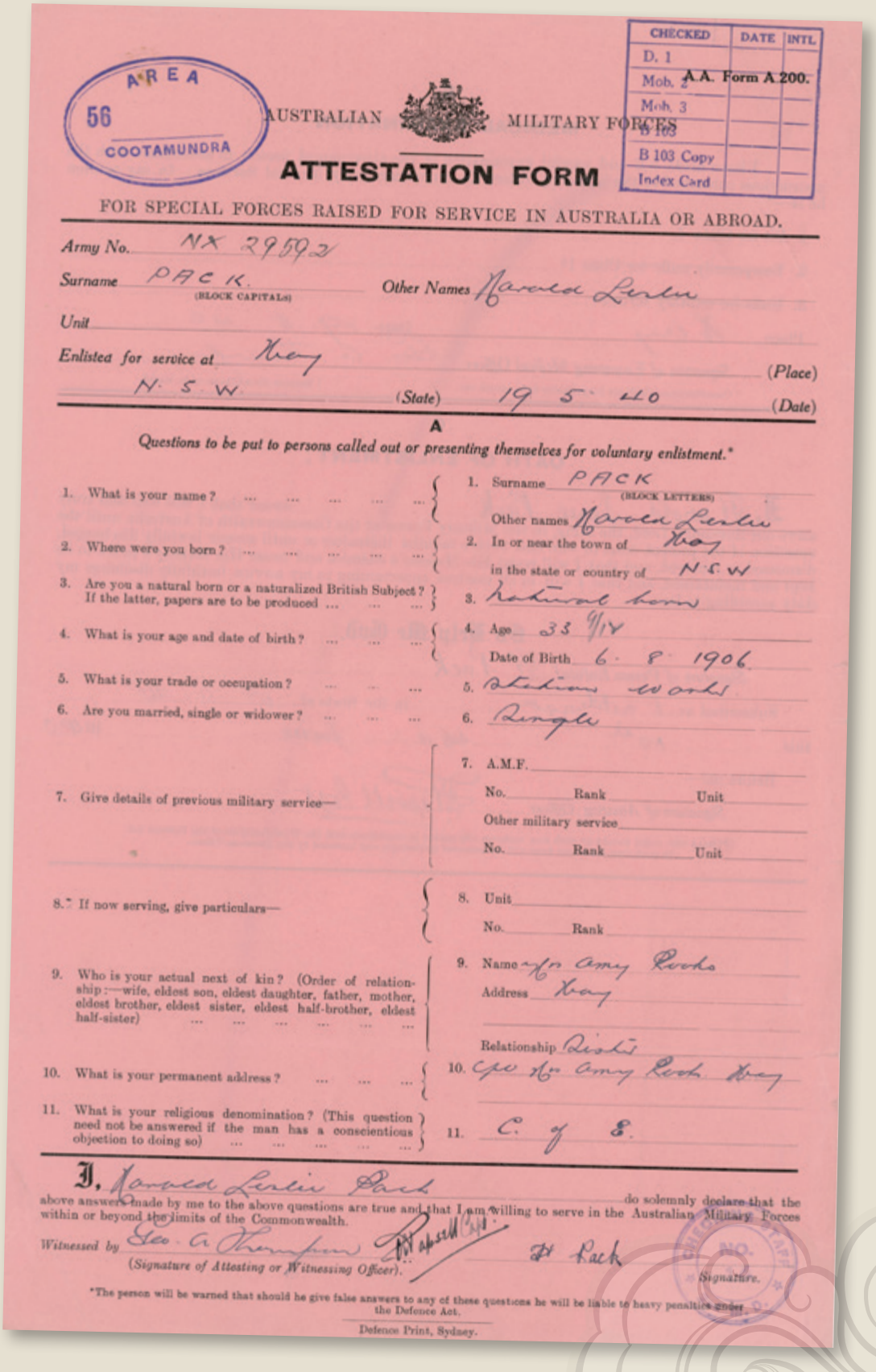


382 MACAULEY STREET has been the home of the Pack family since about 1900. This photo taken in approximately 1915, show Margaret Pack (centre) with Lindsay on her knee. L-r are Grace, Eileen, Florence and Aunty Rose. In front is Harold. Ah and Margaret Pack had eighteen children, all born at 382 Macauley Street, the present home of Alex and Isobel Pack.

The Pack family, Hay from the ***Riverine Grazier,*** *November 6, 2002.*

Pack family grave, Hay.
Barry McGowan

Alex Pack, Hay, 2009.
Barry McGowan



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A.A. Form A 200.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

ATTESTATION FORM

FOR SPECIAL FORCES RAISED FOR SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA OR ABROAD.

Army No. NX 29592

Surname PACK (BLOCK CAPITALS) Other Names Harold Leslie

Unit

Enlisted for service at Kogarah (Place)

N.S.W. (State) 19 5 40 (Date)

A

*Questions to be put to persons called out or presenting themselves for voluntary enlistment.**

1. What is your name? — 1. Surname PACK (BLOCK LETTERS) Other names Harold Leslie
2. Where were you born? — 2. In or near the town of Kogarah in the state or country of N.S.W.
3. Are you a natural born or a naturalized British Subject? If the latter, papers are to be produced — 3. Natural born
4. What is your age and date of birth? — 4. Age 33 9/12 Date of Birth 6. 8. 1906.
5. What is your trade or occupation? — 5. Station hands
6. Are you married, single or widower? — 6. Single
7. Give details of previous military service— — 7. A.M.F. No. Rank Unit Other military service No. Rank Unit
8. If now serving, give particulars— — 8. Unit No. Rank
9. Who is your actual next of kin? (Order of relationship:—wife, eldest son, eldest daughter, father, mother, eldest brother, eldest sister, eldest half-brother, eldest half-sister) — 9. Name Mrs Amy Pack Address Kogarah Relationship Friend
10. What is your permanent address? — 10. Cpl Mrs Amy Pack Kogarah
11. What is your religious denomination? (This question need not be answered if the man has a conscientious objection to doing so) — 11. C. of E.

I, Harold Leslie Pack do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to serve in the Australian Military Forces within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

Witnessed by Geo. A. Thompson Lieut. H. Pack

(Signature of Attesting or Witnessing Officer). Signature.

*The person will be warned that should he give false answers to any of these questions he will be liable to heavy penalties under the Defence Act.

Defence Print, Sydney.

Harold Pack's Attestation form, 1940.
National Archives of Australia

Photographs of Harold Pack from his enlistment papers in 1940, aged 36.
National Archives of Australia

One of Alex's sisters, Amy, married into the Rooks family in Hay. The Rooks were fishermen on the Murrumbidgee River, using a boat with an outboard motor and fishing primarily for Cod and Perch.

Harry Choy and Florence Pack on their wedding day.
Private collection

Another sister, Florence, married Harry Choy from Grong Grong.

They had two children, Bill and Betty.

Betty lived in Grong Grong and worked both there and at Narrandera as a telephone operator. Later she married Bob Menzies, who ran a garage and later a steel fabrication business in Grong Grong with his brothers in law from the Choy family. Betty helped run the nearby Bluebell café. Both Bob and Betty retired to live at Ashmont, a suburb of Wagga Wagga, where they still live today.

On her father's side of the family Betty's grandparents were William and Susan Quong. They had three children; Percy, Albert and William (Harry), who became Betty's father. On William's death, Susan married Charlie Choy, and they had two children, Bert and Lavina.[391]

[391] Discussions with Alex Pack and Betty Menzies, 2009 and 2010.

Hand coloured studio portraits of Betty & Billy Choy.
Private collection

Choy family graves, Grong Grong cemetery, NSW.
Barry McGowan

Susan Quong and two of her sons, Albert and William (Harry) who took their stepfather's name, Choy.
Private collection

The Choy family were, and still are, very highly regarded residents of Narrandera and Grong Grong. Albert Choy died in 1949 at 60 years of age when his coat was caught in a piece of machinery in his Narrandera laundry. He was unable to extricate himself and received critical injuries when his body struck a wall. In his obituary it was stated that he 'interested himself with the progress of the township and was held in high esteem by all who knew him'. He was described as possessing 'a retiring disposition and was a good resident'. His wife, Rita, had passed away the previous year, aged 48 years. In her obituary she was described as a 'highly respected resident of the Narrandera district'. She was 'possessed of an amiable and likeable disposition, and had many friends in the district'. Rita was a member of the CWA at Grong Grong and Griffith and during World War II she was an enthusiastic worker for the Chinese Relief Fund.[392]

Susan Choy (formerly Quong) was born in Hong Kong and came to Australia at 15 years of age. She passed away in August 1954 at the age of 86 years. On her passing it was said that she 'gave her help to all charitable and patriotic movements in her district', as well as other efforts that 'helped advance the locality in which she lived'.[393] Florence Choy, the wife of Harry Choy, died in 1954 at the age of 52 years. She had been very active in local organisations, including the CWA, the Far West Children's Health Scheme and her church.[394]

Her husband, Harry Choy, died in 1974 at the age of 82 years. He had been active in community affairs at Grong Grong, where he served on the gymkhana committee, fire brigade committee and football club. In his younger days he had played Australian rules.[395]

The Doon family from Tumut are another very highly regarded Chinese family in the Riverina. Dang Charles Doon, the patriarch, migrated to Australia sometime in the late 19th century and was either accompanied to Australia by an uncle (perhaps Dang Ah Chee) or he accompanied his uncle's goods on the trip out. In

Florence Choy, née Pack.
Private collection

[392] *Narrandera Argus,* 3 February 1948, 11 October 1949.
[393] *Narrandera Argus,* 16 August 1954.
[394] *Narrandera Argus,* 30 December 1954.
[395] *Narrandera Argus,* 30 June 1974.

about 1910 or 1911 he returned to China, where he married Esther Gow. They had one child Richard, but because Esther and Richard were born in China they could not migrate to Australia. Esther came out 14 years later, and Dick later still. The circumstances of Esther's arrival in Australia are shrouded in mystery, and part of the shadowy intrigue surrounding the administration of the White Australia Policy. Several of her children, John and Ted Doon and Grace Ching, were adamant that she entered under the assumed name of Gow, as a member of a Chinese-Australian family of the same name, a matter discussed in detail in the next section. Charles and Esther had a large family. Eight of their children were born in Tumut: Eric, Bob, Ted, Betty, John, Grace, Bonnie and Joyce. Esther died at the early age of 50, leaving Betty, the eldest girl, to become the 'mother' to the family. Charles passed away on 12 November 1955. A local correspondent described him as an astute businessman, whose motto was 'Fair and Square to all and honest dealing'. No one had an adverse word to say against him. In his younger days he was a keen athlete and excelled at foot running. He was one of the first Chinese people to be baptised in the Tumut Church of England and was a member of the first Chinese Sunday school at Tumut Plains. He was also a founder of the JA Boys Organisation in Tumut.[396]The young Doon boys were talented and passionate footballers and played with the Junior Anglican (JA) and Young Anglican (YA) teams.

They were also passionate about horses. Ted Doon recalled that the family entered the family horse 'Lady' in the Tumut and Gundagai shows where she won the prize for the best and quietest pony every time. Hearing of the horse's exploits the Sydney Royal Easter Show organisers invited the family for an exhibition every show day, all four boys sitting or standing on the horse's back.

Ted Doon recalled that he wanted for be a jockey from the earliest days. While still at school he did track work at Tumut, and when he was 14 he worked as an apprentice to Danny Lewis at Randwick, later becoming one of Sydney's leading jockeys. Between 1944 and 1950 he rode winners in the AJC Metropolitan, Summer Cup (twice), Christmas Cup, Carrington Stakes (twice), Tattersall's Cup and Canterbury Stakes. Ted lived in Canberra for many years before his death in October 2011.[397]

Charles and his sons raced their own horses at local and district meetings, and by the early 1960s the Doon brothers had a stable of ten horses and Ted was the rider on many occasions. He rode the syndicate's first winner, Piasano, at the First Improver's Handicap at Wagga Wagga on 2 March 1962, following this up by a win the following week on Digger's Rest in the St Patrick's Day handicap. [398] The family's most famous horse was Arwon, winner of the 1978 Melbourne Cup. Arwon was owned by Eric, Bob and John Doon in a syndicate with two other men. The horse had earlier run second in the Metropolitan Handicap and the Caulfield Cup, and the Melbourne Cup win was hailed throughout the local district, many Tumut punters travelling to Melbourne to support the brothers.[399]

Bob Doon passed away suddenly in August 2007. A local business man, he had contributed enormously to the community through his involvement with the Tumut Lions Club. He was a Charter member when the club was formed in 1970, President in 1985-86 and a life member in 1997. Bob was highly active in the club's service activities and projects, and with his wife May, a regular attendee at various district, multi-district and international conventions.[400] He was described as

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396 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 18 November 1955, 20 April 1993.

397 *Sun Herald,* 26 July 1981'; *Daily Telegraph,* 4 May 1988; Ted Doon's personal reminiscences, 2010.

398 *Daily Advertiser,* 3, 10 March 1962.

399 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 10 November 1978.

400 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 8 April 2004, 28 August 2007.

Dang Charles and Esther Doon with children, left to right, Bob, Ted Eric and Betty.
Private collection

The Doon boys in the Tumut Junior Anglican football team, 1940.Left to right, Bob, Ted, and Eric.
Private collection

The Doon family horse Lady won many local prizes for the best and quietest pony. Hearing of the horse's reputation, the Sydney Royal Easter Show organisers invited the family to exhibit her on show days. The boys from left to right: Bob, John, Ted & Eric.

Private collection

May and Bob Doon with baby Robert, May 1956.

Private collection

> Popular with people from all walks of life, a man well known and well respected in the community, a real character held in deep affection. He was without pretension, calling a spade a spade, and ever willing to do someone a good turn. He and May were invariably there when someone they knew was in trouble or needed a helping hand.[401]

May has also made an enormous contribution to the local community, and in recognition of her charitable work through a host of organisations and her special compassion for the needy, aged and the sick, she was named as Tumut Citizen of the Year in 1991. Decades of devotion to pastoral care and her work with a host of local organisations were rewarded by the presentation of the Order of Australia Medal (O.A.M.) by the Governor General, Michael Jeffrey, in 2004. She is still heavily involved in voluntary pastoral care, church activity and the Lions Club.[402]

Eric & Zelda Doon were also very popular, and after their marriage in 1954 they returned to Tumut to great acclaim, several hundred people gathering at the Oddfellow's Hall to celebrate their return. Mr French expressed his wishes that they would continue to be a shining example to the young people and help build a better Tumut. A Mr Gaul said that everyone appreciated Eric and Zelda's fine qualities and the fact that they had already given so much to the public life of Tumut.[403] In the years to follow Eric and Zelda were to continue their earlier involvement with the Anglican Youth (YA) of Tumut, Eric as Treasurer and Zelda as President.

Richard Doon's Australian story is multi-facetted and intimately linked with the administration of the White Australia Policy. He emigrated in 1938 under exemptions which allowed Chinese merchants (in this case his father) to sponsor staff or family members to work in their Australian businesses, but could not bring out his wife, Chen, or his daughter, until 1953. At first he worked in his father's business in Tumut, before becoming a restaurant owner in Sydney. In 1954 he bought a half share in the Chung On café in Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, later becoming the sole owner, and the restaurant soon becoming a local icon. In 1970 he became a Parliamentary member of the Taiwanese Upper House under special provisions which allowed overseas Chinese people with Tawianese allegiance or affiliation to be nominated for Parliament. In Dick's case the nominations were made by party branches in the South Pacific region, and the nomination endorsed by senior members of the Taiwan Government. He retired from this position in 1976 and then worked to establish a Chinese community centre in Melbourne, with the support of the Taiwan Government, later becoming director of the Chinese Cultural Community Centre in Little Bourke St.[404]

Richard had contacts and influence at the very highest levels in white Australia, and often used these contacts to respond to problems caused by the Immigration Department. He was heavily involved in local community affairs and was Chairman of the Chinese Citizen's Association, and helped build many community projects for migrants, including the Chinese Cultural Centre at Ascot Vale. His son Danny also became widely involved in civic affairs, serving as president of Melbourne Chinatown, president of the Chinese Restaurateurs Association of Victoria, vice-president of the Moonee Ponds Chamber of Commerce, and organising the establishment of the Victorian Elderly Chinese Hostel in Ascot Vale in the 1990s.[405]

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401 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 28 August 2007.

402 *Tumut and Adelong Times* 16 July 1991, 8 April 2004, 27 January 2004, 28 August 2007.

403 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 18 January 1954.

404 Andrew Junor, 'Chung On: Moonee Ponds and the lemon chicken long boom', Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 2010, pp.20-33; Discussions with Danny Doon, September 2011.

405 Junor, 'Chung On: Moonee Ponds and the lemon chicken long boom', pp.20-33; Discussions with Danny Doon, September 2011.

The Doon family maintained close contacts with other Chinese families in Tumut and elsewhere, including Dang Loon's family after they moved to Sydney. Auntie Violet (Dang Loon's wife), as she was known to the Doon family, remained in close contact after Esther Doon passed away in 1943. She helped Charles buy dresses for the Doon girls throughout their teen years, and together with her husband, invited the girls to stay at their corner grocery shop in Surry Hills for Christmas holidays on several occasions. Their son, Don, came to Tumut for his annual holidays and stayed with Tom and Thelma Young and became good friends with the Doon family. One of his sisters, Joyce, was a keen horsewoman and Charles made sure she had access to the horses in the stable when she visited Thelma and Tom.[406]

While they call Australia home the family has never forgotten their traditional allegiances. Charles Doon was strongly connected with the Sze Yap Association building at the Chinese Camp and prepared and performed burial ceremonies, which involved incense, paper money and the roasting of a pig. The ceremonies usually happened on the actual burial day, because the men had saved money for the ceremony throughout their working life. Towards the end of the 1930s only two or three elderly men lived at the Chinese camp and as they did not have much money saved, there was no ceremony, just the incense and burning of the paper money. Those who had the ceremony had prearranged with Quong Wing and Charles Doon beforehand.[407] In 2007 Ramon Doon, a grandson of Charles, accepted a position as principal of the international school in Guangzhou, later moving to another school in Shenzen. Ramon and his wife Tracey lived in China for two years. As an Australian-born Chinese, Ramon found the experience both enlightening and confronting. In 2008 25 family members undertook a long anticipated trip back to China to visit the ancestral village, Num Ping, in Taishan County, Guangdong Province, and met many relatives.[408]

Another illustration of the family's links with China were the ties between Richard and Danny Doon and the ancestral village. Originally a teacher in the village, Richard was also involved in the administration of the district and was an adviser to the village mayor. After the war he wrote to his friends in the village for information on the welfare of his family and later sponsored his former teacher under the student provisions. In Australia he contributed money to the home village in China to help with the maintenance of the village and the graves of their ancestors, and to help pay for the annual Ch'ing Ming ceremonies, for in the village there were some 50 or 60 families with the same name. Danny has also contributed money to the village.[409] The family has held several reunions in Australia, the first of which was in Tumut in 1993. Sixty descendants attended the function, coming from all over Australia, and including grandchildren and great grandchildren. The most recent was in 2013.[410]

The Tumut-based Shai Hee family was also heavily involved in the local Tumut community, and maintained strong links with China. William Shai Hee was a Tumut storekeeper and had several businesses in China, including a bank in Guangzhou and a cotton spinning mill in Shanghai.

On one of his trips William married Chin See in an arranged marriage. She was his second wife.

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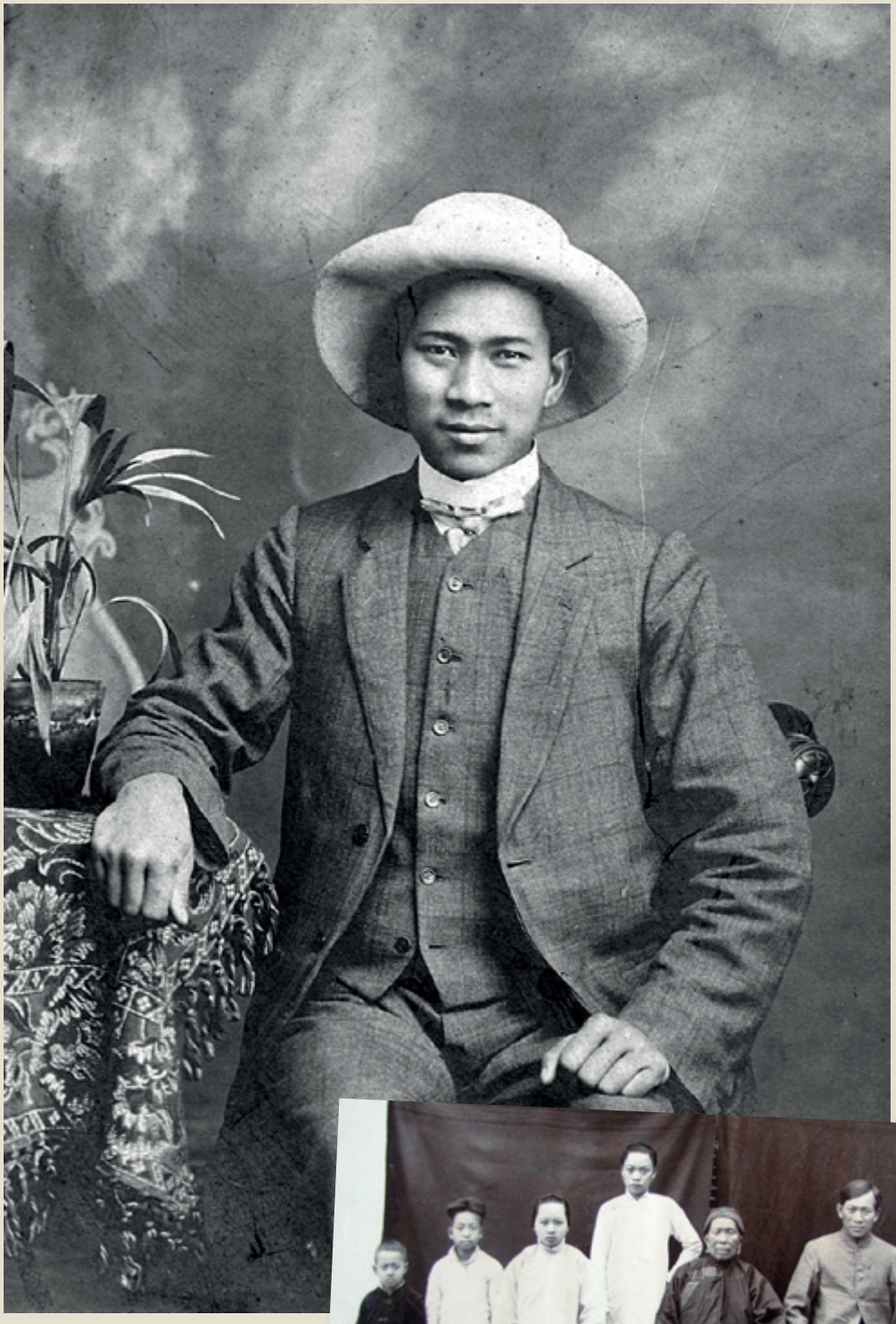
406 Information from Grace Ching, March 2012.

407 Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

408 *Tumut and Adelong Times,* 14 September 2008; information from Ramon Doon, September 2011; information from Grace Ching and Carolyn Ufer, October 2011 and May 2012.

409 Discussions with Danny Doon and Grace Ching, September 2011.

410 *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 20 April 1993.



William Shai Hee prior to 1920.
Private collection

Shai Hee family, China, 1920s. All the standing children are from William's first marriage. Seated left to right are Chin See, William's mother and William Shai Hee.
Private collection

The Shai Hee family, 1933. Left to right, William and Allan, Eva and nanny, Chin See and Reg, Jean and Ted.
Private collection

He had to return to Australia to attend to his businesses and left Chin See in the home village, Hem-Ning, Hoe-Sun, (near Guangzhou), where his first son, Ted, was born. A year later William brought Chin See and Ted to live at Tumut.

They stayed in Tumut for six years and had more children, Jean, Allan, Eva and Reg. In 1933 the family returned to China for the children's education. By this time William had built two large homes in his village, one for his Australian family and one for the children from his first marriage (the wife had died). Again, William had to return to Australia. This time he took Ted, but the rest of the family remained behind, including the new born Joe. During the Japanese invasion of China the family took what possessions they could and went by bus and ship to Hong Kong, staying with friends of William until the family could travel to Australia. The children attended school in Tumut, with Reg, Allan and Joe joining the Boy Scouts. Allan proved to be a very good artist and mechanic and Allan and Reg were both very good musicians. Chin See was a talented herbalist. Additional family members were Bill, Margaret, Eileen, Mary, Bob and Pam. In 1948 most of the family went to live in Sydney to further the careers and education of the children. Ted stayed in Tumut where he became the local photographer. Joe became Captain of the Tumut High School and Captain of the Senior Rugby League football team. The Shai Hee family had strong social contacts in Tumut, especially with other Chinese families.[411] They also had high level contacts elsewhere, in particular with the Chuey family.[412]

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[411] Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee', unpublished reminiscences, Sydney, 2004.

[412] Letter from Clarrie Hogue to Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, November 1952. (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee); Ross Curnow, 'Bland, Francis Armand (1882-1967) in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Volume 13, 1993; www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bland-francis-armand-9525.

The Shai Hee family, Tumut 1945. Back row: Jean & Bobby, Allan, Eva and Reg. Front: Margaret, Eileen, Willie and Jo.
Private collection

Despite these positives, the Shai Hee family had mixed experiences socially. According to Reg Shai Hee the boys were always in fights at school, sport eventually proving to be the great equaliser. Racism did not only affect the children of Chinese families, but also the children of Aboriginal families, the European children trying unsuccessfully to enlist Joe's help to attack the Aboriginal children as they crossed a bridge on their way to school. Ted suffered more than the other Shai Hee boys. He was very bright and very good at his school work, but was expelled from school once it was discovered that he was born overseas, and therefore an alien. He was the eldest of the children, but more vulnerable, and was affected for the rest of his life by the expulsion. He completed the rest of his schooling at the convent and became a member of the Roman Catholic Church; all the other Shai Hee children were Anglicans. Joe also had his problems. Although he was born overseas, he was not expelled (probably because he came to Australia much later). But he suffered in other ways. He was the popular choice as captain of the senior football team, but the coach deliberately ignored the wishes of the rest of the team and chose a European boy. Fortunately for Joe the support from the other boys was sufficient enough for the decision to be overturned. At a technical college in Sydney, sometime in the late 1950s, he scored the highest points in his year and was the top apprentice in NSW. However, because the Premier of NSW was to make the presentation at the Sydney Town Hall a European boy was chosen to receive the prize instead. Joe recalls that for the most part his siblings got on very well with other children, however, they were never invited into other children's homes for birthday parties. He could never remember his father and mother being invited into European homes.[413]

The importance of the Chuey family connection came to the fore in the early 1950s, when William approached Rose Chuey, the widow of James Wong Chuey, for assistance in getting Chin See and two of their children, Ted and Joe, permanent exemption to live in Australia, instead of being granted

[413] Discussions with Reg and Joe Shai Hee, May 2012.

permission to remain here for short periods only. Rose approached a neighbour, Clarrie Hogue, who wrote to the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, and also to the then Federal Liberal Party member for Warringah, (and obviously a close friend of Clarrie Hogue), Professor Francis Armand Bland, to ask that Chin See and the two children be granted permanent exemption. Bland was for many years one of Australia's outstanding public servants and academics, entering the Federal Parliament relatively late in life, and serving as the member for Warringah from 1951 to 1961.[414]

Dang Ah Chee was another highly respected Tumut businessman whose involvement in the local community dates back to the late 19th century. Together with his brother Dang Bown Sluey, and their connections to other members of the local Chinese business community, many of whom were from the same clan, they formed a business dynasty. Both men were at one time very wealthy, but lost most of their money due to a combination of poor management and bad luck. According to Josephine Oh, a descendant of Dang Bown Sluey, Dang Ah Chee had a wife in China, but she was childless, and he decided to remain in Australia, where he was already very successful. He married an Australian woman, Margaret Carruthers, who was related to the then NSW Premier of the same name. Dang Bown Sluey also had a first wife in China, but left her there and brought a young wife to Tumut, and then on his return to China took a concubine. A cousin, Dang Loon, who managed Dang Bown Sluey's Ty Loong business while Sluey was absent in China on estate matters, also had a first wife in China. Ah Chee was very generous, and a major benefactor of the Tumut hospital, which cost about £1300 to build, Ah Chee donating £100. He also donated the baptismal font at the Presbyterian Church in 1883. In his will Ah Chee made provision for a payment of £50 to the Tumut hospital and a generous provision of £7000 plus the Club House Hotel in Gundagai and other property to Dang Hack of Gundagai. He bequeathed his Hong Kong businesses to his son Dang Yeng Tang, and most of his remaining Tumut estate to Dang Bown Sluey, his wife receiving a modest lump sum and monthly stipend and their house in Hong Kong. She later took the family to England.[415]

After Dang Ah Chee dissolved his company in Tumut, Ty Loong & Co was formed across the street in newly built premises, with Dang Bown Sluey as manager. When Dang Bown Sluey was recalled to Hong Kong by the family elders to settle Ah Chee's affairs, the business was left in the hands of a cousin, Dang Loon (who also had a first wife in China). Later Dang Bown Sluey's eldest boy, Dang Quong Wing, returned to Tumut from China to work in his father's business, his father having since passed away. The Tiy Loong business was dissolved in 1926 as Dang Qong Wing intended to return to China. However, he re-established the business, which was named simply as Quong Wing. Dang Loon's daughter, Thelma, married Tom Young, who ran the Sun Kum Lee & Co store in Merrivale St, Tumut.[416]

One of the strongest family networks in the Riverina district was at Narrandera, and began with the prosperous merchant Sam Yett, and his nephews George and William Hock Shung. Described as the 'King of Chinatown' he was held in very high esteem by the Chinese and Europeans residents of the town. On his death the *Narrandera Argus* stated that

> He practically owned and supported the Chinese population of Chinatown, being in his way something of a philanthropist. Towards local charities he was ever liberal, and his support to deserving institutions

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[414] Letter from Clarrie Hogue to Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, November 1952. (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee); Ross Curnow, 'Bland, Francis Armand (1882-1967). www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bland-francis-armand-9525.

[415] Josephine Oh to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004.

[416] Josephine Oh to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004.

> will be greatly missed.'[417]

The Narrandera Ensign was even more effusive, remarking that during his time in Narrandera

> he had gained much esteem as a good townsman. He was the wise counsellor of his country men, over whom he exercised much influence; he was a good business man, and scrupulously honest in all his transactions; and he was a ready and willing contributor to all charitable movements, as well as a liberal supporter of the institution in which he died.[418]

George Hock Shung arrived from Guangzhou in 1874 and lived in Melbourne for six years, Sydney for two years, and in Narrandera for over 50 years, until his death in 1944. He succeeded Sam Yett in his business and married Jessie Lamonte, the daughter of Adelaide Lamonte and Willie Ah Kinn of Urana. George had four children; Mervyn, Hilton, Keith and Heather. On his death the *Narrandera Argus* stated that he 'was respected by all who knew him. He had many good qualities, and in past years had been a contributor to the Hospital and other movements'. George was buried with Church of England rites.[419] The Shung family had very strong connections with other Narrandera-based Chinese people. One of these was Wong Gooey, the famed land contractor, who married and had a son, who later became a doctor. Other families were the Hun Chong family, who owned a store in East St, and their relatives, the Hook family, Sammy Hook later taking over the Chong business. The Hook family had three girls, Thelma, Dorothea and Hazel, none of whom married, and when Ah Gooey's son (the doctor) moved to Melbourne, the Hook family followed, for he was the family doctor.

George Shung's son Hilton joined the RAAF in World War II and his last posting was with the Narrandera Air Training school. He was very popular and highly respected, and together with his brother Keith regarded as among the best greyhound judges in the State. Hilton and six other crew members of a Beaufighter were killed when the plane hit high tension electricity wires in September 1945. All the crew were locals and the funeral service was one of the largest held in Narrandera, with hundreds of people lining the streets and attending the graveside service.[420] Hilton's brother, Keith, passed away in 1950. Another son, Mervyn, was educated at St Joseph's Convent school in Narrandera. On leaving school he worked at fencing, bag sewing, pitching hay, stooking sheaves and gardening, before commencing work as a wool classer. Early in World War II Mervyn joined the Volunteer Air Observer Corps, which was attached to the RAAF. His job was to help spot and identify aircraft flying over Sydney. Earlier, the Army had rejected him twice. Mervyn recalled that after a short spell the authorities advised him that he would be more useful back in the bush, so he returned to his former work as a woolclasser. In 1943 he married Frances McMahon. Mervyn recalled that he played a lot of cricket and tennis when young, joining the Narrandera cricket club in the early 1930s and playing for many years in the Austin Cup competition. In 1949 he joined the Masonic Lodge (Lodge Leopold) in Narrandera and was awarded his 50 year certificate in 1999. [421]

The Shungs are not the only descendants of Willie Ah Kinn in the Riverina. Aside from Jessie, Willie and his wife Adelaide had five other children; Ivic, Archibald, Adelaide, Emily and Annie. The lineage of Annie's descendants illustrates the difficulties in tracing the genealogy of Chinese Australian families, and suggests that there are many more descendants of Chinese Australian families living in

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[417] *Narrandera Argus,* 26 March 1903.

[418] *Narrandera Ensign,* 26 June 1903.

[419] *Narrandera Argus,* 23 May 1944.

[420] *Narrandera Argus,* 7 September 1945.

[421] Shung, 'Probis Address. My Life Story' by M.W. Shung'.

the Riverina and nearby districts. Annie married Thomas Hoban. They had four children; Iris, Dorothea, Evelyn and Alton. Iris married John Reuben Hunt, a flour miller, and had two children, Patricia and John (Jack), John marrying Lorna Salter, who has now become the family chronicler. John and Lorna live in Narrandera and are life members of the Leeton Harness Racing Club, Lorna earning the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award in 2007 for her work with the club. Jack was the airport manager at Narrandera. Dorothea married James Pearson, a descendant of whom is James Pearson, who also lives in Narrandera. Alton, a steam train driver, was the father of Bob Hoban, also a resident of Narrandera. All three families have strong connections to the Roman Catholic Church and are close friends of the Shung family. Adelaide, another daughter of Willie and Adelaide Ah Kin, married Jim Lett. They had two children, Norman and Catherine. Norman was a lithographic printer and worked with the De Havilland aircraft factory at Bankstown, before coming to Batlow in 1951. Two of his children still live in the district, Royce a builder, and Evelyn, who works in a bank at Tumbarumba. Norman Lett and Mervyn Shung were close friends.

James Wong Chuey was one of the most influential and wealthy Chinese men in the Riverina district. His range of contacts was immense at all levels of society, enhanced considerably by his role as a leading member of the Junee Methodist church and a principal benefactor of the Sze Yap Society, the Glebe Temple and the Chinese Masonic Lodge in Surry Hills. In August 1912 he wrote in his capacity, firstly as a Junee businessman, and secondly as an officer of the Chinese Masonic Society of NSW, to the Australian Dr George (Chinese) Morrison, to congratulate him on his appointment as Political Adviser to the Chinese Government.[422] He was also a confident of the then Premier of New South Wales, Mr William Holman, and in October 1916 called upon his services to help rescue his adopted son Wong Sat How (the son of the Jembaicumbene storekeeper and herbalist Ah How), who had been kidnapped from the Hsin-ning train in China by bandits. The boy was a student at Newington College, Stanmore, and was in China to complete his Chinese education. Holman was reported to have used every method at his disposal to help, sending a detailed report to the British officials at Hong Kong, who then forwarded it

Violet Loon, 1930 and her husband Dang Loon in 1928. Both photographs are from CEDT forms.
National Archives of Australia

[422] 'Morrison Papers', Vol.66 of MS312, Mitchell Library, Sydney, pp.391-397.

Outside the Wah's garage in Junee. Left to right: Stan Hancock, Les Ah Wah, unknown and Linda Wah.
Private collection

onto the British Consulate at Guangzhou. But it was to no avail and a ransom of £400 had to be paid. After this incident Holman wrote a letter of recommendation allowing Chuey to take a few friends to see the official government munitions and machine factories, coal mines and many other places in NSW.[423] In 1925 he was invited by the Chinese Masonic Society in Melbourne to help celebrate the opening of a new Masonic Lodge in Shanghai.[424]

James Chuey's wife, Rose, a Chinese woman, was well known by Junee residents for her 'lovable disposition and well known benevolence, charitable and Christian principles'. Rose was an adopted daughter of James Chung On, a very highly regarded citizen of Launceston, and a patriarch of the Tasmanian Chinese community. He had worked as a market gardener and tin miner, and had been heavily involved in community activities in Launceston, One of his other daughters, Violet, married Dang Loon, from Tumut.[425]

Two other prominent Junee identities were Tommy Ah Wah and his wife Mary. They had six children, several of whom worked in the family's garage business, in particular Lesley Edward, Linda Emily and Albert James (Jack).

Ruby, the eldest child, married Henry Lee, a Cowra-based herbalist. Russell Danswan worked for the Wahs almost his entire working life and remembers them as very kind and considerate employers. The family belonged to the Methodist Church and had strong social links with the Mee Ling family in Temora, Russell recalling the warm-hearted greetings when the Mee Lings visited Junee. According to Russell the Wah children were all well educated, some of them attending a Christian Brothers' school in Wagga. The girls were very proficient in dancing and piano, and Tommy was a very good fiddle player. Lorna Hepper and Rhonda Haddon recalled that another daughter, Edna, taught tap dancing to the girls for the Methodist Church concerts. Lesley enlisted in the Australian army in the Second World

[423] *Braidwood Review,* 8 August 1916; *Chinese Australian Herald,* 28 October 1916 (translation of original by Michael Churchman, ANU); *Adelaide Advertiser,* 15 September 1916.

[424] *Argus* 14 September 1925.

[425] *Junee Southern Cross,* 24 July 1953; *Hobart Mercury,* 25 February 1952; *Launceston Examiner,* 25 February 1952.

BOOK N° 44.
Form B 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 1
DUPLICATE. Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, William Lawson Acting the Collector of Customs for the State of New South Wales in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Mee Ling hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three (3) years from this date.

Date 23rd April 1910 W Lawson Actg Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 42 years Complexion
Height Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.
Full Face :— Profile :—

Date of departure 27th March 1910 Destination China
Ship Aldinga
Date of return Ship
Port

See c22/5/16 Customs Officer

BOOK N° 44.
Form B 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 2
DUPLICATE. Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, William Lawson Acting the Collector of Customs for the State of New South Wales in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Jeng Jing Mee Ling hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three (3) years from this date.

Date 23rd April 1910 W Lawson Collector of Customs

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 28 years Complexion
Height Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.
Full Face :— Profile :—

Date of departure 27th March 1910 Destination China
Ship Aldinga
Date of return 5 Nov 1927 Ship Changte
Port Sydney Customs Officer

See c22/5/16

George senior and Jeng Ying Mee Ling's CEDTs, 1910.
National Archives of Australia

Annie Mee Ling in the grocery department of Mee Ling's store, Temora.
Private collection

War and in 1945 was in Sabah, formerly British North Borneo, where he contracted malaria and was repatriated to Australia. The last surviving member of the family was Jack Wah, who retired from the business due to ill health in 1995. He excelled at bowls and held many executive positions with Junee rugby league and Group Nine. Clarrie Leslie, another Junee garage owner with a Chinese background, and owner of the Loftus Hotel, was very highly regarded in the Junee community. He served on the municipal council for three terms between 1947 and 1956 and again between 1962 and 1965, and was Mayor of Junee between 1949 and 1956.[426]

Andrew, Albert and George Mee Ling.
Temora Rural Museum

The Mee Ling family of Temora were also held in high regard. George Mee Ling senior, part owner of the firm, Man Sing and Co, and his wife Jeng were residents of Temora from the earliest days.

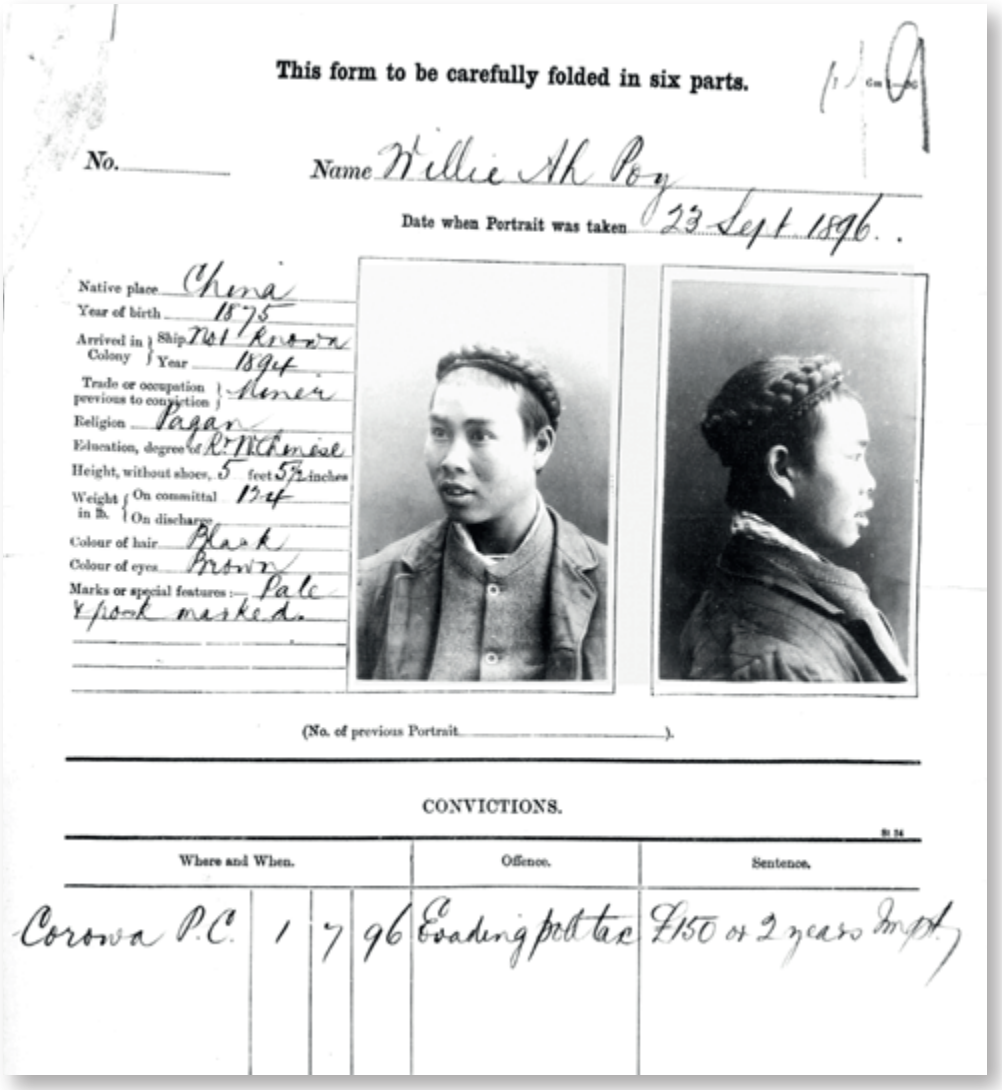
He was a member of the local Masonic Lodge and very active in charitable work. On his family's departure for China in 1910 the members of the Masonic Lodge presented George with an illustrated Testimonial 'as a small token of their deep appreciation of your efforts in always promoting the best interests and harmony of the Lodge'. In the testimonial it was stated that 'the Brethren will ever remember the loyal and faithful services that you have so efficiently and successfully given to Lodge Temora as Treasurer during the past twelve years'.[427]

George junior stayed for about 16 years, during which time he received an 'excellent education, being able to read and speak Chinese fluently'. He returned to Australia at the age of 19, and was an active member of the Temora community, enjoying tennis, bush picnics and barbeques with family members. He was also a keen collector of coins and antiques.

On his passing in 1975 he was described as having a genial personality and gentle manner, and a 'ready response to those in need'. His brother Andrew passed away the following year. Their father had died

[426] *Junee Southern Cross,* 4 November 1999; Information, Russell Danswan, Junee, 2009; Military Records, Leslie Edward Ah Wah, Series B8832002, Item NX157455, NAA, Canberra; Morris, *Speaking of the Past.*

[427] Lodge Temora Testimonial, 27 April 1909.



This form to be carefully folded in six parts.

No. _____ Name Willie Ah Poy

Date when Portrait was taken 23 Sept 1896.

Native place China
Year of birth 1875
Arrived in Colony { Ship Not Known / Year 1894
Trade or occupation previous to conviction Miner
Religion Pagan
Education, degree of Chinese
Height, without shoes, 5 feet 5½ inches
Weight in lb. { On committal 134 / On discharge
Colour of hair Black
Colour of eyes Brown
Marks or special features Pale
4 toes marked.

(No. of previous Portrait _____).

CONVICTIONS.

Where and When.				Offence.	Sentence.
Corowa P.C.	1	7	96	Evading poll tax	£50 or 2 years Impt.

Albury courthouse record of Willie Ah Poy being sentenced for evading poll tax by crossing the river at Corowa.
New South Wales State Records Centre, Sydney

many years before in China and had been buried there. Andrew married Katherine Ah Sue. Her father, Thomas, left China at the age of 17 years and spent 67 years in Australia, of which 30 were in Temora, where he established a green grocery business and owned a market garden. Before his death in 1942 he transferred his business to his only surviving daughter Katherine, with whom he had lived since the death of his wife Mary two years previously. With the exception of George senior all members of the Mee Ling and Ah Sue families were buried with Church of England rites.[428]

The Albury-based Poy family are another very well known Chinese family in the Riverina. Their story began on the Victorian goldfields in 1880 when Lim Coon married a European woman Mary Jones. They had four children, one of which was Louisa Coon, who married Willy Ah Poy, a fruit and vegetable storekeeper in Chiltern, Victoria.

[428] *Temora Independent,* 3 February 1942, 5 June 1975, 3 January 1940, 8 April, 1976; Temora Centenary Committee, *Temora Yesterday and Today,* p.250.

Willy Ah Poy, in this 1890's photograph a respectable fruit and vegetable storekeeper in Chiltern, Victoria. He married Louisa Coon from the Victorian goldfields. They had nine children. Willy travelled frequently to China to see his parents, and possibly also had a wife and children there. He did not return from his last trip and was presumed dead. Louisa moved to Albury with the eight surviving children where she met and married Edward (Teddy) Mahlook, a local market gardener.
Private collection

During World War II, three of Louisa's sons, William, Roy and Lindsay, were in different parts of Asia fighting the Japanese. William joined the British army in Hong Kong where he was a motor bike dispatch rider and won the Military Medal. He was captured when the city was taken on Christmas Day 1941, but managed to blend in with the locals and escape soon after. For months he sold rice to the Japanese before stealing it and selling it back again, later managing to get his family on a diplomatic exchange ship to Canada. Roy was not so fortunate and was captured at the fall of Singapore in February 1942. He was imprisoned in Singapore's Changi gaol, and later forced to work on the notorious Thai-Burma railway.[429] Lindsay put his age up so he could join the army. His turn for overseas duty came in May 1945 when as a trained engineer he went to Borneo (present day Sabah), where his main task was to help destroy concrete beach obstacles in preparation for the Australian landing on Tarakan Island. After the landing he went on numerous jungle patrols, eventually becoming victim to a booby trap. He was saved by the belt on which he hung his pliers, which deflected much of the shrapnel.

Years later, on their return, Roy became a bookmaker. His son Roy followed in his father's occupation,

[429] *Border Mail*, 12 August 1989, 15 February 1992.

Willy and Louisa Poy with two, William and Doris, of their nine children.
Private collection

Lindsay, William & Roy Poy.
Private collection

Ted Mahlook & Louisa (formerly Poy), Albury.
Private collection

Chin Chow's probate certificate, 1890.
Hay Gaol Museum

which at times caused confusion to some punters, not knowing which Roy to go to with their tickets. He also owned the Commercial hotel, later retiring from bookmaking and buying a taxi. Roy junior was a well known Australian Rules footballer and John Harms from the *Melbourne Age* included him in his list of the ten greatest Chinese Australian footballers of all time. Between 600 and 700 people attended Roy's funeral at St Patrick's Church in October 2008, many people having to stand outside.[430] Lindsay also became a bookmaker, later retiring then buying a taxi, before retiring again.

After the war, William became a very successful businessman and at one stage was commuting weekly between Canada, New York and Hong Kong, where he managed an international brokerage firm. His son Neville became a famous Canadian plastic surgeon.

Another Poy brother, Lesley, moved to Sydney where he created a family circle of jockeys, racehorse owners, trainers and professional punters. He was connected to the horse 'Better Loosen Up', which won the Japan Cup in 1996.[431]

The experience of the Nye family from Wagga also illustrates the strength and power of family and kinship networks, and the embrace of new allegiances such as the Australian army. Daniel Nye, the patriarch, came to Australia in the 1860s, making his way to Wagga Wagga where he met Ellen Richardson. They had several children; Arthur, Isabelle, Robert, Dolly and Jessie, all of whom attended the Gurwood Street School. Daniel was a hawker servicing the small country towns near Currawarna, and may have been a court interpreter during the 1880s and 1890s. Isabelle, Daniel's eldest child, ran the household in the absence of the parents (Ellen having left some years earlier), and when old enough Arthur accompanied his father on his many bush trips, later becoming a boundary rider on one of the large properties near Currawarna. He later married Hannah Mabel Rogers (Mabel), the daughter of a publican, and they had six children, Jack. Robert, Marjory, Dorothy, Isobelle and Norman (Ted), all of whom also attended Gurwood Street School. Arthur continued hawking after his father's death in 1904 and worked as a market gardener and later a nurseryman, becoming reasonably wealthy in the process.

Isabelle never married, working for a time with the Hamilton family at Illabo, then travelling around the district, returning to Wagga Wagga intermittently to help out Hannah. In the 1940s she worked in Melbourne, then returned to Wagga Wagga where she built a house, later living with Arthur and Hannah. One of Arthur's sons, Norman, joined the army in 1941 and saw active service in the Buna campaign in Papua New Guinea. He was in an armoured vehicle when it was disabled by enemy fire, injuring other crew members. In his citation his commanding officer stated that 'at great personal risk and showing utter disregard for his own safety, he removed the injured men from the tank under heavy M.G. [machine gun] fire, to a position of comparative safety in a mine crater. In all, three sorties were made with injured personnel'. The men were pinned down by machine gun and mortar fire for about five hours during which Ted made three trips to a shell hole, about eight metres away, for water. When stretcher bearers arrived he helped to bring the wounded men back. For these acts of bravery he was mentioned in despatches. After contracting malaria in the early part of 1942 he was evacuated back to Australia and later discharged.[432]

The story of Lucy Ah Kin, Ah Kim or Ah Kem and Joe Coey, a green grocer in Wagga and later a tobacco farmer at Hillas Creek, illustrates the difficulties in tracing family histories of some Chinese families and the ephemeral circumstances in which many Chinese people lived. The experiences of Lucy and Joe

[430] Discussions with Colleen Poy, July, August 2010.

[431] Wilson, 'The dinky-di Poy Boys'; Albury & District Historical Society, *Bulletin*, May 2005, No 446.

[432] Recommendation for award, B883, NX43844, 12 April 1943, NAA, Canberra.

Teapot with its wicker basket and cups given to the Robb family.
Hay Gaol Museum

also demonstrate the mobility of much of the Chinese population. Often they had no strong ties to any one particular place, and followed their prospects where they could, often changing and anglicising their names in the process. For Lucy and Joe there was an existing and supportive Chinese community at Wagga Wagga and Hillas Creek. Information retrieved by Sherry Morris and Jan Cronk sheds light on the frequent name changes at the time of their children's births. Their first two children were born in Wagga Wagga Julia Wing Coey in 1873 and Mary Chu Cooey in 1875. Dolley Mary On was born at Hillas Creek in 1885, and the twins William On and Rosanna On in 1888. Not long after the family moved back to Wagga Wagga, where David Henry Ah-Kem and Richard Robert Cooey were born. The family later moved to Bathurst where Lucy and Joe again changed their surnames to On Wong and Owen. Joe was reputedly a labourer and tobacco grower at Hillas Creek and Wagga Wagga, and a market gardener at Bathurst and Kelso.

Occasionally, strong and genuine relationships were formed between Chinese and white Australians. In one such instance Shin Chow bequeathed all his possessions (after expenses) to Robert Percival McFarland, the son of Andrew and June McFarland of Thelangerine station near Hay, and in another example, Harry Ah Mow Wong, a market gardener on Wyvern station, gave a tea set in wicker basket to the Robb family.

Perhaps the most heart-warming story concerns Charlie Wong Hing, a market gardener at North Wagga. Wendy Hucker and Yvonne Braid have very fond memories of Charlie. Wendy Hucker is a step-child of the late Eric Roberts, a prominent business man and founder of 2WG, the first commercial radio station in Wagga and Yvonne Braid a Wagga Wagga City Council member and former employee of 2WG. Charlie Wong Hing's origins in Australia are mysterious. The most likely story being that he jumped ship at Sydney Heads sometime in the late 1800s, making his way to the Riverina, where he later assumed the identity of a deceased Chinese man. He went back to China at some stage for he had a son there, but left before the boy was born. Later he made his way to Wagga Wagga, where he took up market gardening.

One of Charlie's customers was Eric, who at that time was living atop the present 2WG building in Wagga Wagga. A former teacher, Eric went to Wagga Wagga, with the aim of setting up a radio station. In the early 1930s Eric had very little money left after expenses and Charlie often did not charge him

Charlie Wong Hing, date unknown.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

Charlie Wong Hing's RAAF pass, 1945.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

for his vegetables. One day Eric noticed that Charlie had stopped coming. Seeing him down the street one day Charlie told him that he could no longer bring vegetables because his horse had died. Eric responded by buying him one, and in the Second World War, obtained Charlie a job as market gardener for the RAAF at Uranquinty.

Charlie Wong Hing with Kirsty Hucker.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

After the War Eric employed Charlie as a gardener, cook and general help on his farm at Clear Springs, Jingellic and Charlie became more strongly allied to the family; 'whatever Charlie wanted, he got'.
Often he would go to Sydney and mingle with the Chinese community and play Fan Tan, always returning to the farm with a paper bag of chocolate frogs for the children of the farm employees & management. Charlie sent money to his son in China though a contact in Melbourne, and his son wrote back to him through an uncle in Hong Kong. He never returned to China and spent his final years at 'The Haven', an aged care facility in Wagga Wagga which had been built up gradually by Eric and his wife Nan, raising money through the 2WG Women's Club.

Wendy was the executor for Charlie's will and later visited his family in China. Frank Rynehart also has fond memories of Charlie. He recalled that Charlie was happy and well liked in the neighbourhood. When Frank was very young, Charlie played with him and the other children, using fruit as a substitute ball, which he and the children would belt with a cricket bat or hockey stick.[433]

Notwithstanding these often very positive accounts of friendship and success, many Chinese men had very hard lives, living in poverty and dying alone. One such man was Ah Yen, whose body was found in the river near the Hay cemetery in 1894. He had been a labourer living at the camp, and was over

[433] McMullen, *Transcript of interview with Frank Rynehart*.

Charlie Wong Hing at Clear Springs, *Jingellic.*
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

Charlie Wong Hing's son, daughter-in-law, grandsons, their wives and great grandchild in China, none of whom he ever met.
Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

60 years of age. He also used to catch fish and sell them to his countrymen. At the time of his death he 'was very poor and could scarcely make a living'. He was found to have died of 'senile decay and want of nourishment'. The Chinese at the camp paid for his burial.[434] Another unfortunate man was Chong Young Sing, who died in May 1896. He was 60 years of age and had a wife in Canton (Guangzhou). On his body was a piece of paper on which he had written in Chinese, 'I have had bad luck lately. I mean to die. I owe Chong Hang £5'. The doctor found numerous large lumps of opium in the stomach and a large piece rolled up in his shirt, the magistrate concluding that he had met his death through a self-administered overdose of opium,[435]

[434] *Riverine Grazier*, 28 December 1894.

[435] *Riverine Grazier*, 29 May 1896.

The White Australia Policy

Peter Wah Young's Certificate of Domicile, 1903.
National Archives of Australia

The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and the White Australia Policy had their basis in the earlier colonial immigration restrictions, a continuing fear of the alien 'other' and a resurgent Japan and perceptions of unfair economic competition. But, as historians A.T. Yarwood and Ann Curthoys have so effectively argued, the underlying motivation was a deep-seated racism, which saw all coloured people as distinctly inferior to whites, and the need therefore to promote the ideal of racial homogeneity.[436] Yarwood remarked that because of their greater and disproportionate numbers, the new legislation disadvantaged Chinese males more than any other non- European group. True, no longer did they have to pay the poll tax if they wished to travel between the former colonies, but bar a brief interregnum of 15 months in the early 1900s they could not, as a general rule, admit family members to Australia, other than on a temporary basis. By this measure it was hoped that the Chinese population would gradually decrease. The Chinese and all other coloured people were also denied citizenship rights, unless they were naturalised, this policy effectively excluding the children of naturalised Chinese from citizenship.[437] The authorities, and in particular Labor politicians, strictly administered and scrutinised the immigration regulations for Chinese people; any major concessions would have been a serious breach of policy.[438]

The new arrangements became effective on 21 October 1902, at which time NSW finally abandoned its poll tax for Chinese arriving by land, the tax remaining for ships' passengers for another 6 months, other than for naturalised Chinese, Any Chinese person domiciled in Australia who wished to leave temporarily could apply for a Certificate of Domicile. One man to take advantage of these provisions was Peter Wah Young, a Hay-based storekeeper. His certificate was issued in 1903.

436 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia*; Curthoys, 'Conflict and consensus', p.56.

437 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia,* pp.68-82; Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, p.33.

438 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia*, pp.115-118.

An unusual application was made in 1905 by Gundagai, and later Tumut, businessman, Dang Loon. He was accompanied by the wife and family of Dang Ah Hack, who were taking Dang Ah Hack's remains back to China for burial. Dang Loon, who was then known as Dang Goon Loon, was also a trustee of Ah Hack's estate. In his character reference, Dang Loon was described by the owner of the *Gundagai Times* as a 'highly respectable man, always quiet and unassuming in manner, and is besides a worthy townsman in every way'.[439]

Form No. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 06/284
DUPLICATE. *Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, John Baxter Sub Collector of Customs for the State of New South Wales in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Dang Bown Sluey hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 3 Sept 06 [signature] Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 63 years Complexion
Height 5ft 7½ in in Boots Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks Small scar each side of mouth
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Full Face :— Profile :—

Date of departure Sept 06 Destination China
Ship Empire
Date of return Ship
Port

Customs Officer

Dang Bown Sluey's CEDT document, 1906.
National Archives of Australia

However, as historian Shirley Fitzgerald has argued, the Act did not define the term 'domicile', instead spelling out the mechanism for gaining the certificate, which could be provided to 'any person who satify[ied] an officer' of the Customs Department, which in turn gave enormous power to the bureaucrats. She cites several examples where the authorities denied certificates to Chinese residents of long standing, despite numerous favourable character references.[440]

In December 1905 a new system of verification known as the Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test (CEDT) replaced the Certificate of Domicile. The CEDT's could be made available to residents deemed of good character who had lived in Australia for five years, the test of character being made more explicit than with the Certificates of Domicile. As Paul Jones and Michael Williams have remarked, after Federation a pattern of regular, short term visits to the home villages and towns of Southern China became the norm. 120 approved journeys by Chinese in 1902 grew tenfold by 1905 and thereafter to several thousands in the following years. Wives and dependent children, students, businessmen and others were admitted for a short period on the basis of a CEDT. But the new arrangements were an administrative nightmare. Between 1902 and 1911 alone, customs officers in each state received in excess of 400 operational guidelines on coloured immigration, some providing clarification of procedures following court action by the Chinese. The bureaucratic needs for administering the CEDT's were complex and involved photographs, hand prints and character references, including one from the local police, who also had to verify the accuracy of the photographs. The Chinese may have been residents of Australia but they were not entirely free, and aware that any slip-up on their part could mean that their CEDT application would be refused. Possession of a court record or bad character reference from the local police ensured it.[441]

The fate of CEDT applicants with unsatisfactory references from the local police is illustrated by the experiences of Narrandera storekeeper, George Hock Shung. In December 1912 he applied for a CEDT,

[439] Series SP 244/2, C05/5679, NAA, Sydney.

[440] Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape Gold Scissors. The Story of Sydney's Chinese*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1996, pp.33-37.

[441] Paul Jones, *Chinese-Australian Journeys. Records on Travel. Migration and Settlement, 1860- 1975*, NAA, Canberra, pp.16-21.

Look Quen Sluey's CEDT photograph, 1906.
National Archives of Australia

Clara Sluey's CEDT photograph, 1906.
National Archives of Australia

Gook Quen Sluey's CEDT photograph, 1906.
National Archives of Australia

Form No. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 06/288
DUPLICATE. *Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, John Baxter Sub OM
for the State of New South Wales the Collector of Customs in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Quong Wing Sluey hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three years from this date.

Date 3 Sept 06

Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese
Age 7 years
Height
Build Stout
Particular marks none visible
Birthplace Tumut NSW.
Complexion
Hair Dark
Eyes Brown

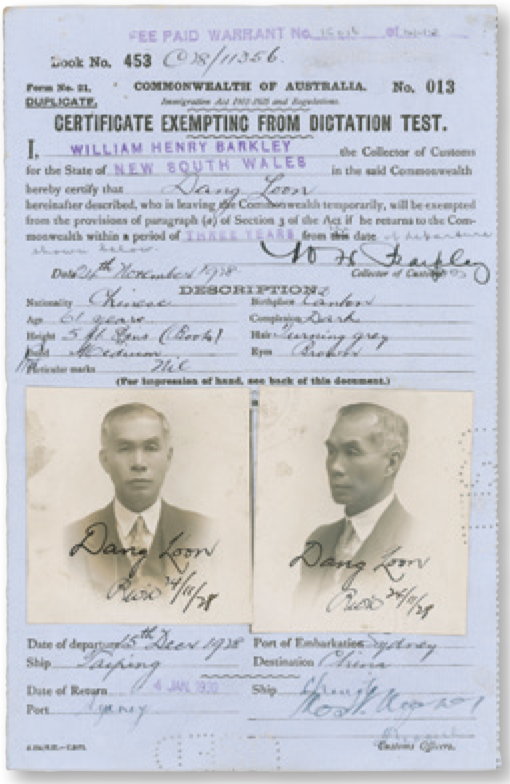
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Date of departure Sept 06
Ship
Destination China
Date of return 1st May 14
Port of Sydney
Ship Eastern

Customs Officer

Quong Wing Sluey's CEDT form, 1914.
National Archives of Australia



FEE PAID WARRANT No.

Book No. 453 C28/11356

Form No. 21.
DUPLICATE.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 013

Immigration Act 1901-1925 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, WILLIAM HENRY BARKLEY the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth hereby certify that Dang Loon hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date

Date 24th November 1928

W. H. Barkley
Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age 61 years
Complexion Dark
Height 5 ft 8ins (Boots)
Hair Turning grey
Build Medium
Eyes Brown
Particular marks Nil

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

Dang Loon

Date of departure 15th Decr 1928
Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Taiping
Destination China
Date of Return 4 JAN 1930
Ship Changte
Port Sydney

Customs Officers.

FEE PAID WARRANT No.

Book No. 475 C30/2888

Form No. 21.
DUPLICATE.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 082

Immigration Act 1901-1925 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth hereby certify that Dang Loon hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date

Date 14 MAR 1930

Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age
Complexion Dark
Height
Hair Turning grey
Build medium
Eyes Brown
Particular marks Nil

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Dang Loon

Date of departure
Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Changte
Destination China
Date of Return 8 NOV. 1930
Ship Changte
Port Sydney

Customs Officers.

Dang Loon's CEDT forms, 1928 and 1930.
National Archives of Australia

describing himself as a storekeeper and clearer contractor. He was married to a European woman and lived at the Chinese camp. George obtained good references from the Mayor of Narrandera, who described him as a straightforward, reliable and peaceful citizen, S Richards, a local merchant, the manager of the Bank of NSW, and the manager of Hill Clark & Co, stock agents. But Senior Constable Toohey had other ideas, describing him as a 'well known sly grog seller, and opium dealer'. He said that George was a 'Chinaman of good appearance, and is in comfortable circumstances, but he certainly does not bear a good character'. On the most recent occasion of sly grog selling the police used a female informant with marked coins to buy some alcohol from him, and found a very large cache of alcohol on his premises. Toohey also stated that he owned two wooden houses in the camp and had rented them to women of bad repute from Melbourne, a matter on which he had been cautioned, but not prosecuted. His application for a CEDT was refused. His uncle wrote to the authorities on George's behalf, stating that the main reason George wished to go to China was to visit his 80 year old mother whom he had not seen for 20 years, but to no avail. George went anyway, and applied for permission to re-enter Australia on his return in October 1913. It was granted on the basis that 'he be of better behaviour in the future'.[442]

More successful was Dang Bown Sluey of Tumut, the brother of Dang Ah Chee: He applied for a CEDT in 1906 to permit him to return to China to help Tang Chee, Ah Chee's son, manage his father's businesses. On his application he stated that he was born in Canton in 1843 and came to Australia in 1868. He had lived in Sydney for five years, Gundagai for three to four years and Tumut for about 30 years, and described his occupation as storekeeper's assistant; previously he had been a bookkeeper and carpenter. CEDT's were also sought for his wife Look Quen Sluey, two daughters. Gook Quen Sluey

[442] Series SP42/1, C1913/5044, NAA, Sydney.

Book No. 180 C15/4934 Fee paid 7/8/1937 No. 094

Form No. 21. DUPLICATE.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. *Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, WILLIAM HENRY BARKLEY the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Mack Goon hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date.

W. H. Barkley Collector of Customs.

Date 27 AUG 1915

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton

Age 62 years Complexion Dark Brown

Height Medium Hair

Build Eyes

Particular marks

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Mack Goon

Date of departure 31 8 15 Port of Embarkation Sydney

Ship Empire Destination Canton

Date of return 29 JUN 1917 Ship R.M.S. Empress

Port Sydney

Customs Officer.

Mack Goon's CEDT, 1915.
National Archives of Australia

and Clara Sluey, and his son Quong Wing Sluey, to allow the children to be educated in China.

In April 1909 he sought and was granted an extension of his CEDT for three years and for his son Quong Wing for five years to enable him to complete his education in China.[443]

To obtain his initial CEDT he had to provide four references. In one reference the Mining Warden at Tumut described him as a 'well known resident of Tumut' with a 'splendid character', and in another the manager of the Commercial Bank in Tumut stated that he was the owner of considerable property and 'an honest, steady, and commendable resident of Tumut'. His two other referees also described him as honest and respectable. Dang Bown Sluey's property, most of it inherited from his brother, was valued at £8728, a considerable amount of money at the time. Another Tumut businessman to visit China on several occasions was William Shai Hee, who submitted applications to travel in 1915, 1917, 1922 and 1932. Dang Loon from Tumut also made several visits, submitting applications in 1928 and 1930, on the latter occasion accompanied by his wife Violet.

Also successful was Mack Goon, a labourer and former cook and a resident of West Wyalong, who applied for a CEDT in August 1915 to allow him to visit Canton (Guangzhou) for three years. He was 62 years of age and had been in Australia for 34 years; 18 years in the Tumut district and 16 years at Wyalong. One reference was from George Bland, who said he had known him as a labourer for the past 14 years and had had many business transactions with him and found him to be very honest in every respect. The other was from Stephen Watterson, who stated that he had known him as a labourer and testified to his honesty and industry. Police Sergeant Smith described him as of a 'quiet disposition, very respectable and straight in all his dealings.'[444]

In another instance, William Flood Sam from West Wyalong applied for CEDTs in 1915 for himself and for his son Percy to enable them to visit China. One referee, a Mr Shibley, stated that he had known William for many years and had always found him sober, honest and reliable. Another referee, Joseph Speirs, said that he had known William and his family for 15 years and had always found him to be a good hard working, sober man. One other referee, Mr Flannery, said that he had known William for 15 years and found him to be very honest, straightforward and industrious. Mr Flannery's father had known him for 30 years and also testified as to his general good character. The local Police Sergeant, Mr McCabe, stated that William had been married for 40 years and had 12 surviving family members. His wife and six of his children were living in West Wyalong. Four of the children were married and he had five sons in the AIF. He said that William bore a 'good character'. [445]

[443] Series SP42/1, C1912/3324, C1913/4423, C1913/5044, NAA, Sydney.

[444] Series SP42/1, C15/4934, NAA, Sydney.

[445] Series SP 42/1, C1915/4032, C1915/4058, NAA, Sydney.

\Wong Lip's CEDT application in July 1921 was almost certainly family related. At the time he was a market gardener at Jerilderie. He was 51 years of age and had been in Australia for 25 years, during which time he had worked as a scrub cutter on Coree Station (about 16 kilometres from Jerilderie), and for 15 years at the Hop Sing gardens in Jerilderie. Mr Baker, a local auctioneer, stated that he had known Wong Lip for 22 years and described him as 'quiet and respectable man 'who had 'conducted himself decently' ever since he had known him. The local Police Sergeant described him as a 'very sober, honest and industrious man'.

Book No. 179 C15 4058 Fee paid 1K 9073

Form No. 21. DUPLICATE. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations. No. 85

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, WILLIAM HENRY BARKLEY the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that William Flood Sam hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date.

Date 27 JUL 1915 W H Barkley Collector of Customs

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 78 years Complexion
Height 5 ft 3¾ in. Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

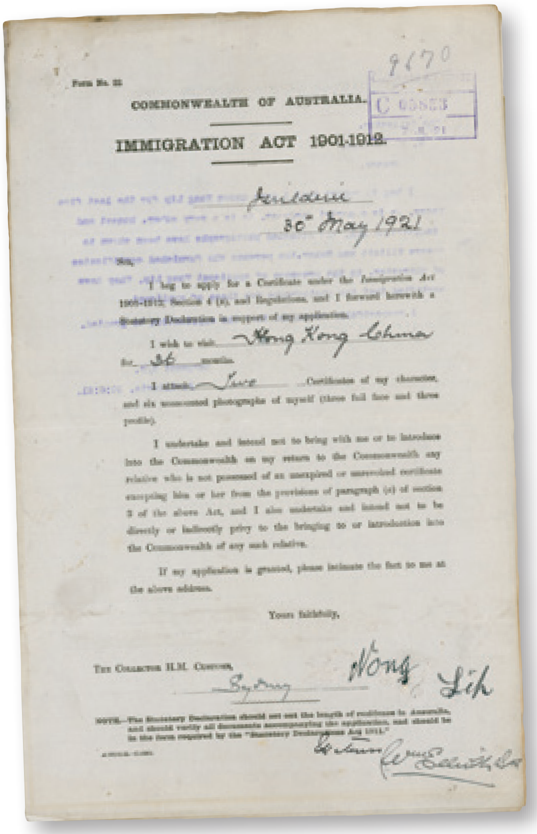
PHOTOGRAPHS.

Full Face:— Profile:—

Date of departure 10-7-15 Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Aldenham Destination China
Date of return 10 NOV 1915 Ship S.S. EMPIRE
Port of Sydney

Customs Officers.

William Flood Sam's CEDT, 1915.
National Archives of Australia



9170

Form No. 22.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. C 05853

IMMIGRATION ACT 1901-1912.

Jerilderie
30th May 1921

Sir,

I beg to apply for a Certificate under the Immigration Act 1901-1912, Section 4 (b), and Regulations, and I forward herewith a Statutory Declaration in support of my application.

I wish to visit Hong Kong China for 36 months.

I attach Two Certificates of my character, and six unmounted photographs of myself (three full face and three profile).

I undertake and intend not to bring with me or to introduce into the Commonwealth on my return to the Commonwealth any relative who is not possessed of an unexpired or unrevoked certificate exempting him or her from the provisions of paragraph (a) of section 3 of the above Act, and I also undertake and intend not to be directly or indirectly privy to the bringing to or introduction into the Commonwealth of any such relative.

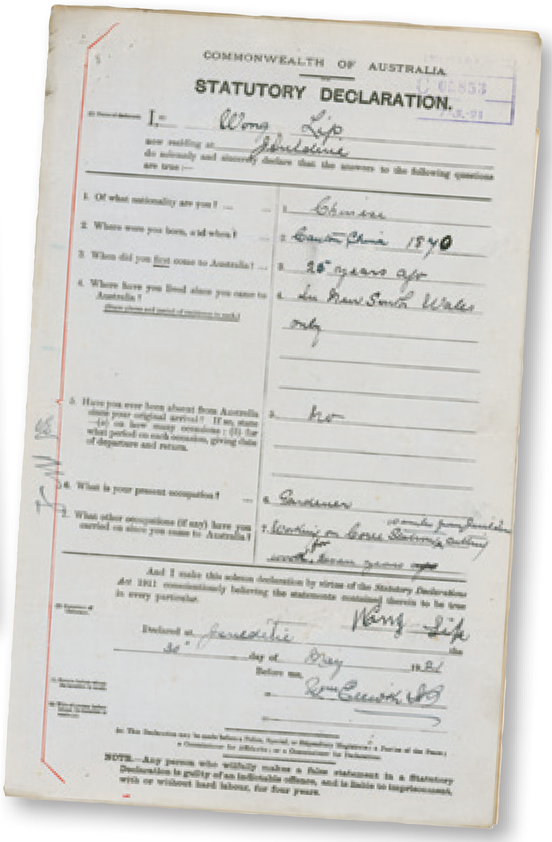
If my application is granted, please intimate the fact to me at the above address.

Yours faithfully,
Wong Lih

The Collector H.M. Customs, Sydney

NOTE.—The Statutory Declaration should set out the length of residence in Australia, and should verify all documents accompanying the application, and should be in the form required by the "Statutory Declarations Act 1911."

Wong Lip's CEDT application form, 1921.
National Archives of Australia



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. C 05853

STATUTORY DECLARATION.

I, Wong Lip now residing at Jerilderie do solemnly and sincerely declare that the answers to the following questions are true:—

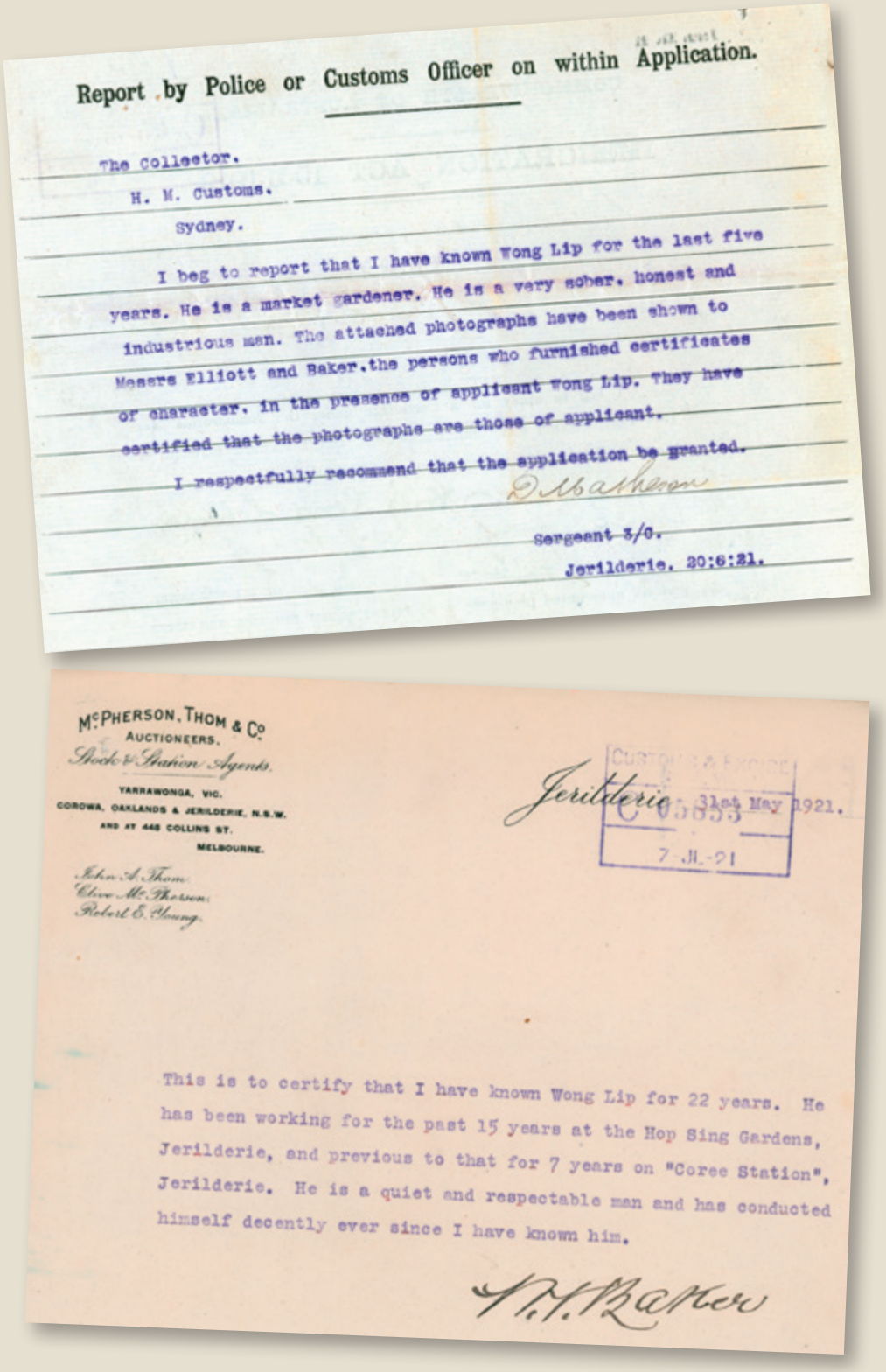
1. Of what nationality are you? — Chinese
2. Where were you born, and when? — Canton China 1870
3. When did you first come to Australia? — 25 years ago
4. Where have you lived since you came to Australia? — In New South Wales only
5. Have you ever been absent from Australia since your original arrival? If so, state—(a) on how many occasions; (b) for what period on each occasion, giving date of departure and return. — No
6. What is your present occupation? — Gardener
7. What other occupations (if any) have you carried on since you came to Australia? — Working on Coree Station, cutting 10 miles from Jerilderie for seventeen years ago

And I make this solemn declaration by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1911 conscientiously believing the statements contained therein to be true in every particular.

Wong Lip

Declared at Jerilderie the 30th day of May 1921
Before me,

NOTE.—Any person who wilfully makes a false statement in a Statutory Declaration is guilty of an indictable offence, and is liable to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for four years.



Report by Police or Customs Officer on within Application.

The Collector.
H. M. Customs.
Sydney.

I beg to report that I have known Wong Lip for the last five years. He is a market gardener. He is a very sober, honest and industrious man. The attached photographs have been shown to Messrs Elliott and Baker, the persons who furnished certificates of character, in the presence of applicant Wong Lip. They have certified that the photographs are those of applicant.

I respectfully recommend that the application be granted.

D Matheson
Sergeant 3/C.
Jerilderie. 20:6:21.

McPHERSON, THOM & Co
AUCTIONEERS.
Stock & Station Agents.
YARRAWONGA, VIC.
COROWA, OAKLANDS & JERILDERIE, N.S.W.
AND AT 448 COLLINS ST.
MELBOURNE.
John A. Thom.
Clive McPherson.
Robert E. Young.

Jerilderie 31st May 1921.

CUSTOMS HOUSE
7 JN -21

This is to certify that I have known Wong Lip for 22 years. He has been working for the past 15 years at the Hop Sing Gardens, Jerilderie, and previous to that for 7 years on "Coree Station", Jerilderie. He is a quiet and respectable man and has conducted himself decently ever since I have known him.

W.H. Baker

Wong Lip's CEDT references, 1921.
National Archives of Australia

Wong Lip's application was for three years.[446] On his return to Australia he was accompanied either by his son, Toy Sun, or the boy arrived shortly after, commencing school at Temora in late 1924, Wong Lip having by then left Jerilderie and set himself up as an orchardist at Temora.

The CEDT applications by George Hock Shung, Dang Bown Sluey, William Flood Sam, Mack Goon and Wong Lip show the very obvious affection and regard with which the men were held by white Australians (other than Constable Toohey) in their local communities. As shown by a number of applications, major reasons for travelling were to visit ageing parents and family, to ensure that the children received a Chinese education, and to attend to business matters.

The experiences of Wong Lip's son, Toy Sun Lip, illustrate the strict regulations surrounding the admittance of Chinese students into Australia and the perils of non-compliance. In accordance with the regulations, his father and two Chinese merchants in Sydney took responsibility for his financial support during his stay in Australia and for his return to China at the end of his term of exemption.

But the real problems began at school. The authorities insisted on regular school attendance, forbad the seeking of alternate employment, and required an attendance and conduct report from the school at the end of each term. Toy Sun's experience also highlights the plight of aging Chinese men who, amidst a dwindling Chinese population, had difficulty in obtaining casual help in their business enterprises. At first Toy Sun's attendance was very good with very few absences and in his term report in November 1924 the principal said that he was 'no trouble whatsoever-neatly dressed-seems well looked after'. But by the time of his mid-term report in July 1925 an all too frequent pattern was beginning to emerge, the boy being absent for 17 days out of a possible 82, for alleged reasons of family illness. All other aspects of his attendance were satisfactory, and he was described as a 'well behaved boy'. The same level of non-attendance occurred at the end of first term 1926, this time the reason given was he was the need to help his father, the school saying that his absences had been 'practically unavoidable'. He was described as a 'most satisfactory pupil'.[447]

During the second school term in 1926 he was away for 33 days out of 57, the reasons being his own illness, the illness of his father, and his father's absence in Sydney, which meant that he had to look after the shop. This report drew a warning from the Home and Territories Department, conveyed by the Chinese Consulate General in Melbourne, that if the boy did not observe the conditions of entry he would be required to leave the country. In October 1926 he was described as 'extremely well-behaved, attentive and industrious', but it was also stated that his attendance 'could be much improved'. He had been absent for 12 days out of a possible 59. Through the Chinese Consulate General the father apologised for the boy's absences, saying that it was due to sudden illness on his part. His school reports for most of 1927 were excellent, although he was absent for 17 days to attend his father's shop. But in September 1928 an absence of 26 days drew a stern warning from the Department that if future reports showed that the boy was kept home to assist in the shop action would be taken to cancel his exemption and steps taken for his departure from Australia. [448]

In April 1929 the Chinese Consulate General applied for a further 12 month's extension of Toy Sun's exemption. The Department advised that because the boy's absences had continued largely for the purpose of attending his father's business, and because this 'irregularity' had been brought to the Department's attention on three occasions, the Department would not be justified in granting any

[446] Series SP42/1, C21/5853, NAA, Sydney.

[447] Series A1, 1929/3660, NAA, Canberra.

[448] Series A1, 1929/3660, NAA, Canberra.

Toy Sun Wong Lip's passport application, 1923.
National Archives of Australia

Wong Lip's CEDT application photograph, 1921.
National Archives of Australia

Toy Sun Wong Lip's passport, 1923.
National Archives of Australia

further extensions and that arrangements should be made for his departure at the end of the month. Following further representations from the Chinese Consulate-General the Department inquired into the nature of the business conducted by the father, the number of employees and whether he had any relatives who could help, which he did not. The Department relented and granted another 12 months exemption, with the usual warning about attendance. In early 1930 the Department was advised that Toy Son had left Temora High School to attend the Sydney Efficiency Motor School, and would be living in Sydney. The Department refused permission for the boy to attend the Sydney school and insisted he return to Temora, and that arrangements be made for him to leave Australia at the conclusion of his current exemption period. Not even the influential James Wong Chuey could save him.[449]

Despite the tight policing and enforcement of the immigration restrictions evasion and other illegal methods were used, such as the purchase of false Naturalisation Certificates and CEDTs. Some officials also supplied false identification as a returned domicile, and desertion by ship's crew and the smuggling of people on ships also occurred. Court cases and other legal challenges were supported by members of the Chinese community and were often successful in limiting the powers of administrators who were wary of taking a case to court if they felt there was any chance of an adverse,

[449] Series A1, 1929/3660, NAA, Canberra.

and precedent setting decision.[450]

The cases of Florrie Ching and Esther Doon illustrate some of these issues. Florrie sought entry to Australia in 1917 based on a birth certificate in the name of Florence Matilda Ah Gow, who was born at Mundarlo, between Wagga Wagga and Gundagai, on 11 November 1886. Florrie claimed that she was Florence Ah Gow, and had gone to China in 1894 with her parents and remained there ever since. About eight years previously she had married Charlie Ching, who was in possession of a CEDT and allowed to land in Australia. Her husband and two Chinese residents of NSW provided statutory declarations affirming her identity. Thomas and Kenneth Ah Gow, her brothers, had re-entered Australia by special permission in 1906 and 1908 respectively. A departmental memorandum dated 27 December 1906 stated that their father, known only as Ah Gow, had been naturalised in 1881 and in 1894 took his wife and six children to China 'at the desire of the grandparents, who are now deceased, and in order that the children might familiarise themselves with the Chinese language'. Ah Gow returned to NSW shortly after and one son (Charlie) returned in 1904. He had been a storekeeper near Gundagai (at Mundarlo) for about 25 years, and since 1902 a commission agent in Sydney. [451]

The Collector of Customs in Sydney remarked that in cases like Florrie's it was exceedingly difficult to establish beyond doubt the identity of the immigrant. A comparison of photographs separated as in this case by 23 years was useless. In the past he had tried to prevent the admission of Chinese immigrants because he was unable to satisfy himself as to their identity, but

> as the immigrant usually had no difficulty in obtaining as many witnesses as necessary (usually Chinese) to swear that he or she was identical with the person who left Australia, the Magistrates, in the absence of rebutting evidence by the Department, dismissed the charge.

In the absence of evidence that Mrs Ching was not identical with Florence Ah Gow, he had no option but to admit her.[452]

The twist to this story involves Esther Doon, the wife of Dang Charles Doon from Tumut. Three of Esther's surviving children, Ted, Johnny and Grace, are adamant that she was born in China (even though the birth certificate states that she was Australian born), and came out under an assumed name, in her case Gow. As a local resident, and having spent his early years in Australia in the Gundagai area, Dang Charles Doon would have known the Ah Gow family very well, and would have been very well aware of the opportunities provided by cases such as that of Florrie Ching. Historian Paul Macgregor has commented that 'a few Chinese brides adopted the name and Australian birth certificate of Chinese children who had been born in Australia, but had returned to China while still young and died'. He further remarked that 'women who came with these false identities had to maintain them for the rest of their lives in Australia'. Esther was one of these women, and was given an assumed identity as one of Ah Gow's daughters to allow her to enter Australia. All she needed was a valid birth certificate showing her as Australian born. Family information suggests strongly that both Esther and Florence had false identities and as a consequence became sisters.[453] The majority of post 1905 Chinese brides of Chinese-Australian men were never able to settle here.

Charles Doon's frustrations with the White Australia Policy did not stop with the arrival of Esther, for the

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[450] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, pp.32-33.

[451] Series A1, 1917/16652, NAA, Canberra; *Gundagai Times*, 11 January 1881.

[452] Series A1, 1917/16652, NAA, Canberra.

[453] Paul Macgregor, 'Dreams of Jade and Gold. Chinese families in Australia's history', *The Australian family. Images and Essays*, (ed) Anna Epstein, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, pp.25-28.

family was under constant surveillance and pressure from the Immigration authorities, who sometimes made home visits to test the assimilability of the family, in particular Esther and the children. Charles's attitude to these visits was that 'there had to be new face at the table every year', Esther's pregnancies ensuring that she could not be deported. The Immigration official's forlorn statement after every visit of 'Oh, you're pregnant, I'll come back next year' says it all.[454] Furthermore, their son Richard was still in China, where he had married and had two children. He migrated to Australia in 1938 under the exemptions allowed for hiring of store assistants, and worked in his father's store in Tumut. But he could not bring out his wife, Chen, or the children. When the Second World War broke out Richard stayed in Australia, while his wife and children remained in the family village. Richard brought out his son Danny in 1950 under the student exemption provisions, but it was not until 1952 that the whole family was reunited.

The final twist concerns Florence Ching and her son Raymond, who were visiting their village in China when Raymond died. His birth certificate was then given to Ng Kwok Nung, who migrated to Australia under his new identity and later married Grace Doon, one of Esther's daughters.[455] By coincidence, and unbeknown to each other at the time, the new Raymond came out to Australia on the same boat as Richard Doon.

Richard's relationships with the Immigration Department were also difficult, and illustrate further the point that he Chinese residents of Australia were subject to constant surveillance. According to historian Andrew Junor the Department of Immigration had officially approved Richard's restaurant business in Sydney, but Richard incurred their displeasure when he did not inform them of his new business purchase in Moonee Ponds in 1954. He was told to return to Sydney immediately or risk deportation. Although this threat was not enforced, Departmental officers also paid Richard a home visit to check on his degree of assimilation. The officer was concerned that Richard did not belong to any clubs, but noted that he lived among Australians, had a 'good appearance, a pleasing personality and an adequate knowledge of English'. His Chung On restaurant continued to be scrutinised by the Department, one letter reminding him that 'all employees of Asians, who are under restriction as to residence in Australia are required annually to give details of their trading and of the employees so engaged'. Departmental officers also made unannounced inspections of his premises. On one occasion, Richard reacted very strongly, citing his high standing and reputation, the adverse effect of the visits on his patronage, the much longer period of time that he had been in Australia compared to one of the inspectors, and his influential political friends. He was particularly indignant at the lack of progress by the Department in securing a speedy admission into Australia of his son Danny's fiancée. Richard was also very active in assisting migrants, due to his need for skilled chefs, and later, their families.[456]

The Shai Hee family also had their challenges. William Shai Hee had married Chin See in China, but then had to return to Australia, leaving Chin See in his home village, Hem-Ning, Hoe-Sun (Heshan) City where his first son, Ted, was born. William wrote to the Department in 1926 asking that Chin See and Ted be allowed to enter Australia, as he was unable to visit them because of business commitments.. In 1927 Chin See and Ted came to Australia on temporary visas and lived at Tumut for six years, where more children were born. William wrote again in 1928 asking that Chin See be

[454] Information provided by Grace Ching, October 2011.

[455] Information provided by Grace Ching, October 2011.

[456] Junor, *Chung On: Moonee Ponds and the lemon chicken long boom,* pp.20-33; information from Lel Doon, September 2011.


Form No. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 07/570
Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.
CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.
I, John Baxter actg the Collector of Customs for the State of New South Wales in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Willie Shai Hee hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of three years from this date.
Date 29 Nov 07
DESCRIPTION.
Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age 28 years
Complexion Dark
Height 5 ft 9 in in Boots
Hair Brown
Build Medium
Particular marks Scar on left cheek bone
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)
PHOTOGRAPHS.
Full Face
Profile
Date of Departure Dec 07
Destination China
Ship Nikko Maru
Date of return 30. 5. 10
Ship Aldenham
Port Sydney
Customs Officer

1907


Book No. 166
Form No. 21. DUPLICATE.
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 94
Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.
CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.
I, William Henry Barkley the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Willie Shai Hee hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date.
Date 20 2 15
Collector of Customs.
DESCRIPTION.
Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age 36 years
Complexion Dark
Height 5 ft 9 in in Boots
Hair Brown
Build Medium
Particular marks Scar on left cheek bone Scar on Chin right side
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)
PHOTOGRAPHS.
Date of departure 22 2 15
Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Nikko Maru
Destination China
Date of return 26 JUN 1916
Ship St Albans
Port Sydney
Customs Officers.

1915


FEE PAID WARRANT No. 3969 of 15/3/22
Book No. 329
Form No. 21. DUPLICATE.
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 100
Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.
CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.
I, WILLIAM HENRY BARKLEY the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Willie Shai Hee hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of THREE YEARS from this date.
Date 14 March 1922
Collector of Customs.
DESCRIPTION.
Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age 43 years
Complexion Dark
Height 5 ft 9 in in boots
Hair Brown
Build Medium
Particular marks Scar on left cheek bone
(For impression of hand see back of this document.)
PHOTOGRAPHS.
Date of departure 19/3/22
Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship St Albans
Destination China
Date of return 21/8/23
Ship St Albans
Port Sydney
Customs Officers.

1922


FEE PAID WARRANT
Book No. 508
Form No. 21. DUPLICATE.
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No 094
Immigration Act 1901-1925 and Regulations.
CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.
I, GEORGE FINLAY ASHTON MITCHELL the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Willie Shai Hee hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of from the date of departure shown below.
Geo. F. A. Mitchell
Collector of Customs.
Date 16. 7. 1933
DESCRIPTION.
Nationality Chinese
Birthplace Canton
Age 54 years
Complexion Dark
Height 5 ft 8 inches
Hair Black
Build Medium
Eyes Dark
Particular marks Scar on left cheek, Black mole on forehead
(For thumb prints, see back of this document.)
PHOTOGRAPHS.
Date of Departure 15th July 1933
Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Tanda
Destination China
Date of Return 20-6-35
Ship Tanda
Port Sydney
Customs Officers.

1935

Some of William Shai Hee's CEDTs, from 1907 to 1933.
National Archives of Australia

allowed to remain in Australia for a further 12 months because she was not in a fit state to travel unaccompanied to China following the birth of her second child. Again, he was unable to travel because of business commitments. In 1929 he again sought an extension because of Chin See's pregnancy and her ongoing child care commitments and his inability to leave the business. He wrote again in 1930, stating that most of the firm's business was conducted with local primary producers, to many of whom the company had extended credit. The bank agreed that it would not be in the company's best interests for him to leave. In January 1931 William wrote again, stating that it would be necessary for him to accompany Chin See to China, but because of adverse trading conditions he would be unable to leave the business. William wrote again in July 1931, stating that business conditions had not improved because of the effect of serious floods on the firm's customers, and the closure of the State Savings Bank. In 1932 William again sought an extension, pointing out that his wife was again pregnant, and that he could not leave the business to accompany her. The financial situation of the company was even more acute than before, as many customers had been unable to pay their accounts. A local resident, Ken Hoad, wrote in support. In 1933 the family returned to China, with the exception of Ted, who stayed behind to manage the business.. The following year William had to return to Australia, leaving the rest of the family behind, including the new-born Joe. After the Japanese occupation of China the family went to Hong Kong, with Chin See and Joe entering Australia on temporary visas. Tom Collins, M.P., wrote to the Minister for the Interior in 1937 on behalf of the family, arguing that owing to the 'precarious situation' of the wives of Chinese storekeepers it was an obligation of the Australian Government to allow their entry until conditions were safer in China. Chin See and her children arrived in Australia in January 1938. In December 1938 William sought an extension for Chin See and Joe, arguing that conditions in China were in a 'deplorable state' and that it was 'no place for a woman to be'. Similar representations were made in 1939 and 1941, by which time the Shai Hee village had been 'completely wrecked' and their home destroyed. Over this period of time William's representations were strongly supported, where necessary, by local MPs, Parker Moloney and Tom Collins, and by his bank manager.[457]

William's concerns with the ever-present possibility that Chin See and Ted could be deported from Australia, led him to build two homes in China in the 1920s. He may also have had in mind living in China permanently because of his extensive business interests. Although only about two years old at the time Joe remembers that one of the houses was very large, with a high grey wall around it. His brother Reg remembers that the houses had two storeys, and that while in China, William, Chin See, and her children stayed in one, and the two sons and a daughter from William's first marriage (his wife had died in China) stayed in the other. The families slept upstairs and some of the livestock was kept downstairs. Such buildings were (and still are) referred to as "diaolou", (meaning watchtowers or fortified multi-storey towers). They were built by overseas Chinese in the event that they returned to China after making their fortune overseas. The buildings were generally made of reinforced concrete, and built with high walls or towers to serve as lookouts and protection against attacks from bandits, who regarded these wealthy families as 'fair game', and as protection against floods. Most diaolou are located in the Sze Yap district of Guangdong Province, the home of so many Chinese immigrants to Australia, New Zealand and the Americas in the late 19th century.

An example of the perils of the overseas Chinese in China is illustrated by the kidnapping of James Wong Chuey's adopted son in 1916. He was only released after payment of a large ransom. More pointedly for the Shai Hees was their own experience with kidnapping, when the nanny ran away

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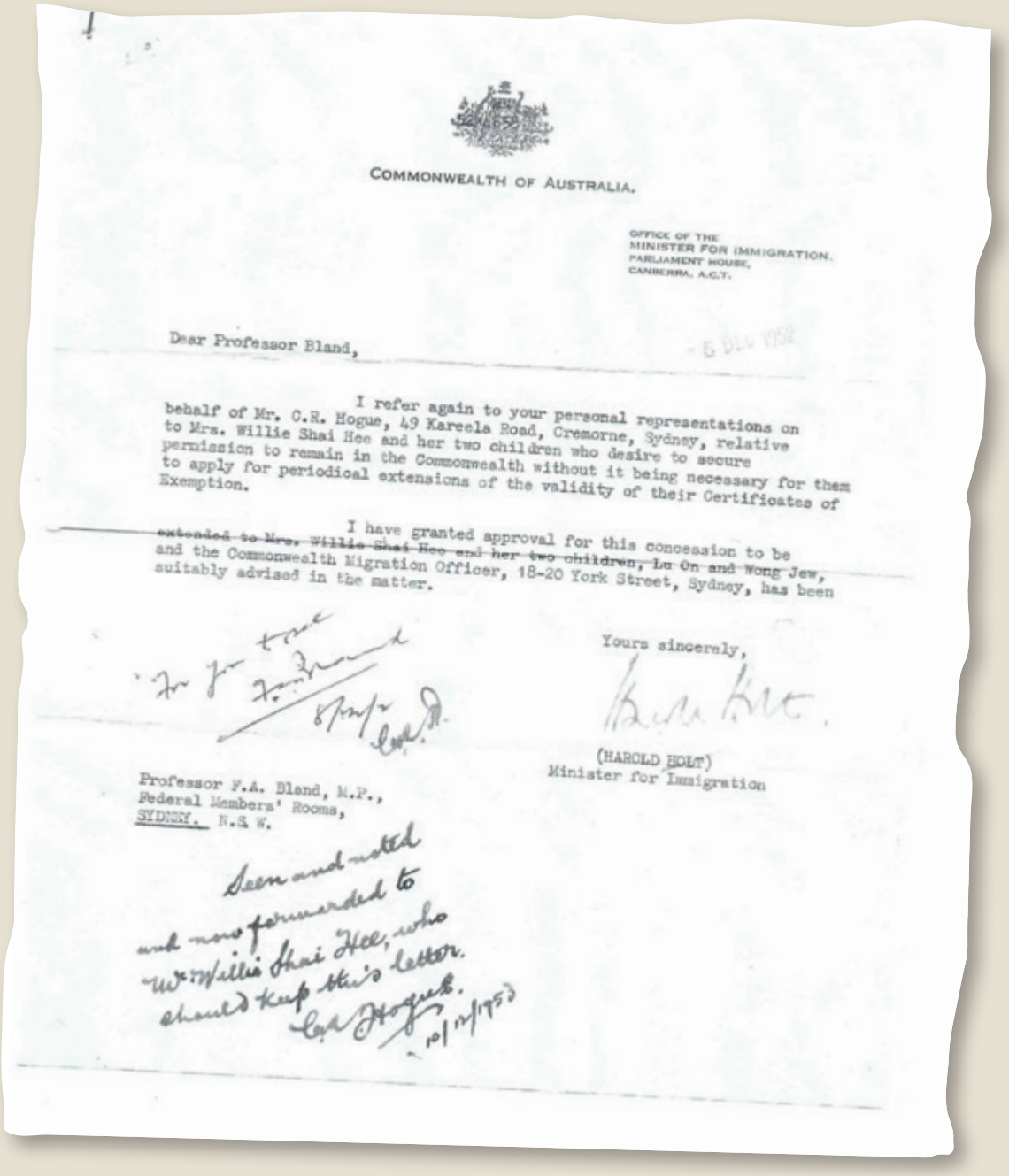
[457] Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee' unpublished reminiscences, Sydney, 2004; information from Joe Shai Hee, February 2012; Series A2998, 1952/4657, NAA, Canberra.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

OFFICE OF THE
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Dear Professor Bland,

I refer again to your personal representations on behalf of Mr. C.R. Hogue, 49 Kareela Road, Cremorne, Sydney, relative to Mrs. Willie Shai Hee and her two children who desire to secure permission to remain in the Commonwealth without it being necessary for them to apply for periodical extensions of the validity of their Certificates of Exemption.

I have granted approval for this concession to be ~~extended to Mrs. Willie Shai Hee and her two children, Lu On and Wong Jew,~~ and the Commonwealth Migration Officer, 18-20 York Street, Sydney, has been suitably advised in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

(HAROLD HOLT)
Minister for Immigration

Professor F.A. Bland, M.P.,
Federal Members' Rooms,
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Seen and noted
and now forwarded to
Mr Willie Shai Hee, who
should keep this letter.
C.R. Hogue.
10/12/52

The letter from Harold Holt, Immigration Minister to Proffessor Bland in 1952.
Private collection

Diaolous in Kaiping, Guangdong Province, China.
www.china-tour.cn/China-Pictures/Diaolou.htm

with Reg, who was then only a baby, and went to the docks to sell him. After a frantic search Chin See caught up with them and took Reg back (the fate of the nanny is unknown).[458]

Continued concerns about the deportation of Chin See, Joe and Ted in the post World War II period led William to approach Rose Chuey, the widow of James Wong Chuey, for assistance. She in turn approached a neighbour, Clarrie Hogue, who in 1952 wrote to the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, and the then Federal Liberal Party member for Warringah, (and obviously a close friend) Professor Bland, to ask that Chin See and two of the children be granted permanent exemption to live in Australia, instead of being granted permission to remain here for short periods only. He said that it seemed to be 'very harsh treatment of this family and a shocking waste of time by the Department having to review the case every few years or so'. Hogue described the family as 'fine citizens', stating that William's grandfather had come to Australia many years ago and helped develop the country by cutting down trees and building roads, and that William had been in business in Australia for 58 years, paying taxes and giving employment to many people. The family were 'one of our pioneers' and had 'done very fine work'. He had known the family for many years.[459] Harold Holt, the Minister for Immigration, agreed that Chin See and the two children be granted permission to remain in Australia without having to apply for periodic extensions of their CEDTs.[460] In a letter to Hogue, Bland stated that

> I wish we could have people with the reasonableness of Harold Holt. You have got to remember, however, that this White Australia country looks askance at every 'furriner'. I have been arguing that the world is full enough of hardship and misery without our deliberately adding to the volume by refusing families the joy or re-union, when all their world had been destroyed by circumstances over which they had no control.[461]

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[458] Tan, Jin Hua, Selia, 'Kaiping Diaolou and Its Associated Villages: Documenting the Process of Application to the World Heritage List'; thesis submitted for a Master of Science degree, University of Hong Kong, September 2007; information from Reg, Joe and Jean Chin (née Shai Hee), February 2012.

[459] Letter from Clarrie Hogue to Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, November 1952. (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

[460] Letter from Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration to Professor F.A. Bland, M.P, 5 December 1952 (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

[461] Letter from F. A. Bland to Clarrie Hogue, 15 December 1952 (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

NOTICE TO ALIENS.

Acquiring Place of Abode.—An alien who arrives in Australia from overseas and who acquires a place of abode must, within seven days after so acquiring a place of abode, give notice thereof, in the prescribed form, to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode.

Change of Abode.—An alien, before changing his place of abode, is required to give notice in the prescribed form to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode, of the date on which he intends to change his abode, and of his intended new place of abode. He is also required, within seven days after acquiring his new place of abode, to attend in person before the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his new place of abode and to bring with him his Certificate of Registration.

If an alien does not change his place of abode in accordance with the particulars stated in the notice furnished by him, he must forthwith inform the officer of the cancellation of his intended change of abode, or of any alteration in the intended date of his change of abode, or in his intended new place of residence, as the case may be.

Change of Name.—An alien may not change his name unless he has, in accordance with the Regulations previously notified his intention so to do to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode.

NOTE.—Failure to observe the abovementioned requirements renders an alien liable to a penalty of £100 or six months' imprisonment.

No. 32. Form B1.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF ALIEN

(*For alien resident in Australia and for alien passenger entering Australia in Oversea Vessel.*)

Name of holder Soon Lum

Nationality claimed Chinese

Date of birth 16-7- 1879

Occupation Gardner

Date of entry into Australia 24-1-40

Place of abode Chicago Street, Maribyrnong

(In case of passenger entering Australia state home address.)

(In case of alien passenger only — Name of vessel

port at which embarked in her

intended place of abode (if any)

in Australia)

Signature of holder

Remarks

Date of issue 19-2-40

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer 1st Const 7098

Police Station Maribyrnong

Personal Description.

Height Five ft Five in.

Colour of eyes Brown

Colour of hair Going Gray

Build Medium

Notable marks

PHOTOGRAPH.

FINGER PRINTS.

Right Thumb

Left Thumb

REGISTERED CHANGES OF ABODE.

New address Narrandera N.S.W.

Registered at Narrandera

Date 11th November 1940

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address Kay

Registered at Maribyrnong Victoria

Date 19.8.40

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address Toganmain

Registered at Via Darlington Point N.S.W.

Date 20th October 1952

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address

Registered at

Date

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

Certificate of Registration of Alien for Soon Lum who wanted to move from Maribyrnong in Victoria to Toganmain Station, Darlington Point, near Narrandera, NSW in 1940.

Hay Gaol Museum, New South Wales

Over the years restrictions for merchants, tourists and students and market gardeners were gradually eased. In 1904-05 provision was made for visits by 'coloured' merchants, tourists and students, and in 1912 for Chinese merchants engaged in wholesale overseas trade (excluding storekeepers and hawkers) and Chinese students. The merchants had to maintain a minimum gross turnover of £1000 a year and could stay for one year. Under departmental policy at the time, merchants already in Australia could introduce assistants to help them in work for which Chinese was indispensable. A second amendment changed the conditions of travel to and from Australia by 'coloureds', permitting the entry of anyone who could satisfy officials that they had formerly lived in Australia. In 1934 the turnover requirement for merchants was reduced to £500 and the basic period of stay was set at seven years. Merchants could also introduce assistants for the same length of stay at the rate of one for each £500 of turnover.[462]

According to historian A.C. Palfreeman it is not clear when assistants were first admitted to work for Chinese other than merchants, but it is likely that this occurred well before 1934, as long as the turnover was at least £5000 a year. Merchants could introduce an extra assistant for each £10,000 of turnover to a maximum of five on condition that an equal number of local hands were employed, reduced in 1940 to £5000 for the second, and in 1947 to £2500 for each assistant. In certain cases where an old established business was maintained by an elderly Chinese he could introduce an assistant on a turnover of only £2500 and eventually allow the assistant to carry on the business. Before 1934 substitutes were permitted to enter Australia on a temporary basis to enable Chinese domiciled residents to hire managers for their businesses while they were abroad. In 1934 it was decided that permanent substitutes would be allowed entry to replace domiciled Chinese who wished to retire and leave Australia permanently if the business had a turnover of £5000. Also in 1934 merchants were permitted to introduce Chinese assistants if they were engaged in wholesale overseas trade and had a certain gross turnover, this latter requirement changing over time, and extending to include managers and permanent substitutes. Commencing in 1924 the age of students permitted to enter Australia was gradually reduced, particularly if the parents were merchants. Subsequently a separate category of persons eligible for entry - Chinese chefs - was instituted to enable Chinese restaurant owners to import the necessary staff. Chinese market gardeners were also granted permission to apply for assistants where the gardens had a turnover of £1500. At the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 further changes were made to the entry requirements to provide for Chinese refugees and those already in Australia on temporary CEDTs. Over the years restrictions for merchants, tourists and students and market gardeners were gradually eased.[463]

[462] A.C. Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy*, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp.5-19.

[463] Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy*, pp.27-39.

Conclusion

Much of the foregoing highlights just how difficult life was for many Chinese people in Australia. They were not exactly welcomed into the country and were often reminded of that in the press; they were the alien 'other' and were not allowed to forget it. The Chinese presence in the Riverina was, however, mainstream, and has spanned several generations to the present day. At times they were a significant proportion of the adult male population of regions, and their camps and daily aspects of their lives such as the festivals, court appearances and burial ceremonies were an ever-present reality. It is a story of success; the triumph of an alien people in an alien land, far removed from their kith and kin near the verdant fields and abundant streams of their native Guangdong Province. That so many survived, and in many instances thrived, is an example to all Australians. It is a very human story, but sadly, with a few notable exceptions, much of this history has been lost, or at best, marginalised. Hopefully, the Museum of the Riverina's interest has helped redress some of this neglect, and has pointed the way for a major rewrite of colonial and post colonial history, particularly in the area of race relations and regional economic and social history.

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